

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 4:17 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: the loss of unstructured time at AMS

Dr. Fehrman,

Did you try to call me earlier today? If so, I was preparing for a client and couldn't pick up. I'd be happy to talk to you... if you let me know about when you can call, I can make sure I pick up if I'm available. I don't usually pick up if I don't recognize the number.

Also, My last phrase that accused you of possibly trying to "save face" was a low blow and not helpful. It's never helpful to make accusations of others' motives, and I apologize for that.

If we don't connect today, I hope you have a restful weekend,
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 10:36 AM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:
Sounds good.
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 10:31 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Hi Rachel,

Blair and his team are reevaluating this decision and will share the decision with parents once that decision is made.

I'll call you to talk though the other items you asked for clarification about.

Best,
Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

Sent from a mobile device.

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 10:06 AM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Thanks for the parent square announcement!

I'm so confused though... You spoke with teachers about this in mid-summer, bc that's when we parents all started hearing about it. I was in disbelief that I waited to see if it actually came to fruition. So what do you mean when you say it fell off your radar over the summer? The committee I was on, sense of belonging, sent you an email via our head, Ms. Madkins, expressing our concern for this new policy. And you responded. Reference Ms. Madkins' email on 7/20 and your response on 7/29.

And I was on the reconfiguration committee from beginning to end.. we never discussed this except for your unilateral announcement mid-summer. Could you tell me if it was discussed in a subcommittee so I can reach out to them? Because to my committee's knowledge, this wasn't a topic listed under any subcommittee's mission. I'm confused about what you're saying here.

Thanks for your clarification! And I'd love to say that it's not too late to make a change here. I hope you'll seek to do the right thing, the thing that benefits both students and teachers above any kind of saving face move. We would all respect you more for it.

In Partnership,
Rachel Flaherty

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 3:40 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Thank you for your prompt response, Dr. Fehrman!

And I appreciate your apology for not communicating the change; that means a lot.

However, I'm disappointed that you're standing firm on expecting a few minutes of movement to happen within each class, which most parents and teachers would argue does not provide the same benefit as a full recess. What comes to mind in terms of what that would look like is 5 minutes of screen time or [Go Noodle](#) dances, ugh, exactly what we're trying to get our students away from (they will most likely just stare at the screen), and exactly why the NC BOE states the need for daily movement and unstructured time.

I just don't understand if it was working so well the last 2 years why would you would take that away? Students and teachers both loved it. And I'm confused, how would they go outside during class if they only had 7 minutes to do so? And when they stay inside, how will classes not be distracting to each other unless they line up their unstructured time, which seems confusing for teachers to do. And I seriously don't know what movement would like for middle schoolers inside a classroom. They are big and need big spaces to run/walk/throw a frisbee, get fresh air, etc.

Whenever parents tell me they are pulling their family out of ACS, 9 times out 10, the first reason they cite is more movement, unstructured, and outside time. Please don't be the person who gives parents that reason to leave.

Teenagers are struggling more now than ever in a myriad of ways. I have a lot of thoughts on this... but between the cultural shift in parents generally not letting their kids just go outside and play, the pandemic years of zoom "school" with all its isolation and screen time, and all the increased issues with technology (where do I start?), students need this space and time now more than ever to move, interact with their friends outside. Those are my best ideas. And I can't imagine a teacher at AMS who wouldn't agree... so I wouldn't have a single idea for how to use that 7 minutes in a classroom.

Thank you for your consideration,
Rachel Flaherty

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:16 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Good Morning Rachel,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. I apologize that we did not communicate this change to parents prior to the start of the school year.

The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 5:35 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Dr. Fehrman,

One more thought, if I may...

When parents tell me they're so excited because their kid got into a charter or private school, the first reason I hear parents choose to leave ACS for charters/private schools is for more movement. They'll say things like, "this school gives more outside time" or "this school gives multiple movement breaks per day" or that kind of thing. This movement/unstructured piece is a big deal for parents wanting to encourage healthy living... movement, mental health "rejuvenators," time for their kids' brains to percolate what they've been learning, more social time to develop social skills (so important as kids are so much more undeveloped in that department because of screens and the pandemic), etc. Keeping learning going constantly through a day ends up being self-defeating. These alternative schools often get that (admittedly while missing other pieces that I think ACS gets better than they do) and therefore make that a central part of what they offer. I would so love them to not have a leg up on us in that regard!

Thank you for your consideration,
Rachel Flaherty

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:58 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Dr. Fehrman, (I've copied Mr. Johnston on here as well, to keep him in the loop)

I have been so encouraged by the strong back-to-school vibe at AMS as well. It's such a joy to see it coming together!

I'm not, however, encouraged by the big schedule change this year... and I'm disappointed that there was no explanation given to parents. It has had to trickle down to parents through our kids, other parents, and teachers. The direct communication that has accompanied the last 2 years helped avoid a lot of internal conflict at the school. (For example, when my older kids were there, there were many more FB debates, etc. because parents were often confused and disheartened at the absence of direct communication.)

Please note that parents like to be in the loop and hear about your explanation of any significant changes you make. Asheville, which I'm sure you're seeing, is more like a small town than a big town in that regard. "Eventually, everyone knows everyone else's business..." for better or for worse. :) Eventually, we will hear about what's going on... It would have been helpful to hear about it from you or someone at the beginning of the year instead of hearing about it indirectly with no explanation.

People... students, parents, and teachers... are frustrated about this and feel like their need for unstructured time, which is addressed at the NC DOE level apparently, is no longer being addressed at the district level.

When my older kids were at AMS, there was a similar recess schedule to the one you've imposed. The behavior issues were much higher, and the school felt like a giant pressure cooker. The school responded to issues by getting more strict and removing more unstructured time. The result was more behavior issues (and therefore less learning) as well as disgruntled students and teachers. I'm sure there were multiple factors at play, but the unstructured time was undoubtedly one of them.

I'd love to ask that you consider changing the schedule back to including daily unstructured recess time. The few minutes you can take from each class to make this happen are a small sacrifice... and in this case... the quality of time gained (more focused, relaxed, healthy students /AND teachers) surpasses the quantity of time.

A [short Google search on the subject](#) brought up more studies and articles to detail here. Would you consider looking at some of these?

Thank you for considering, I appreciate all your hard work in ACS, and I hope you have a great rest of your week,
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Josh Lynch <josh.lynch@macon.k12.nc.us>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 3:57 PM
To: Jan Webster
Cc: Maggie Fehrman; Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Consuela Girty; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Mark Sale; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam; Will Hoffman
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

PE occurs daily for all students throughout the system.

Josh Lynch

Superintendent

Macon County Schools
1202 Old Murphy Road
Franklin, NC 28734
828-524-4414
828-524-5938 (FAX)

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 8:59 PM Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org> wrote:

Quick Question from Dr. Fehrman: How many of you have dedicated 'recess' time to comply with the healthy schools act?

Thanks for any information. Have a wonderful weekend.

--

Jan Webster Ed.D.
Executive Director
Western Region Education Service Alliance
Building 200 Suite 206 Ridgefield Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-774-5681 ext. 101
[Check out our WRESA Events.](#)

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Lisa Fletcher <lletcher@tcsnc.org>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 3:52 PM
To: Sale, Mark
Cc: Jan Webster; Maggie Fehrman; Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Consuela Girty; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Mark Garrett; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam; Will Hoffman
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

We have PE daily for our middle schoolers.



"Dream More, Learn More, Care More, and Be More!"...Dolly Parton

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 3:12 PM Sale, Mark <msale@swainmail.org> wrote:

Our students are offered PE everyday

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 8:59 PM Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org> wrote:

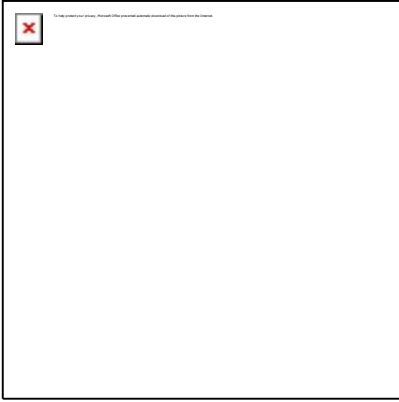
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Our Best... +1%

Mark Sale
Superintendent
Swain County School System
PO Box 2340
50 Mainstreet Suite 2
Bryson City, NC 28713
828-488-3129

It is the policy of the Swain County Public Schools that all operations will be performed without regard to race, age, religion, color, national origin, gender, marital/pregnant status, or disability.

From: Sale, Mark <msale@swainmail.org>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 3:13 PM
To: Jan Webster
Cc: Maggie Fehrman; Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Consuela Girty; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam; Will Hoffman
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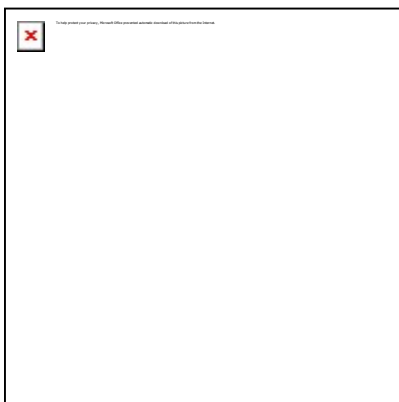
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Mark Sale
Superintendent
Swain County School System
PO Box 2340
50 Mainstreet Suite 2

Bryson City, NC 28713
828-488-3129

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From: Rachel Figura <rachelfigura@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 12:22 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Cell Phones at AHS

Dear Dr. Fehrman,

Thanks for the reply. I haven't heard much feedback going around about it but, I forgot to mention that I love and fully support the new policy of cell phone lock boxes at the high school. Having no cell phone policy there previously was a huge impediment to my son's social development his freshman year right after Covid and negatively impacted the academic success of some of his friends. No need for another reply, but wanted to voice my support for that.

Thanks Again,
Rachel Figura

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 11:54 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Good Morning Rachel,

Thank you for sharing your perspective. Principal Johnston and his team will be evaluating options to provide students with time to move and socialize while maximizing instructional time. I'll forward him your input.

Regards,

Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

Sent from a mobile device.

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 10:40 AM Rachel Figura <rachelfigura@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Fehrman,

Thank you for your message explaining the incorporation of recess into academic time at AMS. Although technically legal, I think it misses the point. Our classrooms are jam packed with tables, chairs, and almost adult sized bodies controlled by kid sized brains- a tough environment to implement movement. I would not like to see Go Noodle and other such videos substituted for recess. Having a dedicated recess time before or ideally after lunch allows students a longer break, time to socialize, and very importantly a chance to get outside. Ideally we would have classroom movement breaks as well as recess. Hopefully you and the staff at AMS can figure out a creative way to implement this. I appreciate the care you take with educating our children and your efforts to balance all of the competing needs in a school day.

Rachel Figura

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 11:55 AM
To: Rachel Figura
Subject: Re: Recess at AMS

Good Morning Rachel,

Thank you for sharing your perspective. Principal Johnston and his team will be evaluating options to provide students with time to move and socialize while maximizing instructional time. I'll forward him your input.

