

Date: June 7, 2018
For ACTION _____
For INFORMATION X
Board Agenda: Yes X
No _____

FROM: Lois F. Berlin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

THROUGH: Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer
Lisa Piehota, Ed.D., Executive Director of Elementary Instruction

TO: The Honorable Ramee Gentry, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Enactment of VA Senate Bill 273/House Bill 1419 (Acts of Assembly, Ch. 784)

SUMMARY: State legislation now allows school divisions to count “unstructured recreational time” (recess) for up to 15% of total required instructional time. This legislative change has resulted in a review of ACPS’ current recess practices.

BACKGROUND: The recent passage and enactment into law of Senate Bill 273/House Bill 1419, effective July 1, 2018, requires that: *“Local school boards shall provide (i) a minimum of 680 hours of instructional time to students in elementary school, except for students in half-day kindergarten, in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science and (ii) a minimum of 375 hours of instructional time to students in half-day kindergarten in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.”* The bill also states that: *“Local school boards may include and the Board of Education shall accept, for elementary school, unstructured recreational time that is intended to develop teamwork, social skills, and overall physical fitness in any calculation of total instructional time or teaching hours, provided that such unstructured recreational time does not exceed 15 percent of total instructional time or teaching hours.” (SB 273/HB 1419)*

Currently, ACPS elementary schools schedule daily recess from 20-35 minutes for kindergartners, and 15-30 minutes for students in grades 1-5. These minutes are equal to or exceed recess practices in neighboring districts as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Northern Virginia Public School FY18 Elementary Recess and Length of School Day

	ACPS	Arlington	Prince William	Fairfax	Loudon
Length of Daily Recess Offered	20-35 minutes for kindergarten; 15-30 minutes for grades 1-5	27-30 minutes for kindergarten; 20-25 minutes for grades 1-5	30 minutes: broken into two 15-minute sessions	15 minute minimum: moving to (2) 15-minute sessions FY 19	15 minutes: discussion in place to raise to 20 minutes
Length of School Day	6 hours, 35 minutes	6 hours, 41 minutes	6 hours, 45 minutes	6 hours, 45 minutes	6 hours, 45 minutes

RECOMMENDATION: ACPS Central Office staff will work with elementary building-based leaders to establish, implement, and monitor a consistent set of recess practices across the division. Furthermore, Central Office staff will explore opportunities to increase recess times given the flexibility outlined in the new legislation.

IMPACT: Achieving consistency across the division with recess times will ensure equitable practices for all students. This legislation will provide greater opportunities for students to develop social skills, engage in physical activity, and exhibit good health.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Acts of Assembly, Ch. 784 (4/6/18)

CONTACT: Michael Humphreys, Health/P.E. Instructional Specialist, 703.619.8020

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2018 SESSION

CHAPTER 784

An Act to include unstructured recreational time in any calculation of total instructional time.

[S 273]

Approved April 6, 2018

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *Local school boards shall provide (i) a minimum of 680 hours of instructional time to students in elementary school, except for students in half-day kindergarten, in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science and (ii) a minimum of 375 hours of instructional time to students in half-day kindergarten in the four academic disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.*

§ 2. *Local school boards may include and the Board of Education shall accept, for elementary school, unstructured recreational time that is intended to develop teamwork, social skills, and overall physical fitness in any calculation of total instructional time or teaching hours, provided that such unstructured recreational time does not exceed 15 percent of total instructional time or teaching hours.*