

PARENTS ACROSS RHODE ISLAND

Advocacy - Information - Giving Voice to Parents

January 6, 2016

Mr. Daniel P. McConaghy
Chair
Council on Elementary and Secondary Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman McConaghy and Council Members:

At the December meeting I asked what you do plan to do to ensure that every child has adequate recess in the state. I want to thank Council Member Callahan for requesting that RIDE research recess in the state and would like to know what steps RIDE and the council plan to take to follow through with that. As you know from the materials we have provided you, adequate recess is not being provided throughout the state. I look forward to hearing RIDE's work on this issue as it significantly impacts our youngest children.

In December, Deputy Commissioner Abbot said: "If there are districts out there that are either not providing recess or providing recess and not providing 330 minutes of instructional time, they are out of compliance with one regulation or the other." It is the responsibility of RIDE to ensure that compliance occurs. Our point from the beginning of our request is *that the BEP is inadequate at ensuring recess because RIDE has no mechanism to ensure compliance solely from the BEP*. It is only through state statute or through regulations that recess is ensured, which is why we asked it be included in the regulations. This is precisely the circuitous conversation that leads parents to incredible frustration to throw their hands up and walk away.

A few other important points: Deputy Commissioner Abbot said that there were nearly 300 folks who signed our petition – there were nearly 800. He also said that recess was required under state statute. Physical Education and Health instruction are required, but recess is not mentioned in the statute. Last, the commentary regarding third grade reading scores is incredibly concerning. As all of the research shows, providing adequate recess to young children improves educational outcomes. How can this be so readily dismissed?

Please let us know when RIDE intends to respond to the request of Council Member Callahan to review recess throughout the state and what steps will be taken to ensure adequate recess for young children.

Best Regards,

Tracy Ramos
Director – Parents Across Rhode Island