



*Artwork by Charles Schulz*

# Understanding the Recess Bill

by More Recess for Virginians

# What is Recess?



The VA Dept of Education defines recess as: a segment of free time exclusive of time provided for meals during the standard school day in which students are given a break from structured classroom instruction.

- Recess is:
  - A break from instruction
  - A chance to freely move, run, and play
  - Unstructured time where kids control their own activities

*Recess*

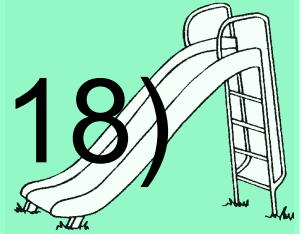
# The Benefits of Recess



- Brain Development – Physically active children are better at paying attention, have faster cognitive processing, and perform better on standardized tests. Breaks allow kids time to encode classroom learning into memory.
- Social & Emotional Skills – The American Academy of Pediatrics states that children learn negotiation, cooperation, and problem solving skills at recess.
- Executive Functions – During unstructured playtime at recess, kids learn to plan their own activities, to switch between tasks, and to set their own goals. These skills increase success in school and even in adulthood.

*Recess*

# Virginia Recess Laws (Pre-2018)



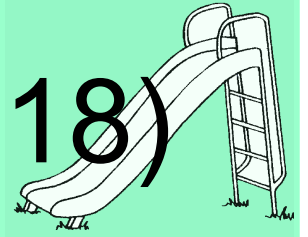
Virginia Requires Elementary Schools to Provide:

- Daily Recess (8VAC20-131-200)
- 20 min per day of physical activity including recess or PE with a goal of 150 min total per week (starting in 2018-2019 Code of Virginia, section 22.1-253.13:1, D, 15)
- A School Day which is at least 5.5 instructional hours, excluding meals and recess (8VAC20-131-5)



*Recess*

# Virginia Recess Laws (Pre-2018)



~7 hr School Day

5 hr 30 min Required Daily Instructional Hours

4 hr 8 min Required for  
English, Math, Science, and Social Studies

Lunch

Current  
Recess

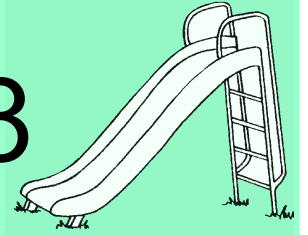
Core Subjects

Recess

Lunch

*Recess*

# Recess Law Changes 2018



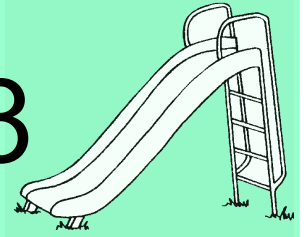
**HB1419/SB273** allows up to 15% of the required 5.5 hours of daily instructional time to be used for recess (roughly 50 min).\*

**HB1419/SB273** reduces the minimum instructional hours that must be spent teaching only English, math, science and social studies/history from roughly 4 hrs and 8 min per day to roughly 3 hrs and 47 min.\*

\*Note: these are changes to state-mandated minimums, Local School Districts will still need to adopt these changes in their own regulations.

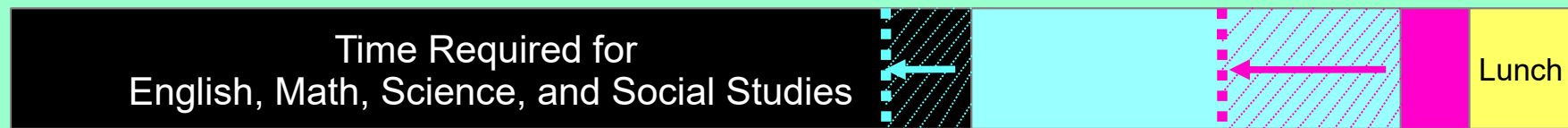
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# Recess Law Changes 2018



~7 hr School Day

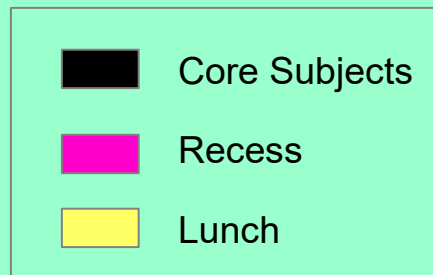
5 hr 30 min Required Daily Instructional Hours



HB1419/SB273 Reduces this requirement to 3 hr 47 min

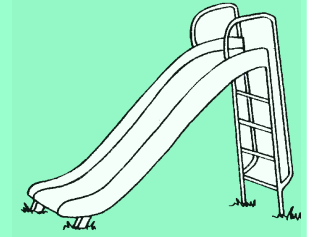
Flexibility for More Recess


Current Recess



*Recess*

# What's Next?



- New Recess Laws in effect July 1 give flexibility for more recess, but not a mandate
- **Start/Join a More Recess group in your area**
  - Groups already exist in Loudoun, Prince William, Fairfax Counties, and Poquoson and Richmond cities
- **Advocate with your School Board** to mandate an increase in recess time in your district using the flexibility granted them with these bills
- Follow  More Recess for Virginians on Facebook to keep up with advocacy efforts across the state.

*Recess*