Regards,

Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

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Rachel Figura

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 11:49 AM
To: Sally Grau
Subject: Re: Concerns about AMS

Good afternoon Sally,

I have directed Principal Johnston to work with his staff and find a solution so students are able to have the movement time while maximizing instructional time. His team will share the updated decision on recess soon.

Regards,

Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

Sent from a mobile device.

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 11:38 AM Sally Grau <sallymgrau@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Superintendent Fehrman,

As a parent of two elementary school children (1st and 4th grader), I am deeply concerned about the situation at AMS.

I wrote to you last spring to ask you to reconsider the school district's decision to close MNSA. I cautioned you that closing MNSA would cause ACS to lose families and teachers. That prediction was correct. One of my neighbors, a highly talented teacher at MNSA, left ACS to take a position at a charter school. He will never teach at ACS again after how he was treated.

Now, I'm hearing from other parents that AMS has eliminated recess and is not fully staffed. How do you expect to retain teachers if you close schools on short timelines, leading to feelings of job insecurity?

How do you expect to attract families, when policy changes aren't communicated in a timely manner? Parents are saying that neither district leadership nor the AMS administration communicated about the decision to eliminate recess; instead, they heard about it from their children.

The decision to eliminate recess is shocking. BCS middle schoolers have daily recess. Daily movement breaks are mandated by the state. All kids need fresh air, movement, and a chance to socialize with their friends (who might be in different "pods").

Once again, parents who are committed to public education and are trying to make Asheville City Schools work for their families are given more reasons to leave. My friends and neighbors continue to pull their kids out of ACS to send them to charter schools, or, if they can afford it, private schools. It's a deeply sad and discouraging situation.

The MNSA decision can't be reversed -- but you can take action on the situation at AMS. Please reinstate recess.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sally Grau, ACS Parent

From: Sally Grau <sallymgrau@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 11:38 AM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Concerns about AMS

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The MNSA decision can't be reversed -- but you can take action on the situation at AMS. Please reinstate recess.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sally Grau, ACS Parent

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Robert Moody <robert_moody@graham.k12.nc.us>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 11:18 AM
To: Jan Webster; Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Consuela Girty; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Mark Sale; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam; Will Hoffman
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL]Middle School Recess Question

Graham County has “recess” scheduled in.

From: Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 8:59 PM
To: Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org>; Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Cc: Aaron Greene <agreene@polkschools.org>; Chad Calhoun <chadcalhoun@mcsnc.org>; Consuela Girty <consuela.girty@ccs-nc.org>; Dan Brigman <danbrigman@averyschools.net>; David Sutton <dsutton@rcsnc.org>; Josh Lynch <josh.lynch@macon.k12.nc.us>; Kathy Amos <kathyamos@yanceync.net>; Keevin Woody <keevin.woody@cherokee.k12.nc.us>; Kim Winter <kkruebel@email.wcu.edu>; Lisa Fletcher <lfletcher@tcsnc.org>; Mark Garrett <mrgarrett@hcpsnc.org>; Mark Sale <msale@swainmail.org>; Melissa Godfrey <melissa.godfrey@clayschools.org>; Rob Jackson <robert.jackson@bcsemail.org>; Robert Moody <robert_moody@graham.k12.nc.us>; Tracy Grit <tracy.grit@mcdowell.k12.nc.us>; Trevor Putnam <tputnam@haywood.k12.nc.us>; Will Hoffman <whoffman@madisonk12.net>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Middle School Recess Question

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If the email looks to be from an employee, stop and contact Technology Support (Myra Waldroup, Cullin Buchanan, Randy Moody, Robert Moody or Wayne Hiatt) IMMEDIATELY!

Quick Question from Dr. Fehrman: How many of you have dedicated ‘recess’ time to comply with the healthy schools act?

Thanks for any information. Have a wonderful weekend.

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Jan Webster Ed.D.
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Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Will Hoffman <whoffman@madisonk12.net>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 11:13 AM
To: Jan Webster; Maggie Fehrman
Cc: agreene@polkschools.org; chadcalhoun@mcsnc.org; Consuela Girty; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; kathyamos@yanceync.net; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; msale@swainmail.org; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

Madison County Schools has dedicated recess time K-8 to comply with the Healthy Active Children Policy. At the middle school level, we do at least 15 minutes per day of recess, in addition to scheduled physical education and healthful living classes.

Will Hoffman, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Madison County Schools
828-649-9276
whoffman@madisonk12.net

From: Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 8:58 PM
To: Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org>; Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
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To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
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Thank you for considering, I appreciate all your hard work in ACS, and I hope you have a great rest of your week,
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Aaron Greene <agreene@polkschools.org>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 10:32 AM
To: Jan Webster
Cc: Maggie Fehrman; Chad Calhoun; Consuela Girty; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Mark Sale; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam; Will Hoffman
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

In Polk all middle school students have a 30 min recess built into their schedule each day to meet the requirement.

Respectfully,

Aaron Greene
Superintendent
Polk County Schools
125 East Mills Street
Columbus, NC 28722
828-894-3051 (Office)
828-817-0805 (Cell)
@AaronGreenePolk

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 8:59 PM Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org> wrote:

Quick Question from Dr. Fehrman: How many of you have dedicated 'recess' time to comply with the healthy schools act?

Thanks for any information. Have a wonderful weekend.

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Jan Webster Ed.D.
Executive Director
Western Region Education Service Alliance
Building 200 Suite 206 Ridgefield Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-774-5681 ext. 101
[Check out our WRESA Events.](#)

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 10:31 AM
To: Rachel Flaherty
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: the loss of unstructured time at AMS

Hi Rachel,

Blair and his team are reevaluating this decision and will share the decision with parents once that decision is made.

I'll call you to talk though the other items you asked for clarification about.

Best,
Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

Sent from a mobile device.

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Thanks for the parent square announcement!

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And I was on the reconfiguration committee from beginning to end.. we never discussed this except for your unilateral announcement mid-summer. Could you tell me if it was discussed in a subcommittee so I can reach out to them? Because to my committee's knowledge, this wasn't a topic listed under any subcommittee's mission. I'm confused about what you're saying here.

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From: Melissa Godfrey <melissa.godfrey@clayschools.org>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 10:14 AM
To: Trevor Putnam
Cc: Consuela Girty; Jan Webster; Maggie Fehrman; Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Mark Sale; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Will Hoffman
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

Our middle schoolers have daily PE. We have had a short break time as well in the past but due to construction, there is no place for that, so our required minutes come from daily PE.

Hope all of you are doing well!

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We count transition time and create in-class activities to meet requirements in instances where PE is not part of the curriculum.

Trevor Putnam, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Haywood County Schools
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Visit us on the web at [www.haywood.k12.nc.us](#). All e-mail correspondence to and from this address is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law, which may result in monitoring and disclosure to third parties, including law enforcement.

From: Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 10:07 AM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: the loss of unstructured time at AMS

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Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Jessica Kutch <jessica.kutch@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 9:44 AM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: Recess

Hi there,

As a parent of a highly active 4th grader who I had planned to eventually enroll at AMS, I'm concerned about the removal of daily, *protected* outdoor movement time for middle schoolers in our district. I'm a proud public school parent, and love the faculty and staff in our district, but decisions like this one trigger conversations in my household about whether to remain in the district over the longterm. This most recent decision has us looking at schools like French Broad River Academy that take seriously the need for outdoor time and movement. The science is pretty clear that movement & time outside boost performance of the brain. I do not believe that pushing this responsibility for physical movement onto already overburdened teachers will result in the same quality of free time the kids previously enjoyed. Please reconsider this policy.

Sent from my iPhone

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Marta Alcalá <marta.alcala@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 9:22 AM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Re: Equitable decision making tool

Good morning,
Done:)

Marta

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 9:04 PM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Sorry for the late email. Can you share the equitable decision making tool with Blair? He's going to review the recess decision to find a solution. Come see me tomorrow if you need more info.

Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

Sent from a mobile device.



Marta Alcalá

(Ella, She, Hers)

Executive Director of Equity/ Community Engagement

office: (828) 350-6162

Cell (828) 545-5673

Email: marta.alcala@acsgmail.net

[Marvelous Math Club as a Catalyst for Asset- and Justice-based Thinking and Practices](#)

"We cannot create a new educational system for all with a lack of understanding of what cripples our current system." Bettina L. Love

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Trevor Putnam <tputnam@haywood.k12.nc.us>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 9:21 AM
To: Consuela Girty
Cc: Jan Webster; Maggie Fehrman; Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Mark Sale; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Will Hoffman
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Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Kim Winter <kkruebel@email.wcu.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 8:25 AM
To: jwebster@wresa.org; Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

Morning, Our middle school has HPE every day and then we also have village recess on Fridays.

Kim K. Winter, Ph.D.

Dean & Professor

College of Education and Allied Professions

Western Carolina University | Killian 204

[1 University Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723](#)

o: [\(828\) 227.7311](tel:(828)227.7311) | kkruebel@wcu.edu

Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 8:22 AM
To: Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org>
Cc: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>; Aaron Greene <agreene@polkschools.org>; Chad Calhoun <chadcalhoun@mcsnc.org>; Dan Brigman <danbrigman@averyschools.net>; David Sutton <dsutton@rcsnc.org>; Josh Lynch <josh.lynch@macon.k12.nc.us>; Kathy Amos <kathyamos@yanceync.net>; Keevin Woody <keevin.woody@cherokee.k12.nc.us>; Kim Winter <kkruebel@email.wcu.edu>; Lisa Fletcher <lfletcher@tcsnc.org>; Mark Garrett <mrgarrett@hcpsnc.org>; Mark Sale <msale@swainmail.org>; Melissa Godfrey <melissa.godfrey@clayschools.org>; Rob Jackson <robert.jackson@bcsemail.org>; Robert Moody <robert_moody@graham.k12.nc.us>; Tracy Grit <tracy.grit@mcdowell.k12.nc.us>; Trevor Putnam <tputnam@haywood.k12.nc.us>; Will Hoffman <whoffman@madisonk12.net>
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

WARNING: This email originated from a non-WCU email account. Do not click links or open attachments unless you are confident the content is safe.

Our middle schoolers have PE every day of the week. The only other scheduled exercise time is if they took strength & conditioning as their primary elective.

Hope that helps!

Consuela B. Girty, Superintendent

Cherokee Central Schools

(828) 554-5001

On Aug 29, 2024, at 8:59 PM, Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org> wrote:

Quick Question from Dr. Fehrman: How many of you have dedicated 'recess' time to comply with the healthy schools act?

Thanks for any information. Have a wonderful weekend.

--

Jan Webster Ed.D.
Executive Director
Western Region Education Service Alliance
Building 200 Suite 206 Ridgefield Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-774-5681 ext. 101
[Check out our WRESA Events.](#)

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Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 8:24 AM
To: Consuela Girty
Subject: Re: Middle School Recess Question

Thanks!

