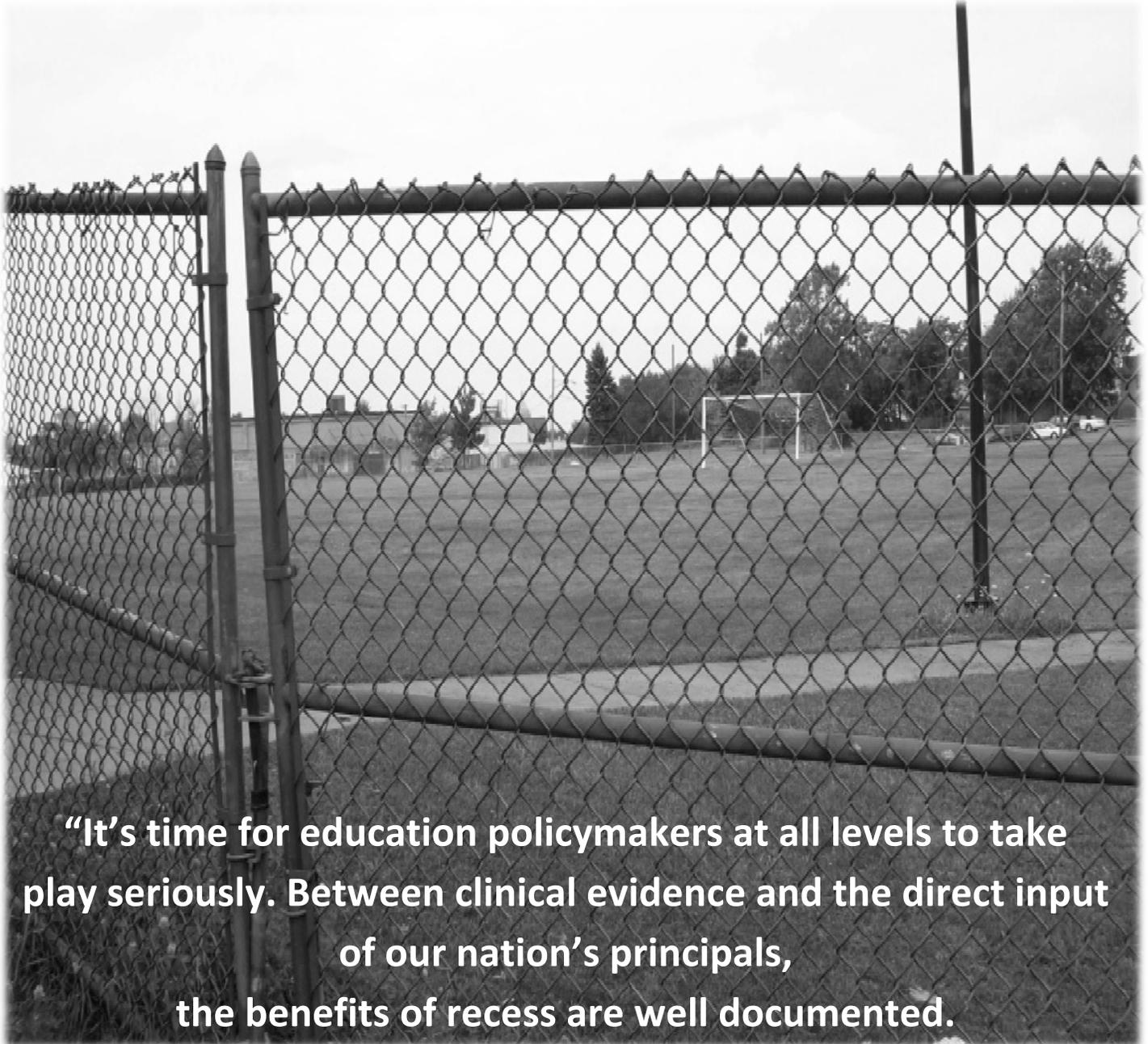


Recess Report 2010

Are Schools Receiving a Passing Grade?



“It’s time for education policymakers at all levels to take play seriously. Between clinical evidence and the direct input of our nation’s principals, the benefits of recess are well documented.

Recess should no longer be treated as an afterthought or an expendable block of time. Instead, it must be recognized as an essential part of the school day.”

-Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2010



Give Kids A Break.

