

Play ball! Recess mandated now at DeKalb County schools

November 5, 2009, by Maureen Downey

DeKalb County officially welcomed the return of recess to its schools this week.

While most schools held recess, it was not mandated and could be denied to a child as a punishment or canceled for the entire class due to a conflict.

Now, recess is no longer an option but a requirement and cannot be withheld from a student.

A core group of dedicated DeKalb parents had been pushing for a concrete policy. (See the [petition for mandatory recess.](#))

Here is the language approved Monday at a work session of the board mandating unstructured break times:

(I am not sure why the DeKalb board felt compelled to rename recess the much more unwieldy “unstructured break time,” but then again, I don’t get why my own system dubs trailers “cottages.”)

Unstructured Break Time

The DeKalb County Board of Education supports supervised, unstructured break times as an integral component of a child’s physical, social, and academic development. Schools shall schedule time for all students in kindergarten and grades one through five to have at least 15 minutes of supervised, unstructured break time each school day. The school principal shall determine the timing and location of breaks at each school.

The school principal shall consult with school-level and system-level instructional staff as appropriate to ensure that students in kindergarten and grades one through five receive maximum instructional time to promote increased academic achievement and that breaks are scheduled to support the learning process. The principal also shall issue directions assigning responsibility for supervision of students so that break time will be a safe and positive experience for students.

Breaks shall not be withheld from students in kindergarten or grades one through five for disciplinary or academic reasons. Supervised, unstructured breaks may be provided for students in grades six through eight at the discretion of the school principal. The DeKalb County Board of Education does not support an extension of the school day to provide for supervised, unstructured break time for students in grades K-8.



Recess is now formally required by the DeKalb County Board of Education