On Fri, Aug 30, 2024 at 8:22 AM Consuela Girty <consuela.girty@ccs-nc.org> wrote:

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Consuela Girty <consuela.girty@ccs-nc.org>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 8:22 AM
To: Jan Webster
Cc: Maggie Fehrman; Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Mark Sale; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam; Will Hoffman
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From: Sandra Newes via ParentSquare <donotreply+420eab47-cb64-466e-abe3-9e781aa49ef1@parentsquare.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:32 PM
To: margaret.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: Sandra Newes commented on Movement time for MS Students



Asheville Middle

Sandra Newes commented in Asheville Middle on

Movement time for MS Students

Sandra Newes said:

Dr, Fehrman- Thank you for this. As a parent of an MNSA kids, I know how much he valued his time outside while there. Having that free time really solidified his friendships and seemed to increased his enjoyment. I also know what it was like for him before they initiated it- when he first started there, they too had elicited outside time for “safety issues”.

I'll send a separate email to you and Mr. Johnston with some research articles. I am not only a parent, but a Psychologist, and I worked for many years in outdoor therapeutic programs as a clinician and a researchers. As others have said, there are numerous published studies on the benefits of unstructured time outside for kids overall, kids with ADHD, those who struggle with dyslexia and also studies showing that academic performance actually improves. I hope that given that, you and your team will consider putting back that unstructured time into the curriculum. Also, I imagine you are aware but the lack of outside time is one major reason I hear cited repeatedly about why families go to private schools. Would it be possible to give families and kids what they want in this instance, when what we are really talking about is 20 minutes of outside time? Could there be other ways to address the reported safety concerns, when there are such documented benefits to this time? Thank you so much for your consideration. Sandra Newes

Reply in App

Greetings AMS Families,

Thank you to the parents who have contacted me inquiring about the change in recess time at AMS. The decision was made in the spring to incorporate the movement time into

academics as the consolidation team worked on the schedule details. Montford North Star did not have a dedicated recess period and it worked quite well for students and staff to find ways to embed movement throughout the day. The consolidation team members from AMS and MNSA had differing perspectives on which approach best served the student body. In order to help move the work forward, I made the decision to focus on distributing the time across core and elective classes.

After the principal transition, this change completely fell off my radar over the summer. I have already apologized to Principal Johnston for not anticipating the tension this change had the potential to bring. Parents, I also apologize for not ensuring this change was communicated earlier.

Principal Johnston is working with the staff to find the best way to maximize instructional time while also providing movement time for our middle schoolers.

Principal Johnston will share more details with the AMS community in the coming days.

Regards,
Dr. Maggie

Please do not reply to this email.

Stay involved with your child's learning and activities at school.



You received this email because you are a ParentSquare user in Asheville Middle. If you received this email in error or wish to disable your account, [click here to unsubscribe](#).

ParentSquare Inc · 6144 Calle Real, #200A · Goleta, CA 93117

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 9:04 PM
To: Marta Alcalá
Subject: Equitable decision making tool

Sorry for the late email. Can you share the equitable decision making tool with Blair? He's going to review the recess decision to find a solution. Come see me tomorrow if you need more info.

Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

Sent from a mobile device.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Jan Webster <jwebster@wresa.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 8:59 PM
To: Jan Webster; Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Aaron Greene; Chad Calhoun; Consuela Girty; Dan Brigman; David Sutton; Josh Lynch; Kathy Amos; Keevin Woody; Kim Winter; Lisa Fletcher; Mark Garrett; Mark Sale; Melissa Godfrey; Rob Jackson; Robert Moody; Tracy Grit; Trevor Putnam; Will Hoffman
Subject: Middle School Recess Question

Quick Question from Dr. Fehrman: How many of you have dedicated 'recess' time to comply with the healthy schools act?

Thanks for any information. Have a wonderful weekend.

--

Jan Webster Ed.D.
Executive Director
Western Region Education Service Alliance
Building 200 Suite 206 Ridgefield Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-774-5681 ext. 101
[Check out our WRESA Events.](#)

From: Michael Hawks via ParentSquare <donotreply+4daec2ad-a85e-4752-84e6-e128fa60c18a@parentsquare.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 8:46 PM
To: margaret.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: Michael Hawks commented on Movement time for MS Students



Asheville Middle

Michael Hawks commented in Asheville Middle on

Movement time for MS Students

Michael Hawks said:

It's not just movement - it's time outdoors that the students want and need. I'm sure that you will find ample studies to support this. Please reconsider your decision.

Reply in App

Greetings AMS Families,

Thank you to the parents who have contacted me inquiring about the change in recess time at AMS. The decision was made in the spring to incorporate the movement time into academics as the consolidation team worked on the schedule details. Montford North Star did not have a dedicated recess period and it worked quite well for students and staff to find ways to embed movement throughout the day. The consolidation team members from AMS and MNSA had differing perspectives on which approach best served the student body. In order to help move the work forward, I made the decision to focus on distributing the time across core and elective classes.

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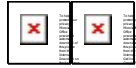
Principal Johnston is working with the staff to find the best way to maximize instructional time while also providing movement time for our middle schoolers.

Principal Johnston will share more details with the AMS community in the coming days.

Regards,
Dr. Maggie

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ParentSquare Inc · 6144 Calle Real, #200A · Goleta, CA 93117

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 6:54 PM
To: Jan Webster
Subject: Middle school recess?

Hi Jan,

Can you ask forward a question to the supers for me?

How many of you have dedicated 'recess' time to comply with the healthy schools act?

Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
Asheville City Schools

Sent from a mobile device.

From: Bridget Felix <bridgetmuldoon@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 4:56 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Re: AMS recess

Thank you for your response, Maggie,

Unfortunately, I don't see how this is going to work. The information below from the NC Healthy Schools website states that physical activity must involve vigorous physical exertion. How will that happen while in a classroom? Also, don't teachers have enough to do? As a parent, I'm happy to share ideas but they all involve being outside and as far as facilitation, I work and wouldn't be able to be at school on a daily basis.

Please share how AMS plans to provide vigorous physical activity in 10 minute increments without going outside.

Please see below:

From [NChalthyschools.org](https://www.nchealthyschools.org):

(b) A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided by schools for all K-8 students daily. This requirement can be achieved through a regular physical education class and/or through activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers, or other curriculum based physical education activity programs. However, such use of this time should complement and not substitute for the physical education program.

(c) The physical activity required by this section must involve physical exertion of at least a moderate to vigorous intensity level and for a duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students.

From <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/.../healthy-active-children.../open>:

Q. Does the 30 minute physical activity have to be in one time?

A. No, the physical activity can be broken down into three 10 minute blocks of time.

The Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that health benefits can be gained in 10 minute increments. Therefore, this 30 minute time can be accumulated during three times throughout the school day. However, less than 10 minutes at moderate to vigorous activity levels, will not gain the health benefits that physical activity provide.

I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,
Bridget Felix

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:21 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Good Morning Bridget,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 4:10 PM Bridget Felix <bridgetmuldoon@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Maggie,

It has come to our attention that AMS will no longer be giving students recess on a daily basis. Out of curiosity, do you take breaks throughout the day? I know for me, a short walk to blow off some steam or process some challenging work is incredibly beneficial. If I've been sitting at my computer too long, I'll make sure to do a little stretching and/or yoga, or take a break to chat with a friend or family member while moving around.

We all need to let our brain rest a bit here and there so we can better focus on our work. Not only that, our kids do enough sitting. Please reconsider this new schedule and let our kids get a breath of fresh air, socialize, and run around for a bit each day. They will be better students because of it.

The following is a quote from the attached [Strategies for Recess in Schools](#) that was sponsored by the [CDC](#):

Benefits of Recess

Recess in schools benefits students by:

- ▶ Increasing their level of physical activity.
- ▶ Improving their memory, attention, and concentration.
- ▶ Helping them stay on-task in the classroom.
- ▶ Reducing disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- ▶ Improving their social and emotional development (e.g., learning how to share and negotiate).

Although most of the evidence is focused on elementary schools, both middle and high school students can benefit from having physical activity periods in addition to physical education and classroom physical activity. These benefits and opportunities are particularly important for students with special needs, functional limitations, or physical disabilities because they may have more behavioral issues and limited experiences interacting socially with other students. Recess that is well-organized will include, for example, a written school recess plan, coordinated schedules and transition times, and professional development for school staff and volunteers. When implemented properly, recess will not only help students be more physically active, but may improve their behavior and attention level in class. It can also reduce bullying and exclusionary behavior among students. By helping students feel safe and more engaged in the classroom, recess also contributes to higher levels of school connectedness. This higher level of connectedness creates a positive school climate, which affects every aspect of school, including attendance, engagement, and academic achievement.

Thank you,

Bridget Felix
828-989-5449

P.S. I am a National Board Certified Health & Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC) and I would be happy to assist in any way I can. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

--



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Tommasanne Davis <tommasanne@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 4:29 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Cc: blair.johnston@acsgmail.net
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School Movement Time/Outside Access

Thank you for the clarification.
Appreciate your time to respond!
Best,
Tommasanne

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 11:44 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Hi Tommasanne,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day or plan longer periods of movement as a team. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons.

Best,
Maggie

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 11:07 AM Tommasanne Davis <tommasanne@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Fehrman,

Thank you for all your hard work and support of our AMS students, and the entire ACS district. As a middle school parent, it has come to my attention that students are no longer allowed "movement" time in their daily schedule, which is concerning.

I believe that this physical and mental break is essential for student success at this age. and removal will lead to unintended consequences for students. I am unsure what went into this thoughtful decision, but I do ask you to reconsider how this may negatively impact our kids.

Data shows that breaks and time for movement are critical for health, general well being, and learning.

I am hopeful you will consider additional conversations with AMS leadership, teachers, and staff regarding this matter in order to best support our young learners.

Kindest regards,

Tommasanne Davis
828.776.0084



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 3:51 PM
To: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: Movement time

Thanks. If you determine that it would be best to incorporate the movement time as a whole, I support that decision. I'm concerned about increased student discipline resulting from unstructured free time for middle school students. If the free time is added back, I need to see how the staff are supervising the students and that the staff are providing structured activities for the students.

Let me know what you decide. I'm good either way.

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 3:33 PM Blair Johnston <blair.johnston@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Asked a few key people this afternoon and the general sentiment is most staff that were here last year would like to still have that time, some people are indifferent, and I've only heard from one staff member that is in complete support. I'm happy to expand on that if needed.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 29, 2024, at 1:54 PM, Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Hi Blair,

What is the sentiment from the staff this "recess" issue?

--



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

--



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 3:40 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: the loss of unstructured time at AMS

Thank you for your prompt response, Dr. Fehrman!
And I appreciate your apology for not communicating the change; that means a lot.

However, I'm disappointed that you're standing firm on expecting a few minutes of movement to happen within each class, which most parents and teachers would argue does not provide the same benefit as a full recess. What comes to mind in terms of what that would look like is 5 minutes of screen time or [Go Noodle](#) dances, ugh, exactly what we're trying to get our students away from (they will most likely just stare at the screen), and exactly why the NC BOE states the need for daily movement and unstructured time.

