

SB 578 - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2251

12/09

SENATE BILL **578**

AN ACT extending recess for students from kindergarten to eighth grade and prohibiting the deprivation of recess time as punishment in schools.

SPONSORS: Sen. Sullivan, Dist 18; Sen. Pearl, Dist 17; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Avard, Dist 12; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Sen. Murphy, Dist 16; Rep. Freeman, Belk. 8; Rep. Peoples, Hills. 14; Rep. Rice, Hills. 38

COMMITTEE: Education

ANALYSIS

This bill expands play-based curriculum from kindergarten until third grade and requires recess for all students from kindergarten until the eighth grade. The bill also prohibits withholding students from recess as a means of punishment or as a requirement to complete school work.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT extending recess for students from kindergarten to eighth grade and prohibiting the deprivation of recess time as punishment in schools.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Expansion of Play-Based Curriculum. Amend RSA 193-E:2-a, II-a to read as follows:

2 II-a. Instruction in support of **standards for** kindergarten [~~standards~~] **through third**
3 **grade** shall be engaging and shall foster children's development and learning in all domains
4 including physical, social, cognitive, and language. Educators shall create a learning environment
5 that facilitates high quality, child-directed experiences based upon early childhood best teaching
6 practices and play-based learning that comprise movement, creative expression, exploration,
7 socialization, and music. Educators shall develop literacy through guided reading and shall provide
8 unstructured time for the discovery of each child's individual talents, abilities, and needs.

9 2 New Paragraph; Recess Physical Education Requirement. Amend RSA 189:10 by inserting
10 after paragraph III the following new paragraph:

11 IV. The school board shall ensure that recess is included in the physical education
12 curriculum for all students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade, with the exception of
13 schools where eighth grade is a part of the high school.

14 (a) For the purposes of this paragraph, recess shall be defined as physical activity that
15 promotes fitness and well-being which shall include unstructured play outside, unless weather
16 conditions negatively impact the safety of physical activity taking place outside.

17 (b) For the purposes of this paragraph, recess shall not include any time considered
18 instructional time for a physical education class.

19 (c) A student shall not be withheld from participating in recess as a means of
20 punishment or as a requirement for the completion of school work.

21 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.