The Journal of Pediatrics published a groundbreaking study of 11,000 third-graders, comparing those who had little or no daily recess with those that had more than 15 minutes of recess per day. The findings show that children who have more recess time behave better in the classroom and are likelier to learn more. (Barros, 2009)



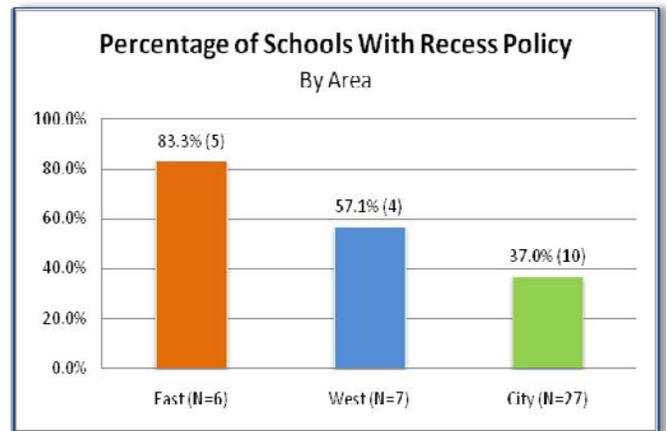
Obesity is a leading public health concern in Rochester and Monroe County and carries serious health risks for children. 25.6 percent of children and adolescents in Monroe County aged 2-19 years are overweight or obese and 38.3 percent in the City of Rochester based on results from the Monroe County Childhood Obesity Prevalence Study, URMC, 2009. Most children aged 5-17 years spend six hours or more of their day at school. However, children have less time engaged in physical activity during the school day due to academic curriculum requirements and pressure to perform well on achievement exams.

40 area schools provided responses to the Healthi Kids 2010 Recess Survey

Recess Survey Areas	Elementary Schools
City of Rochester (26 RCSD Elementary, 1 Charter)	School # 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,12,15,17,20,22,23, 29,36,41,42,44,45,46,52,53,57,58, Urban Choice Charter School
Suburban Sample 1 (7 Elementary)	<u>Greece</u> : Parkland, Buckman Heights, Kirk Road <u>Gates-Chili</u> : Florence Brassier <u>E. Irondequoit</u> : Helendale Primary <u>W. Irondequoit</u> : Brookview, Seneca
Suburban Sample 2 (6 Elementary)	<u>Fairport</u> : Brooks Hill, Northside <u>Penfield</u> : Indian Landing <u>Pittsford</u> : Mendon Center <u>Webster</u> : Klem Road, State Road

“At School 12 we have found that there are direct correlations between those teachers that have their students participate in recess and build daily physical activity into their day and their actual academic performance. It is clear that healthy children are ready to learn at higher levels of performance.”

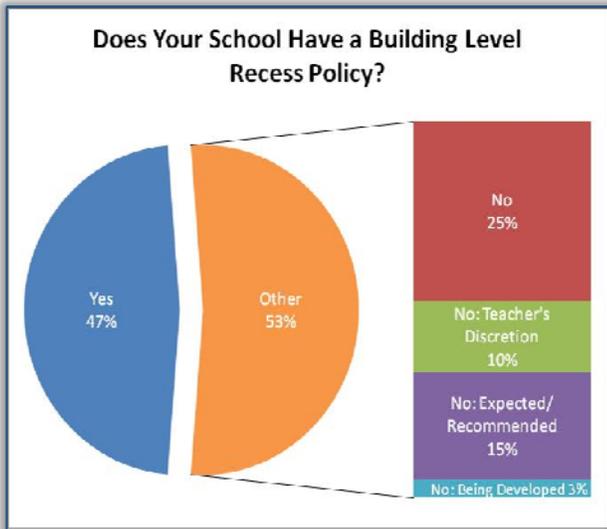
-Michele Liguori-Alampi, School 12 Principal



The State of Recess.

We know that children spend the majority of their day in a school classroom, sitting behind a desk. We also know that our region, like the rest of the country, has decreased time for unstructured play and recess for students. The Healthi Kids Initiative began to ask the question ‘What happened to Recess?’ So, Healthi Kids surveyed Principals or Vice Principals from three groups of elementary schools: 1) All City of Rochester elementary schools including charter schools, 2) A sample of schools in Gates, Greece, and Irondequoit – districts with higher rates of overweight children, and 3) A sample of remaining suburban schools in Fairport, Penfield, Pittsford and Webster. 40 schools were reached and gave responses to survey questions (48.8% response rate).