I just don't understand if it was working so well the last 2 years why would you would take that away? Students and teachers both loved it. And I'm confused, how would they go outside during class if they only had 7 minutes to do so? And when they stay inside, how will classes not be distracting to each other unless they line up their unstructured time, which seems confusing for teachers to do. And I seriously don't know what movement would like for middle schoolers inside a classroom. They are big and need big spaces to run/walk/throw a frisbee, get fresh air, etc.

Whenever parents tell me they are pulling their family out of ACS, 9 times out 10, the first reason they cite is more movement, unstructured, and outside time. Please don't be the person who gives parents that reason to leave.

Teenagers are struggling more now than ever in a myriad of ways. I have a lot of thoughts on this... but between the cultural shift in parents generally not letting their kids just go outside and play, the pandemic years of zoom "school" with all its isolation and screen time, and all the increased issues with technology (where do I start?), students need this space and time now more than ever to move, interact with their friends outside. Those are my best ideas. And I can't imagine a teacher at AMS who wouldn't agree... so I wouldn't have a single idea for how to use that 7 minutes in a classroom.

Thank you for your consideration,
Rachel Flaherty

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:16 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Good Morning Rachel,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. I apologize that we did not communicate this change to parents prior to the start of the school year.

The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 5:35 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Dr. Fehrman,

One more thought, if I may...

When parents tell me they're so excited because their kid got into a charter or private school, the first reason I hear parents choose to leave ACS for charters/private schools is for more movement. They'll say things like, "this school gives more outside time" or "this school gives multiple movement breaks per day" or that kind of thing. This movement/unstructured piece is a big deal for parents wanting to encourage healthy living... movement, mental health "rejuvenators," time for their kids' brains to percolate what they've been learning, more social time to develop social skills (so important as kids are so much more undeveloped in that department because of screens and the pandemic), etc. Keeping learning going constantly through a day ends up being self-defeating. These alternative schools often get that (admittedly while missing other pieces that I think ACS gets better than they do) and therefore make that a central part of what they offer. I would so love them to not have a leg up on us in that regard!

Thank you for your consideration,

Rachel Flaherty

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:58 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Dr. Fehrman, (I've copied Mr. Johnston on here as well, to keep him in the loop)

I have been so encouraged by the strong back-to-school vibe at AMS as well. It's such a joy to see it coming together!

I'm not, however, encouraged by the big schedule change this year... and I'm disappointed that there was no explanation given to parents. It has had to trickle down to parents through our kids, other parents, and teachers. The direct communication that has accompanied the last 2 years helped avoid a lot of internal conflict at the school. (For example, when my older kids were there, there were many more FB debates, etc. because parents were often confused and disheartened at the absence of direct communication.)

Please note that parents like to be in the loop and hear about your explanation of any significant changes you make. Asheville, which I'm sure you're seeing, is more like a small town than a big town in that regard. "Eventually, everyone knows everyone else's business..." for better or for worse. :) Eventually, we will hear about what's going on... It would have been helpful to hear about it from you or someone at the beginning of the year instead of hearing about it indirectly with no explanation.

People... students, parents, and teachers... are frustrated about this and feel like their need for unstructured time, which is addressed at the NC DOE level apparently, is no longer being addressed at the district level.

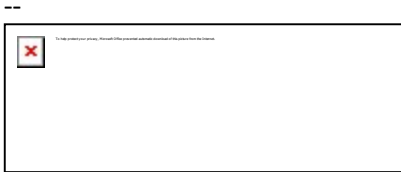
When my older kids were at AMS, there was a similar recess schedule to the one you've imposed. The behavior issues were much higher, and the school felt like a giant pressure cooker. The school responded to issues by getting more strict and removing more unstructured time. The result was more behavior issues (and therefore less learning) as well as disgruntled students and teachers. I'm sure there were multiple factors at play, but the unstructured time was undoubtedly one of them.

I'd love to ask that you consider changing the schedule back to including daily unstructured recess time. The few minutes you can take from each class to make this happen are a small sacrifice... and in this case... the quality of time gained (more focused, relaxed, healthy students /AND teachers) surpasses the quantity of time.

A [short Google search on the subject](#) brought up more studies and articles to detail here. Would you consider looking at some of these?

Thank you for considering, I appreciate all your hard work in ACS, and I hope you have a great rest of your week,
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Blair Johnston <blair.johnston@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 3:34 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Re: Movement time

Asked a few key people this afternoon and the general sentiment is most staff that were here last year would like to still have that time, some people are indifferent, and I've only heard from one staff member that is in complete support. I'm happy to expand on that if needed.

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On Aug 29, 2024, at 1:54 PM, Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Hi Blair,

What is the sentiment from the staff this "recess" issue?

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Carrie Turner <carrie@carrieturnerphotography.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 3:18 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Cc: Amy Ray; James Carter; liza.kelly@acsgmail.net; rebecca.strimer@acsgmail.net; jesse.warren@acsgmail.net; george.sieburg@acsgmail.net; sarah.thornburg@acsgmail.net; blair.johnston@acsgmail.net
Subject: AMS recess

Hi Dr. Fehrman -

I'm writing to express my disappointment in the decision to remove recess from the daily schedule at AMS. I have seen your response to other parents about this and it seems wildly unrealistic to expect classroom teachers to incorporate some form of movement into their classes, and a poor substitute for unstructured outdoor play. Is five more minutes per class really going to make a significant difference in classroom outcomes, so much so that losing a daily break with outdoor time and activity is worth it?

There's plenty of research out there showing how valuable physical activity is to the overall health of young people, as well as improving their ability to focus and learn. To cite just two examples, the CDC recommends 60 minutes of physical activity per day for children ages 6-17 ([source](#)). The American Academy of Pediatrics states that physical activity "fosters psychological well-being, can increase self-esteem and capacity for learning, and can help children and adolescents handle stress" ([source](#)). Physical activity isn't something just desired by the crunchy parents of Asheville - its value is backed by science.

The response that I've seen is pretty short on explanation. Why was this change needed?

I'd also like to point out that the lack of communication about such a big change does not inspire confidence, trust, or collaboration. When parents find policy changes out accidentally - from the rumor mill, from other parents, from our kids - it makes us feel like, at best, a serious lapse in communication took place or, at worst, such a change was purposefully not disclosed because reasoning was flawed, a plan to mitigate negative impacts is lacking, and you knew the change would be unpopular.

I hope you can help us regain a sense of collaboration by opening this up as a conversation, by sharing your reasoning, and hearing and responding to concerns.

Thank you,
Carrie Turner

Mom of a 7th grader and a 12th grader; beginning my 13th year as an ACS parent, volunteer, and supporter

Carrie Turner
828.279.9730

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 1:54 PM
To: Blair Johnston
Subject: Movement time

Hi Blair,

What is the sentiment from the staff this "recess" issue?

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 1:41 PM
To: Grace Findley
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School Outside Time Concern

Hello again Grace,

Thank you for the additional feedback. I understand your perspective and appreciate your advocacy for the teachers. I'm always open to finding the best solution to any problem. I'll reach out to Principal Johnston to discuss solutions that maximize learning time for students while still providing students with an opportunity for movement.

Best,
Maggie

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 1:24 PM Grace Findley <grace@subjectmatterstudio.com> wrote:

Hi Dr. Fehrman,

As much as I really do appreciate you explaining what has happened to the AMS school-wide recess period, I don't agree that we should put more on our teachers to facilitate movement into their classes to make up for the lack of recess.

For one thing, I don't see how it is even possible to monitor that every student is actually getting the proper movement time in each day. It seems like it would be more beneficial to the teachers, principal and students to just allow them designated time where everyone is clearly getting their movement instead of adding more to the teacher's plates.

I understand that maybe you feel like it will raise test scores to be in the classroom more but respectfully I think it will mostly just lead to unhappy students and staff.

I guess my only specific question is, will you reconsider and change things back to the way they were at AMS before to allow for a 30-minute continuous recess? Thank you for your time and all you do for my son and the rest of Asheville City Schools students, staff, and teachers.

Sincerely,
Grace Findley

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:14 AM
To: Grace Findley <grace@subjectmatterstudio.com>
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School Outside Time Concern

Good Morning Grace,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the

course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers. The NC policy does not stipulate that the 30 minutes occur in a single continuous period.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 6:21 PM Grace Findley <grace@subjectmatterstudio.com> wrote:

Dr. Fehrman,

Hello, I am the parent of a 7th grader at Asheville Middle School. It came to my attention this first week of school that the students have had their daily "movement" or outdoor time taken this school year and it is extremely concerning to me.

[NCHealthyActiveChildrenPolicy](#)

I feel that this will not only lead to unhappy students and staff but unhealthy humans mentally and physically as well. Please tell me that you can do something to amend this issue for our school.

We want AMS to continue to be a happy place to learn not a prison for its students. Also, as a mother of a returning AMS student, I question how is the school supposed to feel inviting to the new students from Montford if they aren't even allowed time to get to know each other out of their desks?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Grace Findley
828-423-1480



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Grace Findley <grace@subjectmatterstudio.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 1:25 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School Outside Time Concern

Hi Dr. Fehrman,

As much as I really do appreciate you explaining what has happened to the AMS school-wide recess period, I don't agree that we should put more on our teachers to facilitate movement into their classes to make up for the lack of recess.

For one thing, I don't see how it is even possible to monitor that every student is actually getting the proper movement time in each day. It seems like it would be more beneficial to the teachers, principal and students to just allow them designated time where everyone is clearly getting their movement instead of adding more to the teacher's plates.

I understand that maybe you feel like it will raise test scores to be in the classroom more but respectfully I think it will mostly just lead to unhappy students and staff.

I guess my only specific question is, will you reconsider and change things back to the way they were at AMS before to allow for a 30-minute continuous recess? Thank you for your time and all you do for my son and the rest of Asheville City Schools students, staff, and teachers.

Sincerely,
Grace Findley

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:14 AM
To: Grace Findley <grace@subjectmatterstudio.com>
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School Outside Time Concern

Good Morning Grace,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers. The NC policy does not stipulate that the 30 minutes occur in a single continuous period.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!

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[NCHealthyActiveChildrenPolicy](#)

I feel that this will not only lead to unhappy students and staff but unhealthy humans mentally and physically as well. Please tell me that you can do something to amend this issue for our school.

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I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Grace Findley
828-423-1480



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Jennifer Rhode Ward <jennifer.rhode.ward@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 12:56 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Landon Ward
Subject: Re: AMS movement break

Thank you for this answer, Superintendent Fehrman.

It seems that classroom implementation is absent thus far, and the students are suffering as a result. We will certainly work on creative solutions, and we hope that your office's leadership will prioritize this means of supporting classroom teachers.

Sincerely,
Jen and Landon

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:23 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Good Morning Jennifer and Landon,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best, Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:48 PM Jennifer Rhode Ward <jennifer.rhode.ward@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear Superintendent Fehrman,

We write on behalf of our daughter, who is in her second year at Asheville Middle School, and all of her friends. Please re-introduce the 20 minute movement break, which is essential for social and emotional health. Lack of dedicated movement time also seems in violation of North Carolina's Healthy Active Children Policy (Section 3), particularly since ACS middle school students take only one semester of P.E. per year.

