

WASHINGTON

Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.230.295 Daily Recess

Effective July 23, 2023

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.

Washington’s recess law states that recess must be supervised and student directed.

BEST PRACTICE	LANGUAGE IN LAW	SCORE
ESSENTIAL BEST PRACTICES		
A. Mandates a time requirement of at least 20 minutes of daily recess	Public schools, for each school day that exceeds five hours in duration, <u>must provide a minimum of 30 minutes of daily recess</u> within the school day for all students in grades kindergarten through five and students in grade six that attend an elementary school.	2
B. Inclusive of all students in grades kindergarten-8	Public schools, for each school day that exceeds five hours in duration, must provide a minimum of 30 minutes of daily recess within the school day for all students in <u>grades kindergarten through five and students in grade six that attend an elementary school.</u> <i>Note: The law does not include grades 7-8</i>	1
C. Prohibits schools from withholding recess	<u>Recess should not be withheld</u> as a disciplinary or punitive action during the school day, and that recess should not be withheld to compel students to complete academic work. <i>Note: Weak language</i> <i>Note: While not in the statute itself, this language was included in the legislative intent portion of the enacted bill and subsequently included in the statute’s Official Notes to guide interpretation</i>	1
D. Prohibits schools from using recess to fulfil state mandated physical education requirements	The <u>daily recess required under this section may not be used to meet the physical education requirements</u> under RCW 28A.230.040.	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	<p><u>Time spent changing to and from clothes for outdoor play should not be used</u> to meet the requirements of this subsection (1)</p> <p><i>Note: Weak language</i></p>	1
G. Requires recess be provided on shortened school days	N/A	0
H. Requires recess to be inclusive for all students	<p>Recess must be supervised and student directed and <u>must aim to be safe, inclusive, and high quality as</u> described in the model policy and procedure referenced in RCW 28A.210.368.</p>	2
I. Requires recess to be held outdoors	<p><u>Recess should be held outside</u> whenever possible</p> <p><i>Note: Weak language</i></p>	1
J. If recess is indoors, the law requires there to be adequate space for students to be physically active	<p>It may include organized games, but public schools <u>should avoid including, or permitting the student use of, computers, tablets, or phones during recess.</u></p> <p><i>Note: Weak language</i></p>	1
K. Prohibits the use of personal electronic devices during recess	N/A	1
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