

The scorecard was created as part of a policy toolkit that supports advancing recess in schools through state laws. It was developed by the research team, with input from the advisory board, to provide a starting point for advocates and policymakers seeking to improve recess legislation. A score of “0” indicates that the law requires further development. We recommend first incorporating all essential best practices, followed by any enhanced best practices that are appropriate for your state.

Arkansas Department of Education adopted a regulation that defines recess as “supervised, unstructured social time during which students may communicate with each other.”

BEST PRACTICE	LANGUAGE IN LAW	SCORE
ESSENTIAL BEST PRACTICES		
A. Mandates a time requirement of at least 20 minutes of daily recess	At least forty (40) minutes of instructional time per school day <u>shall be used for recess</u> for students attending public elementary schools	2
B. Inclusive of all students in grades kindergarten-8	At least forty (40) minutes of instructional time per school day shall be used for recess <u>for students attending public elementary schools.</u> “Elementary school” means the educational model consistent with instructional grouping and scheduling used in grades kindergarten through four (K-4) but may include grades five through six (5-6). <i>Note: Weak language for grades 5-6; does not include grades 7-8</i>	1
C. Prohibits schools from withholding recess	N/A	0
D. Prohibits schools from using recess to fulfil state mandated physical education requirements	Minutes provided under Section 7.11 <u>shall not count towards the minimum physical education requirements.</u>	2
E. Includes specific language on compliance	N/A	0

BEST PRACTICE	LANGUAGE IN LAW	SCORE
ENHANCED BEST PRACTICES		
F. Transition time does not count toward minimum time	N/A	0
G. Requires recess be provided on shortened school days	N/A A public school principal <u>may use discretion to adjust the recess time required</u> due to special circumstances or programs that interrupt a regular school day <i>Note: Allows for an exemption on shortened school days</i>	0
H. Requires recess to be inclusive for all students	N/A	0
I. Requires recess to be held outdoors	The minutes of <u>recess required shall occur outdoors</u> when weather and other relevant conditions permit	2
J. If recess is indoors, the law requires there to be adequate space for students to be physically active	The minutes of recess required <u>shall include without limitation opportunities for free play and vigorous physical activity, regardless of whether recess occurs indoors or outdoors</u>	2
K. Prohibits the use of personal electronic devices during recess	N/A	0
L. Requires schools to provide annual professional development opportunities for staff members who lead or supervise recess	N/A	0
M. Requires schools to schedule recess before lunch	N/A	0
N. Requires schools to provide age-appropriate equipment	N/A	0
O. Requires all recess equipment and facilities to meet or exceed safety standards	N/A	0