

Christina School District Board of Education Resolution in Support of Unstructured Learning Time

Whereas, the mission of the Christina School District supports fostering a nurturing learning environment; and,

Whereas, unstructured learning time has been proven to enhance a child's social development and ability to problem solve; and,

Whereas, play improves memory and stimulates brain development; and,

Whereas, play is necessary for ELL students to develop social language that is less formal than academic language; and,

Whereas, play fosters an environment of cooperation and scaffolding of learning among children at different ages/stages and encourages children to connect academic experiences to real-world scenarios; and,

Whereas, research proves that children who are exposed to at least 15 minutes of unstructured play time during the day exhibit better behavior during academic time than children who are not offered a break; and,

Whereas, research published in the Early Childhood Education Journal revealed that both free play and adult-guided play can help young children learn awareness of other people's feelings and that play helps to teach kids to regulate their own emotions; and,

Whereas, evidence informs us that a lack of ample time for undirected, self-chosen play/activities contributes to mental health problems such as rising rates of stress, anxiety, and depression, and therefore should be treated as an important provision in the scheduling of student time; and,

Whereas, studies show that frequent small breaks are more beneficial to student emotional and physical health as well as academic achievement; therefore,

Be it resolved that the Christina School District Board of Education affirms that play is a positive aspect of being a student in a public school system; and,

Be it further resolved that the Christina School District Board of Education believes that unstructured learning time should be provided to all students in varying degrees, but in quantities no less than 20 minutes daily; and,

Be it further resolved that recess shall be supplementary to unstructured learning time inside the classroom; and,

Be it further resolved that the Christina School District Board of Education affirms its support for unstructured learning time and recess for students in grades 6-8; and,

Be it further resolved that the Christina School District Board of Education supports the fact that appropriate amounts of time for play and/or freely chosen activities are necessary for healthy development and should be provided during the school day; and,

Be it further resolved that the Christina School District Board of Education supports the evidence that play increases student abilities in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, executive functioning, communication skills, empathy, and self-regulation; and,

Be it ultimately resolved that the Christina School District believes that ample time for student-driven, unstructured play must be included among the essential learning experiences in the education of our students. Beyond physical activity, these experiences include imaginative play, creative/constructive play, and games with rules. Student engagement in undirected, freely chosen activities is an essential component of healthy human development as well as a necessity for social/emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of children.



Elizabeth Paige
President, Christina School District Board of Education



George Evans
Vice President, Christina School District Board of Education