

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.

California defines recess as a period of time during the school day when pupils are given supervised and unstructured time for physical activity, play, organized games or social engagement with peers.

BEST PRACTICE	LANGUAGE IN LAW	SCORE
ESSENTIAL BEST PRACTICES		
A. Mandates a time requirement of at least 20 minutes of daily recess	<u>Recess shall be at least 30 minutes</u> on regular instructional days	2
B. Inclusive of all students in grades kindergarten-8	Commencing with the 2024-2025 school year, <u>all of the following shall apply to recess provided by a public elementary school.</u> “Public elementary school” means a school that is operated by a school district or county office of education, or a charter school that maintains kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 6, inclusive. <i>Note: The law does not include grades 7-8</i>	1
C. Prohibits schools from withholding recess	A public elementary school pupil <u>shall not be denied recess</u> by a member of the school’s staff unless the pupil’s participation poses an immediate threat to the physical safety of the pupil or to the physical safety of one or more of the pupil’s peers	2
D. Prohibits schools from using recess to fulfil state mandated physical education requirements	Recess means a period of time during the school day, <u>separate and distinct from physical education courses and meal times.</u>	2
E. Includes specific language on compliance	N/A	0

BEST PRACTICE	LANGUAGE IN LAW	SCORE
ENHANCED PRACTICES		
F. Transition time does not count toward minimum time	N/A	0
G. Requires recess be provided on shortened school days	Recess shall be <u>at least 15 minutes on early release days.</u>	2
H. Requires recess to be inclusive for all students	Recess <u>shall comply with a pupil's individualized education programs</u> or pupil's plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.	2
I. Requires recess to be held outdoors	Recess <u>shall be held outdoors</u> whenever the weather and air quality permits.	2
J. If recess is indoors, the law requires there to be adequate space for students to be physically active	If outdoor space is not sufficient, recess may be held indoors	0
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	<p>"Recess" means a period of time during the school day, separate and distinct from physical education courses and meal times, but <u>may follow or precede physical education courses or meal time.</u></p> <p><i>Note: Follow or precede, no clear direction</i></p>	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