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SENATE BILL 5551

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senators Franklin, Keiser, Kastama, Marr, Murray, McDermott, Shin, McAuliffe, Fairley, Kline, Pridemore, Oemig, Regala, Kauffman, and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/26/09. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to recess periods for elementary school students;  
2 and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that students at the  
5 elementary level must have the opportunity to participate in daily  
6 recess. The legislature also finds that recess provides children with  
7 unstructured time to engage in physical activity that helps to develop  
8 healthy minds and bodies. As childhood obesity rates rise, it is  
9 important to ensure that children have the time for physical activity.  
10 Insufficient physical activity and excessive calories consumed is well-  
11 known as a critical factor for this alarming increase in overweight and  
12 obese children. As Washington state strives to be the healthiest state  
13 in the nation, we must continue to encourage our children to engage in  
14 physical activity so they can develop a healthy mind and body.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The office of the superintendent shall  
16 collaborate with the statewide parent-teacher organization to conduct  
17 and report the results of a survey of Washington elementary schools to  
18 determine the current availability of recess for elementary students

1 and the perceptions of the importance of recess in Washington  
2 elementary schools. The survey shall include, but not be limited to,  
3 the following inquiries:

4 (a) How much time does the elementary school devote for recess each  
5 day?

6 (b) Whether the amount of time devoted to recess has decreased or  
7 increased and why?

8 (c) Is recess a structured or unstructured activity at the school?

9 (d) How is recess provided during inclement weather?

10 (e) If recess is part of the scheduled day at your school, may an  
11 individual teacher keep a student from participating in recess for  
12 academic or discipline reasons?

13 (f) Do you believe that recess is a necessary part of the school  
14 day?

15 (2) By December 1, 2009, the responses to the survey shall be  
16 aggregated and reported to the appropriate committees of the  
17 legislature.

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