Respectfully,
Jen and Landon Ward



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Diane Styers <dmstyers@email.wcu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 12:40 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Cc: amy.ray@acsgmail.net; james.carter@acsgmail.net; liza.kelly@acsgmail.net;
rebecca.strimer@acsgmail.net; jesse.warren@acsgmail.net;
george.sieburg@acsgmail.net; sarah.thornburg@acsgmail.net
Subject: AMS recess cancellation
Importance: High

Dear Dr. Fehrman,

I know many parents have reached out about this issue, as I have read your canned and avoidant response to them. I think that it's time you craft a response that directly addresses the issue before parents assemble and seek legal action. As I am sure you are very aware, below is a copy of the North Carolina Healthy Active Children Policy:

HEALTHY ACTIVE CHILDREN POLICY

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Manual

Policy Identification

Priority: High Student Performance

Category: Student Health Issues

Policy ID Number: HSP-S-000

Policy Title: Policy regarding physical education in the public schools

Current Policy Date: 01/09/2003 – Amended 04/07/2005

Other Historical Information:

Statutory Reference:

Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Reference Number and Category:

Section 3. RECESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

(a) Structured/unstructured recess and other physical activity (such as, but not limited to, physical activity time, physical education or intramurals) shall not be taken away from students as a form of punishment. In addition, severe and/or inappropriate exercise may not be used as a form of punishment for students.

(b) A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided by schools for all K-8 students daily. This requirement can be achieved through a regular physical education class and/or through activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers, or other curriculum based physical education activity programs. However, such use of this time should complement and not substitute for the physical education program.

(c) The physical activity required by this section must involve physical exertion of at least a moderate to vigorous intensity level and for a duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students.

There are rumors that recess was cut because too many kids were getting in fights. However, Section 3.a. states that recess shall not be taken away from students as a form of punishment.

Not all students have PE every week (e.g., students in AVID only have PE every other week) and so Section 3.b. cannot be used as rationale that all students are provided a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.

Putting this onto teachers, as you have suggested in your email reply to other parents is absurd. As an administrator you should be doing all you can to take extra work off of teachers, not adding to it. If you think this is actually feasible, then I'd like to see written action plans from each teacher on how they plan to implement this time into their classes. I would also like to see a written action plan for who and how these individual teacher plans will be enforced, tracked, and assessed so that parents can ensure the state policy is actually being followed. As the policy name implies, our children deserve to be healthy and active daily to support their physical, mental, and social health.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Best regards,
Dr. Diane M. Styers



Dr. Diane M. Styers

Associate Professor of Remote Sensing

Geosciences & Natural Resources

Western Carolina University | ST 331A

1 University Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723

o: (828) 227.3819 | dmstyers@wcu.edu

Pronouns: she/her/hers

"The Western Carolina University campus is situated within the ancestral homelands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. At WCU our work seeks to embrace and connect to this Cherokee landscape as we work to reinforce our mission at WCU. We will work to actively engage our community with the extraordinary indigenous identity and culture of this special place that was once known as Two Sparrows Place."

For more information on WCU's land acknowledgement, see <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/about/land-acknowledgement.aspx>

From: kim hunt <kimhunt2232@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 12:26 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Amy Ray
Subject: Re: AMS outside time

Hi Dr, Fehrman,

And apologies I don't have other board members emails saved to copy on this besides Amy. I appreciate the timely response and think it could be really helpful to add a direct answer about why this change was made. If it was to figure out ways to avoid fights/not let AMS be the scary place that some folks were concerned about ... I trust you have a goal here and feel it could be really helpful to share.

Thank you,
Kim Hunt
8th grade parent

On Aug 29, 2024, at 10:21 AM, Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Good Morning Kim,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 4:19 PM kim hunt <kimhunt2232@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Dr. Fehrman,

Good afternoon. Just a quick email to join my voice with some others expressing concern about the change and lack of communication in the change regarding outside time at AMS. Would love to hear from you about the motivation for this change and the response you have received at the middle school w/ staff and administration about this.

Thank you,
Kim Hunt
8th grade parent

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Becca Nestler <yellowbirdbranch@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 12:24 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman; blair.johnston@ashevillecityschools.net;
brian.powchak@ashevillecityschools.net; michelle.ayubi@ashevillecityschools.net
Subject: Re: Outside Time at AMS

Thanks Maggie for your reply. It is really disappointing that this is the direction ACS has taken at the middle school level. This will put extra pressure on teachers to develop yet another activity into the day and because the time is spread out with 5 extra minutes per class - no one will feel they have the extra time to do this....

It just feels like such a loss. I guess, expect to keep hearing from parents and from students who are very unhappy about this change. Perhaps it could be helpful to simmer parents down if we heard from teachers/principals/advisors about what action will be taken at the school level to incorporate this time back into our middle schoolers day. Looks like the responsibility for this has been put onto you from the district, unfortunately.

Let's see if we can work together to come up with a solution for everyone - as it is right now this is an unacceptable change and a tremendous loss for our students.

Let's keep talking about how to work this out,
Becca Nestler
828-399-1467 (always open to talking by phone or in real life)

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:27 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Good Morning Becca,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:04 PM Becca Nestler <yellowbirdbranch@gmail.com> wrote:
I am sure you are getting tons of emails and phone calls about this but I want to add my voice to the chorus:

We absolutely must have a dedicated DAILY outside time/movement break for these middle schoolers!

Thanks,
Becca Nestler
[828-399-1467](tel:828-399-1467)



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 11:44 AM
To: Tommasanne Davis
Cc: blair.johnston@acsgmail.net
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School Movement Time/Outside Access

Hi Tommasanne,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day or plan longer periods of movement as a team. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons.

Best,
Maggie

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 11:07 AM Tommasanne Davis <tommasanne@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Fehrman,

Thank you for all your hard work and support of our AMS students, and the entire ACS district. As a middle school parent, it has come to my attention that students are no longer allowed "movement" time in their daily schedule, which is concerning.

I believe that this physical and mental break is essential for student success at this age. and removal will lead to unintended consequences for students. I am unsure what went into this thoughtful decision, but I do ask you to reconsider how this may negatively impact our kids.

Data shows that breaks and time for movement are critical for health, general well being, and learning.

I am hopeful you will consider additional conversations with AMS leadership, teachers, and staff regarding this matter in order to best support our young learners.

Kindest regards,

Tommasanne Davis

828.776.0084



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 11:40 AM
To: Courtney McDuffie-Shetley
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: AMS Recess/Outdoor Time

Hello again Courtney,

Principal Johnston is the best person to share more details on how they are tracking this at the school level.

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:41 AM Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneyshetley@hotmail.com> wrote:

How is the time that teachers allot to movement tracked to ensure that students are receiving the 30 minutes per day as required by law?

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:19:30 AM
To: Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneyshetley@hotmail.com>
Cc: Blair Johnston <blair.johnston@acsgmail.net>
Subject: Re: AMS Recess/Outdoor Time

Good Morning Courtney,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 5:02 PM Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneyshetley@hotmail.com> wrote:

Good evening,

I heard from my child last night that AMS does not have recess. I wanted to check in and see if this is accurate. If so, is this just while students are acclimating to the new school year in the first few weeks or if this is permanent.

Aside from students just needing a break from the classroom, if AMS is trying to sincerely build one middle school and support MNSA students, then free time outside with other Pods is important. This eases the transition with MNSA students being able to see their friends from other Pods and gives social time to make new friends.

Thanks,

Courtney

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 11:39 AM
To: Sean Dunn
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: Recess

Great questions Sean. I've copied Mr. Johnston, so he can respond to your follow up questions. Mr. Johnston is the best person to share details about how this will be implemented at the school level.

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:58 AM Sean Dunn <seand@qualtrics.com> wrote:
Thanks for the response, Maggie.

What mechanisms has the school administration put in place to track that this is happening and is delivered equitably across students?

I can imagine that some classes will do movement and some won't. This could leave some students well below the required 30 minutes, or on the flip side well above it - taking away from academic time.

It's a nice idea to disperse it, but without accountability it remains a big concern for students learning and district's compliance.

Thanks!
Sean



SEAN DUNN

Enterprise Account Executive, Strategy & Insights

M (917) 902-9382 // Contact Support



On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:26 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Good Morning Sean,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS and thank you for your support of ACS and public schools. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:17 PM Sean Dunn <seand@qualtrics.com> wrote:
Hi Dr Fehrman,

Hope you're doing well and the start to the school year is positive.

I have children in elementary school in ACS. We started at APS, which closed and were active in the discussions to keep MNSA open as it seemed like an ideal fit moving forward.

Despite those challenges we are very big advocates for public education and have had positive personal experiences everywhere we go. Because of that, we resist pursuing other options (e.g. charter and private school).

I am hearing some news today about recess being removed from the AMS schedule.

If this is true and continues to be district policy, it is highly unlikely that we would stay in the district for middle school. While I'm open to understanding any rationale behind the decision, I would be hard pressed to believe there is any benefit to expecting school-aged children spending all day in a classroom with no breaks.

Just wanted to share my perspective with you from the standpoint of a future AMS student.

Thanks
Sean

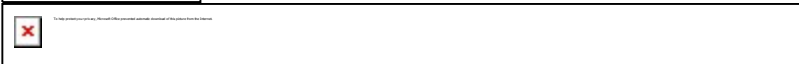
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SEAN DUNN

Enterprise Account Executive, Strategy & Insights

M (917) 902-9382 // Contact Support



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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

--



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 11:37 AM
To: Megan Morlok
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School - Better Understanding of Removal of Outside Time

Of course! Have a great rest of your day!

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 11:12 AM Megan Morlok <mmorlok@biltmorefarms.com> wrote:

Thank you so much Maggie! I really appreciate your quick response.

Megan Morlok
Marketing and Product Manager

P: 828.450.6995 | biltmorefarms.com



BILTMORE FARMS®
Established 1897

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:11 AM
To: Megan Morlok <mmorlok@biltmorefarms.com>
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School - Better Understanding of Removal of Outside Time

CAUTION: External email. Use caution with links and attachments.

Hi Megan,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Thank you for your support and I'm glad to hear the transition is going well so far.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!

Best, Maggie

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:04 AM Megan Morlok <mmorlok@biltmorefarms.com> wrote:

Good Morning Dr. Fehrman,

I hope the first week back for school has been successful for you! I have a 6th grader at Asheville Middle School and a 4th grader at Ira B. Jones Elementary School. When my daughter came home after her first day of middle school, I was concerned to hear there was no outside time/recess. It was our understanding that this was standard practice in years past. It's also my understanding from friends with kids in Buncombe County Schools and other Charter Schools that they're kids get 45 minutes a day of outside time alternating PE and recess every other day, all year long.

