



MEA Pushes for Recess Mandate

MEA testified in support of a new bill that would require the state to mandate at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity

The MEA spoke today in support of LD 378-An Act to Promote Physical Activity for Schoolchildren. The bill, sponsored by Senator Rebecca Millett, requires all school administrative units to provide at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity for all students in kindergarten to grade 5. The bill also states that a school administrative unit may not deny a student physical activity as punishment or discipline.

A survey of MEA members found that during mandated testing, schools were at times, forced to eliminate recess to complete testing. Research shows active children both perform better in school and behave better. The American Heart Association recommends at least 60 minutes of aerobic activity every day. For children ages 5-17 the World Health Organization recommends 60 minutes of exercise.

“Classes in physical education are certainly an important part of exercise and team-building skills for school age children. But unstructured play time is as important as the classroom skills. As a teacher for more than 3 decades I know that children do better in school when given the chance to move. Children learn through play as well; let’s make sure we put our students first and support guaranteed recess,” said Lois Kilby-Chesley, President of the Maine Education Association.

Bill text:

http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_128th/billtexts/SP011901.asp