

# PARENTS ACROSS RHODE ISLAND

*Advocacy - Information - Giving Voice to Parents*

December 9, 2015

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

Dear Chairman McConaghy and Council Members:

Our organization has been steadfast in our work to engage parents on issues that affect them and their children. Nothing is more impactful on a child in school than the regulations regarding the school day.

The BEP, written in 2009, states that each LEA shall: “provide daily recess opportunities.” As one mom put it “kids don’t need opportunities for recess, they need actual recess.” We know and more importantly, *you* know that the BEP is inadequate at ensuring recess for children, so it is terribly disappointing that the Commissioner would cite the BEP as a reason for not including recess in the regulations in his recommendation to you tonight. Without a regulation, there is no way to ensure that all schools are complying. And we know from the research and our experience that recess is regularly taken away or not offered in all schools throughout the state.

Students deserve the council’s thorough and comprehensive review of the School Day regulations, and I ask that in your conversation tonight, you address the nearly 800 parents who have asked you to include recess in the regulations. As you implement strategies in the name of college and career readiness, it only stands to reason that you’d consider the overwhelming scientific evidence that has proven that recess is a necessary part of the normal and healthy development for any child.

We can’t wait another six years for these regulations to be reviewed again before you ensure recess for all children. So I’d like to hear tonight if not through the school day regulation, how the council intends to ensure adequate recess is offered to all children every school day.

Last, because I don’t expect to get a chance to speak again tonight, I’d like to say for the record that Parents Across RI has never been critical of the council’s authority to set policy, despite the Commissioner’s statements to the contrary at the public hearing. In fact, we see your role as critical in setting minimum requirements for all children, which is why we come to you with the recess issue. It’s my hope and expectation that parents’ voices are not only welcomed but listened to and valued as critical as you set policy for children.

Best Regards,

Tracy Ramos  
Director – Parents Across Rhode Island