Overall, my daughter has had a good transition to middle school. Her teachers have been kind but she's voicing concern about so much desk time and little time to move her body and socialize a bit. It sounds like lunch time is also very strict so overall it is creating very little joy doing the day. Maybe this is the move from elementary school to middle school, but as an 11 year old, I worry she isn't getting in physical time to move her body and get a mental break during the day.

Is there any insight on why this decision was made to move away from recess time?

Thank you for your focus on our kids. I so appreciate you and look forward to hearing more.

Thanks again,

Megan Morlok

Marketing and Product Manager

P: 828.450.6995 | biltmorefarms.com



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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Megan Morlok <mmorlok@biltmorefarms.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 11:12 AM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: RE: Asheville Middle School - Better Understanding of Removal of Outside Time

Thank you so much Maggie! I really appreciate your quick response.

Megan Morlok

Marketing and Product Manager

P: 828.450.6995 | biltmorefarms.com



BILTMORE FARMS[®]
Established 1897

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:11 AM
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I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

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Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!
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Is there any insight on why this decision was made to move away from recess time?

Thank you for your focus on our kids. I so appreciate you and look forward to hearing more.

Thanks again,

Megan Morlok
Marketing and Product Manager

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Sean Dunn <seand@qualtrics.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:58 AM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Re: Recess

Thanks for the response, Maggie.

What mechanisms has the school administration put in place to track that this is happening and is delivered equitably across students?

I can imagine that some classes will do movement and some won't. This could leave some students well below the required 30 minutes, or on the flip side well above it - taking away from academic time.

It's a nice idea to disperse it, but without accountability it remains a big concern for students learning and district's compliance.

Thanks!
Sean



SEAN DUNN

Enterprise Account Executive, Strategy & Insights

M (917) 902-9382 // Contact Support



On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:26 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:
Good Morning Sean,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS and thank you for your support of ACS and public schools. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:17 PM Sean Dunn <seand@qualtrics.com> wrote:
Hi Dr Fehrman,

Hope you're doing well and the start to the school year is positive.

I have children in elementary school in ACS. We started at APS, which closed and were active in the discussions to keep MNSA open as it seemed like an ideal fit moving forward.

Despite those challenges we are very big advocates for public education and have had positive personal experiences everywhere we go. Because of that, we resist pursuing other options (e.g. charter and private school).

I am hearing some news today about recess being removed from the AMS schedule.

If this is true and continues to be district policy, it is highly unlikely that we would stay in the district for middle school. While I'm open to understanding any rationale behind the decision, I would be hard pressed to believe there is any benefit to expecting school-aged children spending all day in a classroom with no breaks.

Just wanted to share my perspective with you from the standpoint of a future AMS student.

Thanks
Sean

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Brea Kichefski <breaski@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:58 AM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Subject: Re: AMS no outside time decision

Hi,

We need to bring this back into a free block for the children. 5 minutes sprinkled here and there is not enough to even get the kids' hearts racing and to work out the energy built up. Placing the onus on the teachers for one more thing is not the best approach. Using vague language like "autonomy" and "encouraged to" really highlights that there is no plan or support. We all know that classroom time can run away from the teachers, so now you are pressuring the teachers to handle something that could easily be something that is done by the administration. Instead, you will have frustrated children, leading to frustrated parents, which leads to teachers having more stress.

Can I provide suggestions to the teachers on activities, sure. In principle, I shouldn't have to do this for you.

Do better. This is such a no brainer.

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:14 AM Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Good Morning Break,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers. The NC policy does not stipulate that the 30 minutes occur in a single continuous period.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!
Best, Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 7:14 PM Brea Kichefski <breaski@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Superintendent Fehrman,

I am just leaning of the change to not allow free time at AMS. This policy has to be reversed. It is against both policy and common sense. For 5 more minutes in a class they stopped paying attention in DUE TO A LACK OF ACTIVITY AND MOVEMENT.

Per North Carolina's Healthy Active Children Policy Section 3: "A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided by schools for all K-8 students daily. This requirement can be achieved through a regular physical education class and/or through activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers, or other curriculum based physical education activity programs. However, such use of this time should complement and not substitute for the physical education program."

Please advise on the rationale for this move and/ or simply reverse this terrible decision.

Brea and Steve Kichefski
Parents of Oliver, 6th grade



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneymcduffie@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:41 AM
To: Maggie Fehrman
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: AMS Recess/Outdoor Time

How is the time that teachers allot to movement tracked to ensure that students are receiving the 30 minutes per day as required by law?

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:19:30 AM
To: Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneymcduffie@hotmail.com>
Cc: Blair Johnston <blair.johnston@acsgmail.net>
Subject: Re: AMS Recess/Outdoor Time

Good Morning Courtney,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 5:02 PM Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneymcduffie@hotmail.com> wrote:

Good evening,

I heard from my child last night that AMS does not have recess. I wanted to check in and see if this is accurate. If so, is this just while students are acclimating to the new school year in the first few weeks or if this is permanent.

Aside from students just needing a break from the classroom, if AMS is trying to sincerely build one middle school and support MNSA students, then free time outside with other Pods is important. This eases the transition with MNSA students being able to see their friends from other Pods and gives social time to make new friends.

Thanks,
Courtney

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:27 AM
To: Becca Nestler
Subject: Re: Outside Time at AMS

Good Morning Becca,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:04 PM Becca Nestler <yellowbirdbranch@gmail.com> wrote:

I am sure you are getting tons of emails and phone calls about this but I want to add my voice to the chorus:

We absolutely must have a dedicated DAILY outside time/movement break for these middle schoolers!

Thanks,
Becca Nestler
828-399-1467



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:26 AM
To: Sean Dunn
Subject: Re: Recess

Good Morning Sean,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS and thank you for your support of ACS and public schools. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

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Hi Dr Fehrman,

Hope you're doing well and the start to the school year is positive.

I have children in elementary school in ACS. We started at APS, which closed and were active in the discussions to keep MNSA open as it seemed like an ideal fit moving forward.

Despite those challenges we are very big advocates for public education and have had positive personal experiences everywhere we go. Because of that, we resist pursuing other options (e.g. charter and private school).

I am hearing some news today about recess being removed from the AMS schedule.

If this is true and continues to be district policy, it is highly unlikely that we would stay in the district for middle school. While I'm open to understanding any rationale behind the decision, I would be hard pressed to believe there is any benefit to expecting school-aged children spending all day in a classroom with no breaks.

Just wanted to share my perspective with you from the standpoint of a future AMS student.

Thanks
Sean

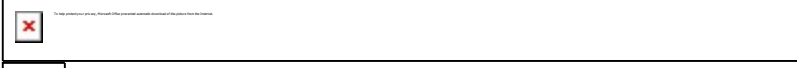
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SEAN DUNN

Enterprise Account Executive, Strategy & Insights

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:23 AM
To: Jennifer Rhode Ward
Cc: Landon Ward
Subject: Re: AMS movement break

Good Morning Jennifer and Landon,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best, Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:48 PM Jennifer Rhode Ward <jennifer.rhode.ward@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Superintendent Fehrman,

We write on behalf of our daughter, who is in her second year at Asheville Middle School, and all of her friends. Please re-introduce the 20 minute movement break, which is essential for social and emotional health. Lack of dedicated movement time also seems in violation of North Carolina's Healthy Active Children Policy (Section 3), particularly since ACS middle school students take only one semester of P.E. per year.

Respectfully,
Jen and Landon Ward



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:22 AM
To: Jennifer Volker
Subject: Re: AMS - change in outdoor time policy

Good Morning Jennifer,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 4:06 PM Jennifer Volker <jvolker2000@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Fehrman,

My son is a new 6th grader at Asheville Middle School. First – a thank you to the teachers and staff there, as he's had a great start to a new school!

However, on his first day he came home very disappointed and told me that the outdoor time, that he had heard about last spring during tours and was so much looking forward to as part of a longer middle school day, had been, in his words, "taken away". I did reach out to Principal Blair and he responded that the time had indeed been eliminated and incorporated into extra minutes in core classes.

Extra minutes added to classes does not compensate for 20 minutes of aggregate outdoor time. In my opinion, ALL students need time to be away from the classroom to move and that time preferably should be outdoors! To me it is just common sense! The benefits of activity for health- both physical and emotional- have been proven over and over! In most private and public sector industries – the importance of movement and self-care throughout the day have been increasingly accentuated and practices adopted. For these middle schoolers – in particular – with the merging of two middle school communities – I would think that the time to self-direct/move/socialize -would have been a very important part to the transition. Further, I found it curious that such a major change in school policy was not communicated with rationalization and explanation of how it aligns with NC Dept of Public Instruction Healthy Active Children statue, governing public schools.

I do appreciate your time and response.

Regards-

Jennifer Volker

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:22 AM
To: Bridget Felix
Subject: Re: AMS recess

Good Morning Bridget,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 4:10 PM Bridget Felix <bridgetmuldoon@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Maggie,

It has come to our attention that AMS will no longer be giving students recess on a daily basis. Out of curiosity, do you take breaks throughout the day? I know for me, a short walk to blow off some steam or process some challenging work is incredibly beneficial. If I've been sitting at my computer too long, I'll make sure to do a little stretching and/or yoga, or take a break to chat with a friend or family member while moving around.

We all need to let our brain rest a bit here and there so we can better focus on our work. Not only that, our kids do enough sitting. Please reconsider this new schedule and let our kids get a breath of fresh air, socialize, and run around for a bit each day. They will be better students because of it.

The following is a quote from the attached [Strategies for Recess in Schools](#) that was sponsored by the [CDC](#):

Benefits of Recess

Recess in schools benefits students by:

- ▶ Increasing their level of physical activity.
- ▶ Improving their memory, attention, and concentration.
- ▶ Helping them stay on-task in the classroom.
- ▶ Reducing disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- ▶ Improving their social and emotional development (e.g., learning how to share and negotiate).

Although most of the evidence is focused on elementary schools, both middle and high school students can benefit from having physical activity periods in addition to physical education and classroom physical activity. These benefits and opportunities are particularly important for students with special needs, functional limitations, or physical disabilities because they may have more behavioral issues and limited experiences interacting socially with other students. Recess that is well-organized will include, for example, a written school recess plan, coordinated schedules

and transition times, and professional development for school staff and volunteers. When implemented properly, recess will not only help students be more physically active, but may improve their behavior and attention level in class. It can also reduce bullying and exclusionary behavior among students. By helping students feel safe and more engaged in the classroom, recess also contributes to higher levels of school connectedness. This higher level of connectedness creates a positive school climate, which affects every aspect of school, including attendance, engagement, and academic achievement.

Thank you,

Bridget Felix
828-989-5449

P.S. I am a National Board Certified Health & Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC) and I would be happy to assist in any way I can. Please don't hesitate to reach out.



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:21 AM
To: kim hunt
Subject: Re: AMS outside time

Good Morning Kim,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. I do apologize that this was not communicated to parents prior to the change.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 4:19 PM kim hunt <kimhunt2232@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Dr. Fehrman,

Good afternoon. Just a quick email to join my voice with some others expressing concern about the change and lack of communication in the change regarding outside time at AMS. Would love to hear from you about the motivation for this change and the response you have received at the middle school w/ staff and administration about this.

