

Austin ISD School Health Advisory Council

Recommendation for Recess Policy for Austin ISD Elementary School Students

March 30, 2016

WHEREAS, the Vision of Austin ISD is to “reinvent the urban school experience” and the Mission of Austin ISD includes “ensuring all Texas children...achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation”; and

WHEREAS, the Austin ISD strategic plan embraces focusing on the Whole Child, including their “physical, social and emotional health, and safety;”

WHEREAS, Texas Senate Bill 530 requires the local school health advisory council to consider and make policy recommendations to the District concerning the importance of daily recess for elementary school students; and

WHEREAS, the Austin ISD School Health Advisory Council has considered research on the positive health and social development benefits, as well as academic benefits of recess and unstructured and undirected play; and

WHEREAS, recess specifically provides children with discretionary time to engage in physical activity that helps to develop healthy bodies, healthy minds and the enjoyment of movement as well as opportunities to practice life skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, taking turns, sharing, and problem-solving; and

WHEREAS, the Austin ISD School Health Advisory Council has considered that local community values are reflected in any recommendation made by the Council; and

WHEREAS, recess, while separate and distinct from physical education, is an essential component of the total educational experience for elementary aged children.

NOW, THEREFORE, based on this information, **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Austin Independent School District (AISD) School Health Advisory Council recommends the following recess policy for all Austin ISD elementary schools:

1. Elementary school students in AISD shall be provided with a minimum of 30 minutes of supervised unstructured recess time per day in addition to the 135 minutes of structured physical activity time per week that is currently mandated under SB530.
2. All teachers shall receive annual professional development on structured versus unstructured time to include the following recess guidelines:
 - Recess time will be provided for at least 30 minutes during each school day.
 - Recess will not be taken away as a punishment or for academic reasons.
 - Recess will not be viewed as a reward but as a necessary educational support component for all children.
 - Recess is not part of the 135 minutes of required structured physical activity mandated and scheduled into the school day.
3. Recess time policy should be published in the campus handbook that is posted or distributed to parents.
4. AISD elementary schools should provide the facilities, equipment and sufficient and active supervision necessary to ensure that unstructured recess experiences are productive, safe and enjoyable.