

Proponent of SB 339
For the Senate Education Committee
01/21/2026
Alexandra Shoup
Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of SB 339. While I am a paraprofessional, I am submitting testimony as a private citizen and mother.

The ability for recess to count as hours of the school day would be incredibly beneficial for the students. Additionally, having recess time be increased to 60 minutes a day can make a HUGE difference in the way children behave and learn in school. There is data provided in the book "The Anxious Generation" that states how children who have more recess time are less likely to get sent down to the office, they are less likely to get in trouble in class, and they are more likely to pay attention. Recess time IS learning time. It is the time for children to learn how to problem solve, learn how to manage friendships and emotions, learn social skills, and learn how to communicate.

Providing these children the opportunity to have recess time be considered school time is not only beneficial for the students, but also for the staff and caregivers. From my experience working at a school, I can see how important recess time is for teachers and paraprofessionals. It gives everyone the chance to get sunshine and fresh air which in turn would reduce turnover rates. Imagine being stuck in a stuffy classroom, with no windows, for hours. Would you not be bored out of your mind? Would you not try to make your own fun in class even if it means getting in trouble? There are many children that are distracted and unable to focus on their own work due to other children's inability to focus. You know what could help with that? More recess time.

These children already spend enough time trying to sit still and focus on subjects they're not interested in. The fact that it seems as though test scores are the only thing that schools prioritize is not helping the children learn social skills that are needed throughout their entire lives. There is already a disconnect with children and their social skills. The pandemic and screen time has really set children back emotionally, socially, and even physically. Recess time is the time for children learn these necessary skills. More recess time would help these children flourish. The Foundation of Economic Education states that prisoners get more outside time than students. Inmates are GUARANTEED at least 2 hours of outside time. This is the highlight of inmates days. Recess time is students highlight of their day. How many times have you heard a child say their favorite subject is recess? That's because they only get 30 minutes a day outside. "The Anxious Generation" states, "At a South Carolina school, a fourth grade teacher reported after one semester, compared to the previous year, truancy cases went from 54 down to 30. School bus violations went from 85 to 31. "In any given school year we used to have around 225 office referrals but now that we've added so much play we only have around 45." This is because of more recess time.

It is important to have recess time count as hours towards the school year because it IS part of the hours of school. It does have teaching and learning aspects, just like a classroom. Except that it is more free range and less structured. It is more important for our children and future leaders to learn social skills and problem solving skills over how to take standardized tests. As previously stated, the data that shows the benefits of increasing recess time are indisputable. These children have so much to learn and the formative years should be the time when we are focused on teaching life skills, not just academic skills.

Thank you again for your time, and vote yes on SB 339. The benefits very clearly outweigh the negatives.

Thank you again,
Alexandra Shoup
Shawnee County
66605