Thank you,
Kim Hunt
8th grade parent



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:20 AM
To: Jennifer Gladden
Subject: Re: AMS Recess

Good Morning Jennifer,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team. You correctly cited the state policy, and please note this policy does not mandate that the 30 minutes happen all at the same time.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.
Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 4:32 PM Jennifer Gladden <jennifer@lolafleur.com> wrote:
Good afternoon,

My 7th grader brought to my attention that recess was eliminated at AMS.

Per North Carolina's Healthy Active Children Policy Section 3:

"A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided by schools for all K-8 students daily. This requirement can be achieved through a regular physical education class and/or through activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers, or other curriculum based physical education activity programs. However, such use of this time should complement and not substitute for the physical education program."

Can you give some insight on this please?

Thank you,
Jennifer Gladden

<https://www.nhealthyschools.org/components/healthyactivechildrenpolicy/>
(<https://www.nhealthyschools.org/components/healthyactivechildrenpolicy/>)



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:19 AM
To: Courtney McDuffie-Shetley
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: AMS Recess/Outdoor Time

Good Morning Courtney,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the removal of the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. I encourage you to share your suggestions and volunteer to support the teachers as they develop activities that work for their team.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 5:02 PM Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneymcduffie@hotmail.com> wrote:

Good evening,

I heard from my child last night that AMS does not have recess. I wanted to check in and see if this is accurate. If so, is this just while students are acclimating to the new school year in the first few weeks or if this is permanent.

Aside from students just needing a break from the classroom, if AMS is trying to sincerely build one middle school and support MNSA students, then free time outside with other Pods is important. This eases the transition with MNSA students being able to see their friends from other Pods and gives social time to make new friends.

Thanks,
Courtney



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:17 AM
To: Rachel Flaherty
Cc: Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: the loss of unstructured time at AMS

Good Morning Rachel,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. I apologize that we did not communicate this change to parents prior to the start of the school year.

The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 5:35 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Dr. Fehrman,

One more thought, if I may...

When parents tell me they're so excited because their kid got into a charter or private school, the first reason I hear parents choose to leave ACS for charters/private schools is for more movement. They'll say things like, "this school gives more outside time" or "this school gives multiple movement breaks per day" or that kind of thing. This movement/unstructured piece is a big deal for parents wanting to encourage healthy living... movement, mental health "rejuvenators," time for their kids' brains to percolate what they've been learning, more social time to develop social skills (so important as kids are so much more undeveloped in that department because of screens and the pandemic), etc. Keeping learning going constantly through a day ends up being self-defeating. These alternative schools often get that (admittedly while missing other pieces that I think ACS gets better than they do) and therefore make that a central part of what they offer. I would so love them to not have a leg up on us in that regard!

Thank you for your consideration,

Rachel Flaherty

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:58 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Dr. Fehrman, (I've copied Mr. Johnston on here as well, to keep him in the loop)

I have been so encouraged by the strong back-to-school vibe at AMS as well. It's such a joy to see it coming together!

I'm not, however, encouraged by the big schedule change this year... and I'm disappointed that there was no explanation given to parents. It has had to trickle down to parents through our kids, other parents, and teachers. The direct communication that has accompanied the last 2 years helped avoid a lot of internal conflict at the school. (For example, when my older kids were there, there were many more FB debates, etc. because parents were often confused and disheartened at the absence of direct communication.)

Please note that parents like to be in the loop and hear about your explanation of any significant changes you make. Asheville, which I'm sure you're seeing, is more like a small town than a big town in that regard. "Eventually, everyone knows everyone else's business..." for better or for worse. :) Eventually, we will hear about what's going on... It would have been helpful to hear about it from you or someone at the beginning of the year instead of hearing about it indirectly with no explanation.

People... students, parents, and teachers... are frustrated about this and feel like their need for unstructured time, which is addressed at the NC DOE level apparently, is no longer being addressed at the district level.

When my older kids were at AMS, there was a similar recess schedule to the one you've imposed. The behavior issues were much higher, and the school felt like a giant pressure cooker. The school responded to issues by getting more strict and removing more unstructured time. The result was more behavior issues (and therefore less learning) as well as disgruntled students and teachers. I'm sure there were multiple factors at play, but the unstructured time was undoubtedly one of them.

I'd love to ask that you consider changing the schedule back to including daily unstructured recess time. The few minutes you can take from each class to make this happen are a small sacrifice... and in this case... the quality of time gained (more focused, relaxed, healthy students /AND teachers) surpasses the quantity of time.

A [short Google search on the subject](#) brought up more studies and articles to detail here. Would you consider looking at some of these?

Thank you for considering, I appreciate all your hard work in ACS, and I hope you have a great rest of your week,
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:14 AM
To: Grace Findley
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School Outside Time Concern

Good Morning Grace,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers. The NC policy does not stipulate that the 30 minutes occur in a single continuous period.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 6:21 PM Grace Findley <grace@subjectmatterstudio.com> wrote:
Dr. Fehrman,

Hello, I am the parent of a 7th grader at Asheville Middle School. It came to my attention this first week of school that the students have had their daily "movement" or outdoor time taken this school year and it is extremely concerning to me.

[NCHealthyActiveChildrenPolicy](#)

I feel that this will not only lead to unhappy students and staff but unhealthy humans mentally and physically as well. Please tell me that you can do something to amend this issue for our school.

We want AMS to continue to be a happy place to learn not a prison for its students. Also, as a mother of a returning AMS student, I question how is the school supposed to feel inviting to the new students from Montford if they aren't even allowed time to get to know each other out of their desks?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Grace Findley
828-423-1480

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:14 AM
To: Brea Kichefski
Subject: Re: AMS no outside time decision

Good Morning Break,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers. The NC policy does not stipulate that the 30 minutes occur in a single continuous period.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!
Best, Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 7:14 PM Brea Kichefski <breaski@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Superintendent Fehrman,

I am just leaning of the change to not allow free time at AMS. This policy has to be reversed. It is against both policy and common sense. For 5 more minutes in a class they stopped paying attention in DUE TO A LACK OF ACTIVITY AND MOVEMENT.

Per North Carolina's Healthy Active Children Policy Section 3: "A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided by schools for all K-8 students daily. This requirement can be achieved through a regular physical education class and/or through activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers, or other curriculum based physical education activity programs. However, such use of this time should complement and not substitute for the physical education program."

Please advise on the rationale for this move and/ or simply reverse this terrible decision.

Brea and Steve Kichefski
Parents of Oliver, 6th grade



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:11 AM
To: Megan Morlok
Subject: Re: Asheville Middle School - Better Understanding of Removal of Outside Time

Hi Megan,

Thank you for reaching out to share your concerns about the change in the school-wide recess period at AMS. The time for the school-wide recess period was dispersed and incorporated into additional time in academic classes. The teachers now have the autonomy to incorporate movement into their classes over the course of the day. Teachers are also encouraged to develop activities as a team and or grade level to make use of this time in a way that helps build teamwork skills and supports academic lessons. If you have any suggestions I encourage you to share those with your daughter's teachers.

I will also touch base with Principal Johnston to make sure the teachers are indeed incorporating opportunities for movement and outdoor time throughout the day.

Thank you for your support and I'm glad to hear the transition is going well so far.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions!
Best, Maggie

On Thu, Aug 29, 2024 at 10:04 AM Megan Morlok <mmorlok@biltmorefarms.com> wrote:

Good Morning Dr. Fehrman,

I hope the first week back for school has been successful for you! I have a 6th grader at Asheville Middle School and a 4th grader at Ira B. Jones Elementary School. When my daughter came home after her first day of middle school, I was concerned to hear there was no outside time/recess. It was our understanding that this was standard practice in years past. It's also my understanding from friends with kids in Buncombe County Schools and other Charter Schools that they're kids get 45 minutes a day of outside time alternating PE and recess every other day, all year long.

Overall, my daughter has had a good transition to middle school. Her teachers have been kind but she's voicing concern about so much desk time and little time to move her body and socialize a bit. It sounds like lunch time is also very strict so overall it is creating very little joy doing the day. Maybe this is the move from elementary school to middle school, but as an 11 year old, I worry she isn't getting in physical time to move her body and get a mental break during the day.

Is there any insight on why this decision was made to move away from recess time?

Thank you for your focus on our kids. I so appreciate you and look forward to hearing more.

Thanks again,

Megan Morlok
Marketing and Product Manager

P: 828.450.6995 | biltmorefarms.com



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Established 1897



Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Megan Morlok <mmorlok@biltmorefarms.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 10:04 AM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: Asheville Middle School - Better Understanding of Removal of Outside Time

Good Morning Dr. Fehrman,

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Thanks again,

Megan Morlok
Marketing and Product Manager

P: 828.450.6995 | biltmorefarms.com




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Established 1897

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman (via Google Docs) <drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 8:21 AM
To: blair.johnston@acsgmail.net
Cc: kimberly.dechant@acsgmail.net; shannon.baggett@acsgmail.net
Subject: Document shared with you: "AMS recess email response"

Maggie Fehrman shared a document

Maggie Fehrman (maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net) has invited you to **edit** the following document:

 AMS recess email response

Open

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA
You have received this email because maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net shared a document with you from Google Docs.




Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman (via Google Docs) <drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 8:21 AM
To: kimberly.dechant@acsgmail.net
Cc: blair.johnston@acsgmail.net; shannon.baggett@acsgmail.net
Subject: Document shared with you: "AMS recess email response"

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Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA
You have received this email because maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net shared a document with you from Google Docs.



Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Maggie Fehrman (via Google Docs) <drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2024 8:21 AM
To: shannon.baggett@acsgmail.net
Cc: blair.johnston@acsgmail.net; kimberly.dechant@acsgmail.net
Subject: Document shared with you: "AMS recess email response"

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You have received this email because maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net shared a document with you from Google Docs.



Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Brea Kichefski <breaski@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 7:14 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: AMS no outside time decision

Hi Superintendent Fehrman,

I am just leaning of the change to not allow free time at AMS. This policy has to be reversed. It is against both policy and common sense. For 5 more minutes in a class they stopped paying attention in DUE TO A LACK OF ACTIVITY AND MOVEMENT.

Per North Carolina's Healthy Active Children Policy Section 3: "A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided by schools for all K-8 students daily. This requirement can be achieved through a regular physical education class and/or through activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers, or other curriculum based physical education activity programs. However, such use of this time should complement and not substitute for the physical education program."

Please advise on the rationale for this move and/ or simply reverse this terrible decision.

Brea and Steve Kichefski
Parents of Oliver, 6th grade

From: Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 5:35 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman; Blair Johnston
Subject: Re: the loss of unstructured time at AMS

Dr. Fehrman,

One more thought, if I may...