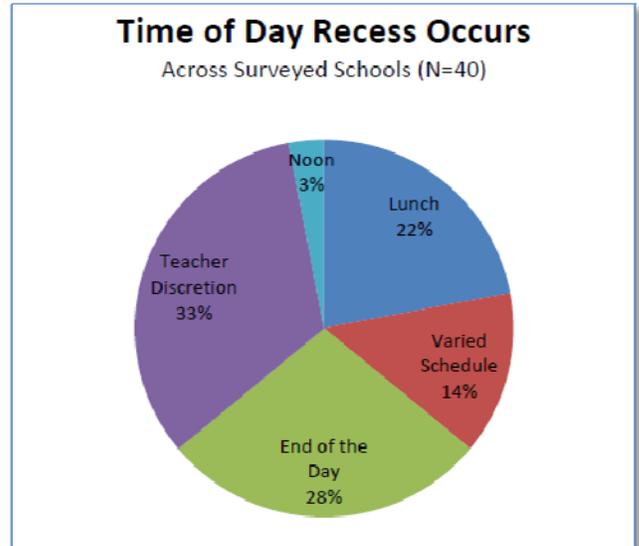
Approximately 47% of all schools surveyed have a recess policy, policies ranged from scheduled recess periods for individual classes, to an overarching school-wide practice requiring all children to go outside for recess.



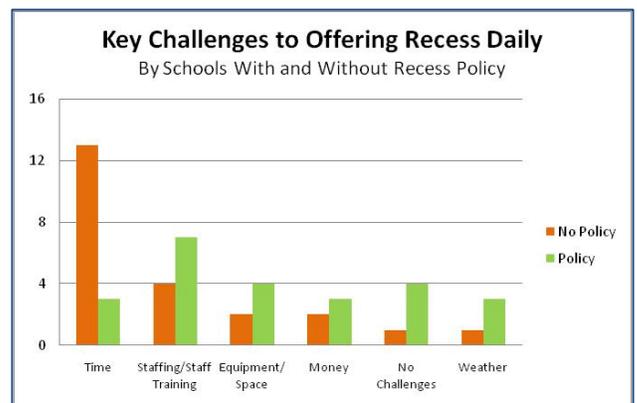
The results show a striking disparity in recess policies between the city and suburbs. While 69.2% of all suburban schools surveyed have established a recess policy, only 34.6% of the City of Rochester schools have one in place. The amount of time for which recess was offered ranged from less than 15 minutes to 45 minutes daily. Schools having a recess policy by and large offered more time for students than schools without a policy. City of Rochester schools generally provide less time for recess compared to neighboring districts. 47-percent of schools do not have a designated time for daily recess. Schedules and teacher discretions are the largest factors contributing to this result.

Healthi Kids understands that recess comes with challenges. Interestingly, when respondents were asked to identify key challenges to offering daily active recess for students, those from schools with recess policies identified staffing, professional development, equipment and space as the biggest challenges.

Conversely, schools who did not have a recess policy in place indicate time as their largest issue followed by staffing, then equipment. These results provide an opportunity for further investigation and best practice sharing between districts' administration.



Schools that have a Recess Policy identified staffing and professional development as their biggest challenges. Conversely, schools who did not have a Recess Policy in place indicated time as their largest issue followed by staffing, and then equipment.



What happens in the classroom is essential to preparing children for success, but what happens outside of the classroom, and even on the playground, is just as important – especially considering that only 36 percent of children meet doctors’ recommendations for physical activity.

-Academy of Pediatrics, 2006

Recommendations & Best Practices.

The findings from this study provide substantial support for recess policy implementation in Elementary Schools across the entire Greater Rochester area. Physical activity programs facilitate children’s development of social skills, improve mental health and reduce risk-taking behavior. The findings from this survey show that putting a required recess policy in place largely increases the likelihood of children taking part in and benefiting from the recommended levels of physical activity.

Healthi Kids recommends that every district in Monroe County require at least 20-minutes of daily, active recess for all elementary students; and every elementary school have a building level policy that details how active recess is achieved daily, in all weather conditions.

Local success stories for instant recess and programmed recess throughout the school day:

- Schools are providing at least 20-minutes a day of supervised recess time during which time staff promote moderate to vigorous physical activity as appropriate to individual student needs.
- School-wide morning physical activity during the first 10 minutes of the day - play some rhythmic music and have movement.
- Class teachers do brain gym or movement - engaging in stretching arms/rolling

shoulders before a lesson to get kids into mindset for learning - some teachers use yoga as well!

- Physical Education teachers submit music daily to classroom teachers and students are given the chance to dance around for minute intervals throughout the day.
- Recess Policy Includes: at least 20 minutes of recess per day in addition to 15 minutes of recess after lunch.
- Recess before Lunch. Kids eat more, waste less food, return to class calmer, behave better and instruction time is increased.

About Healthi Kids.



Healthi Kids is a grassroots advocacy initiative to help Monroe County children lead healthier, more active lives. Healthi Kids an FLHSA initiative works in partnership with the University of Rochester Medical Center’s Center for Community Health, URMCC’s Department of Pediatrics, and the Children’s Agenda. Healthi Kids receives funding from the Greater Rochester Health Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Call or visit us online!
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