

## **Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill No. 339**

**Before the Senate Committee on Education**

**In Support of SB 339**

**Debby Potter/District 10 Member for the State Board of Education**

**20 Jan 2026**

Dear Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of Senate Bill No. 339, legislation that would ensure all Kansas children in kindergarten through fifth grade receive at least 30 minutes of daily recess and that this time be designated as part of the school term.

To be clear this proponent testimony is both my own and on behalf of District 10 which I represent, and it does not indicate any position either for or against this bill by the State Board of Education as a Whole.

Every child deserves meaningful free time during the school day. Childhood is not just about academic achievement — it's about healthy development, physical activity, and the opportunity to socialize, play, and recharge. Recess is not a luxury; it is an essential part of a child's school experience that supports mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

Research shows that regular recess helps students:

- **Improve attention and focus** when they return to class,
- **Develop their own social and emotional skills** through play and peer interaction,
- **Reduce stress and anxiety**, improving overall behavior in school,
- **Increase physical activity**, which is critical given rising childhood obesity rates.

Even a modest daily requirement — 30 minutes — ensures that the youngest learners in our schools have structured time to be outdoors, exercise, read, and/or build friendships.

Designating recess as part of the school term is especially important. When recess counts as instructional time, districts are encouraged to protect it rather than cut it to squeeze in more academic seat time. This recognition sends a clear message: children's free time is part of their education and should be protected.

As policymakers, we should trust the educators and parents who understand the value of balance in a child's day. Senate Bill 339 provides a common-sense standard that supports child development while still respecting local school district implementation.

I urge the Committee to support SB 339 and adopt a policy that helps every Kansas child thrive in school — academically and developmentally.

Thank you.