When parents tell me they're so excited because their kid got into a charter or private school, the first reason I hear parents choose to leave ACS for charters/private schools is for more movement. They'll say things like, "this school gives more outside time" or "this school gives multiple movement breaks per day" or that kind of thing. This movement/unstructured piece is a big deal for parents wanting to encourage healthy living... movement, mental health "rejuvenators," time for their kids' brains to percolate what they've been learning, more social time to develop social skills (so important as kids are so much more undeveloped in that department because of screens and the pandemic), etc. Keeping learning going constantly through a day ends up being self-defeating. These alternative schools often get that (admittedly while missing other pieces that I think ACS gets better than they do) and therefore make that a central part of what they offer. I would so love them to not have a leg up on us in that regard!

Thank you for your consideration,

Rachel Flaherty

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 3:58 PM Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Dr. Fehrman, (I've copied Mr. Johnston on here as well, to keep him in the loop)

I have been so encouraged by the strong back-to-school vibe at AMS as well. It's such a joy to see it coming together!

I'm not, however, encouraged by the big schedule change this year... and I'm disappointed that there was no explanation given to parents. It has had to trickle down to parents through our kids, other parents, and teachers. The direct communication that has accompanied the last 2 years helped avoid a lot of internal conflict at the school. (For example, when my older kids were there, there were many more FB debates, etc. because parents were often confused and disheartened at the absence of direct communication.)

Please note that parents like to be in the loop and hear about your explanation of any significant changes you make. Asheville, which I'm sure you're seeing, is more like a small town than a big town in that regard. "Eventually, everyone knows everyone else's business..." for better or for worse. :) Eventually, we will hear about what's going on... It would have been helpful to hear about it from you or someone at the beginning of the year instead of hearing about it indirectly with no explanation.

People... students, parents, and teachers... are frustrated about this and feel like their need for unstructured time, which is addressed at the NC DOE level apparently, is no longer being addressed at the district level.

When my older kids were at AMS, there was a similar recess schedule to the one you've imposed. The behavior issues were much higher, and the school felt like a giant pressure cooker. The school responded to issues by getting more strict and removing more unstructured time. The result was more behavior issues (and therefore less learning) as well as disgruntled students and teachers. I'm sure there were multiple factors at play, but the unstructured time was undoubtedly one of them.

I'd love to ask that you consider changing the schedule back to including daily unstructured recess time. The few minutes you can take from each class to make this happen are a small sacrifice... and in this case... the quality of time gained (more focused, relaxed, healthy students /AND teachers) surpasses the quantity of time.

A [short Google search on the subject](#) brought up more studies and articles to detail here. Would you consider looking at some of these?

Thank you for considering, I appreciate all your hard work in ACS, and I hope you have a great rest of your week,
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Courtney McDuffie-Shetley <courtneyshetley@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 5:02 PM
To: Blair Johnston; Maggie Fehrman
Subject: AMS Recess/Outdoor Time

Good evening,

I heard from my child last night that AMS does not have recess. I wanted to check in and see if this is accurate. If so, is this just while students are acclimating to the new school year in the first few weeks or if this is permanent.

Aside from students just needing a break from the classroom, if AMS is trying to sincerely build one middle school and support MNSA students, then free time outside with other Pods is important. This eases the transition with MNSA students being able to see their friends from other Pods and gives social time to make new friends.

Thanks,
Courtney

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Jennifer Gladden <jennifer@lolafleur.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 4:33 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: AMS Recess

Good afternoon,

My 7th grader brought to my attention that recess was eliminated at AMS.

Per North Carolina's Healthy Active Children Policy Section 3:

"A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided by schools for all K-8 students daily. This requirement can be achieved through a regular physical education class and/or through activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers, or other curriculum based physical education activity programs. However, such use of this time should complement and not substitute for the physical education program."

Can you give some insight on this please?

Thank you,
Jennifer Gladden

<https://www.nhealthyschools.org/components/healthyactivechildrenpolicy/>
(<https://www.nhealthyschools.org/components/healthyactivechildrenpolicy/>)

From: Bridget Felix <bridgetmuldoon@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 4:10 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: AMS recess

Dear Maggie,

It has come to our attention that AMS will no longer be giving students recess on a daily basis. Out of curiosity, do you take breaks throughout the day? I know for me, a short walk to blow off some steam or process some challenging work is incredibly beneficial. If I've been sitting at my computer too long, I'll make sure to do a little stretching and/or yoga, or take a break to chat with a friend or family member while moving around.

We all need to let our brain rest a bit here and there so we can better focus on our work. Not only that, our kids do enough sitting. Please reconsider this new schedule and let our kids get a breath of fresh air, socialize, and run around for a bit each day. They will be better students because of it.

The following is a quote from the attached [Strategies for Recess in Schools](#) that was sponsored by the [CDC](#):

Benefits of Recess

Recess in schools benefits students by:

- ▶ Increasing their level of physical activity.
- ▶ Improving their memory, attention, and concentration.
- ▶ Helping them stay on-task in the classroom.
- ▶ Reducing disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- ▶ Improving their social and emotional development (e.g., learning how to share and negotiate).

Although most of the evidence is focused on elementary schools, both middle and high school students can benefit from having physical activity periods in addition to physical education and classroom physical activity. These benefits and opportunities are particularly important for students with special needs, functional limitations, or physical disabilities because they may have more behavioral issues and limited experiences interacting socially with other students. Recess that is well-organized will include, for example, a written school recess plan, coordinated schedules and transition times, and professional development for school staff and volunteers. When implemented properly, recess will not only help students be more physically active, but may improve their behavior and attention level in class. It can also reduce bullying and exclusionary behavior among students. By helping students feel safe and more engaged in the classroom, recess also contributes to higher levels of school connectedness. This higher level of connectedness creates a positive school climate, which affects every aspect of school, including attendance, engagement, and academic achievement.

Thank you,

Bridget Felix
828-989-5449

P.S. I am a National Board Certified Health & Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC) and I would be happy to assist in any way I can. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

From: Rachel Flaherty <rachelf49@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 3:58 PM
To: Maggie Fehrman; Blair Johnston
Subject: the loss of unstructured time at AMS

Hello Dr. Fehrman, (I've copied Mr. Johnston on here as well, to keep him in the loop)
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A [short Google search on the subject](#) brought up more studies and articles to detail here. Would you consider looking at some of these?

Thank you for considering, I appreciate all your hard work in ACS, and I hope you have a great rest of your week,
Rachel

Rachel Flaherty

From: Sean Dunn <seand@qualtrics.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 3:17 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: Recess

Hi Dr Fehrman,

Hope you're doing well and the start to the school year is positive.

I have children in elementary school in ACS. We started at APS, which closed and were active in the discussions to keep MNSA open as it seemed like an ideal fit moving forward.

Despite those challenges we are very big advocates for public education and have had positive personal experiences everywhere we go. Because of that, we resist pursuing other options (e.g. charter and private school).

I am hearing some news today about recess being removed from the AMS schedule.

If this is true and continues to be district policy, it is highly unlikely that we would stay in the district for middle school. While I'm open to understanding any rationale behind the decision, I would be hard pressed to believe there is any benefit to expecting school-aged children spending all day in a classroom with no breaks.

Just wanted to share my perspective with you from the standpoint of a future AMS student.

Thanks
Sean



SEAN DUNN

Enterprise Account Executive, Strategy & Insights

M (917) 902-9382 // Contact Support



From: Maggie Fehrman <maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 12:19 PM
To: Ashley Gray
Subject: Re: AMS recess

Greetings Ms. Gray,

While the free time that was part of lunch was incorporated into the core academic schedule this year, the teachers are incorporating opportunities for students to move and spend time outside. Instead of all the movement time happening at once, it is now spread out throughout the school day.

I was just at AMS today and saw several different ways teachers are incorporating time outside and movement into their class period.

Best,
Maggie

On Wed, Aug 28, 2024 at 12:06 PM Ashley Gray <evzart@zoho.com> wrote:

Hello Dr. Fehrman,

I am writing to express concern about the recent canceling of recess for Asheville Middle School. I have two children at Claxton Elementary, one in fifth grade who we are considering sending to AMS. I think it is a very bad idea to not have any outdoor/free time for the kids.

Ashley Gray

Sent using [Zoho Mail](#)

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Click [here](#) to schedule a time to meet with Dr. Fehrman.

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Ashley Gray <evzart@zoho.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 12:06 PM
To: maggiefehrman
Subject: AMS recess

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Ashley Gray

Sent using [Zoho Mail](#)

Kimberly.Dechant@acsgmail.net

From: Megan Pyle <pyle.megan@icloud.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 11, 2024 6:55 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: Buncombe / Asheville City Schools Merger

Dear Ms. Fehrman, thank you for serving as Superintendent of Asheville City Schools.

As a mom—I want to protect recess. Unfortunately, here in Buncombe County, schools use the below NCDPI policy as a loophole to cut out recess on PE days.

<https://www.nhealthyschools.org/components/healthyactivechildrenpolicy/>

Please consider my specific ask—promote a policy for no less than 35 minutes of recess daily for all elementary students in Buncombe / Asheville City Schools should the merger be successful.

Thank you,
Megan

From: Lisa Figueroa <lisa.figueroa@sotertechnologies.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 12:11 PM
To: maggie.fehrman@acsgmail.net
Subject: Summer Promotion on FlySense® Vape Detectors
Attachments: FS300_2024_.pdf

Dear Valued Educator,

It's the perfect time to prepare for the beginning of the school year with our summer promotion. We encourage you to take advantage of the summer period to deploy our devices while students are on recess. This special promotion offers:

Discounts: 35% off on all FlySense® Detectors purchased during the promotion period, priced at \$695 per unit.

Summer Bundle: Purchase 20 FlySense® devices or more for additional discounts. (Please call for further details.)

What is FlySense®?

FlySense® is a sophisticated detection system designed to identify vaping, smoking, and noise disturbances in school environments. The system offers real-time alerts to designated school personnel, enabling a rapid response to incidents and helping to deter such activities within school premises.

Key Features of FlySense® 300:

Real-time Detection: Identifies vaping substances such as THC, nicotine, tobacco, and cigarettes.

Immediate Alerts: Sends instant email or text message alerts with no delays.

Exceptional Accuracy: Boasts 99.99% accuracy.

Comprehensive Coverage: Monitors a 7-foot radius, including four bathroom stalls.

Easy Installation: Requires just two screws and a CAT6 Ethernet cable; installation services are also available.

User-Friendly: Provides portal access with no app download required.

Self-Diagnostic Capabilities: Alerts you to the reasons for any offline issues.

VMS/Camera Integration: Ensures compatibility with existing camera systems.

AI Forecasting: Uses predictive analysis to anticipate vaping incidents before they occur.

If you have any questions or need further information, please refer to the attached Product Overview Sheet or feel free to contact me directly.

We are dedicated to supporting schools in their efforts to combat vaping and create a healthier learning environment for students. With FlySense® Detectors,

you can keep your campus vape-free and protect students from potential health risks.

Regards,

Lisa Figueroa

Account Executive

Soter Technologies

101 Comac Street

Ronkonkoma, NY 11779

T. (934) 500-4372

www.sotertechnologies.com

