Recess Before Lunch
Lucy Nolan
Task Force on Childhood Obesity
Why Recess Before Lunch?

Kids PLAY before they EAT
Why Recess Before Lunch?

* Decreased occurrence of sickness on the playground
* Release of energy before settling to eat
* Decreased behavioral problems on playground, at lunch and in the halls
* Less plate waste – kids drink more milk and waste less food
  * Kids eat slower and enjoy their meal and socialize
* Easier to settle into class work after lunch
Connecticut schools who participate in Recess Before Lunch

* Four schools were interviewed for this presentation:

  - Casmir Pulaski Elementary School, Meriden
  - Israel Putnam Elementary School, Meriden
  - Vernon Elementary School, Vernon
  - Skinner Road School, Vernon
Principal: Dan Coffey

Current Grades with Recess Before Lunch (RBL): Grade 5 (127 children)

Reasons RBL was implemented:
* Cut down on transitions
* To improve timeliness

Resulting Benefits:
* Improved behavior in the cafeteria and classroom
* Students are more ready to learn and receive instruction

Initial Concerns:
* Teachers were concerned about not having enough time for instruction. Now since achievement scores are matched to teacher’s evaluations, teachers valued more time in the classroom.

Solution:
* Emphasis on students being instruction ready after lunch because energy that would have been built up in the classroom has been released during recess time. This helped to elevate the concern of teachers.
* Principal: Anne Jellison
* Current Grades with RBL: Grade K – 5 (585 children)
* Reasons RBL was implemented:
  * Better for children
  * Easier transitions / settled down better
* Resulting Benefits:
  * Students concentrated more on lunch
  * Had fewer office referrals for bad behavior
  * Lost fewer minutes moving students from lunch to class compared to going to class after recess
* There were no concerns or opposition coming from staff, it was fully supported by teachers and other involved staff members.
* Recommendations from principal:
  * Schedule lunch waves first, take into account the number of kids in each grade and when they would be hungry. When lunch schedule is set then build in specials (art, music, etc.).
  * This school prefers to schedule kindergarten last because they have snack in the morning and because they take the most time getting in line for lunch.
Vernon Elementary School
Alternative School for student with behavioral issues
(opened 8/2013)
Vernon

* Principal: Sally Sherman
* Current grades with RBL: K-8 (10 kids)
* Recess Before Lunch was used since school has opened
* Lunch is eaten inside the classroom
* Resulting Benefits:
  * Behavior of children is calmer and better regulated
  * Easier transition from recess to classroom
  * Children are more open to relaxing and eating after recess
  * Children can better complete their assigned tasks during in classroom lunch time (i.e. setting the table, clean up, etc.)
* **Principal:** Sandye Simon

* **Current grades with RBL:** K, 3rd, and 5th (Next school year all grades will be transitioned to a RBL schedule)

* **Reasons RBL was implemented:**
  * Push from district to incorporate more physical activity within the school day

* **Resulting benefits:**
  * Reduced illness that would occur from eating before recess
  * Kids are more active

* **Initial Concerns:**
  * Issue with fitting in washing hands after recess to prepare for lunch
  * Kids are more ramped up coming in from recess and not as calm if there was a longer window of time between recess and lunch. (5th grade class has a two hour window between recess and lunch)
  * Principal has seen no visible improvements in regards to behavior for grades that participate in RBL
## Lunch Wave Schedule

### Casimir Pulaski

**2012-2013 Lunch Waves/Table Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunch Wave</th>
<th>Grades &amp; Classrooms</th>
<th>Recess Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Wave</strong></td>
<td>Grade 5: Gerasim and Wheeler</td>
<td>FIRST WAVE 10:55 - 11:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 – 11:45</td>
<td>Grade 5: Long and Anastasio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Wave</strong></td>
<td>Grade 4: Ennis and Godfrey</td>
<td>SECOND WAVE 11:10 - 11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:00</td>
<td>Grade 3: Gerges and Constanz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Wave</strong></td>
<td>Grade 2: Ericson and Grover</td>
<td>THIRD WAVE 11:30 - 11:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 – 12:20</td>
<td>Grade 1: Greenberg and Bates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth Wave</strong></td>
<td>Grade 3: Bax and Blakely</td>
<td>FOURTH WAVE 11:45 – 12:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:05 – 12:35</td>
<td>Grade 2: Clark and Bengtson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fifth Wave</strong></td>
<td>Grade 2: Daniels and Graham</td>
<td>FIFTH WAVE 12:05 – 12:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:25 – 12:55</td>
<td>Grade 1: Andrews and Blumberg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sixth Wave</strong></td>
<td>Grade 1: Greenberg and Davis</td>
<td>SIXTH WAVE 12:20 – 12:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:40 – 1:10</td>
<td>Grade 1: Greenberg and Davis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Israel Putnam

**Lunch and Recess Schedule 2013-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:35-10:55</td>
<td>10:55-11:25</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:10-11:30</td>
<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:35-11:55</td>
<td>11:55-12:25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:20</td>
<td>12:20-12:50</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:20-12:40</td>
<td>12:40-1:10</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:40-1:00</td>
<td>1:00-1:30</td>
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### Seating Arrangements

**Cafe A** (closest to hallway)

**Cafe B** (closest to outside)
How it effects childhood obesity

Casmir Pulaski kids exercise 3 times during the day:
   Morning, PE, and afternoon

*Skinner Road buses drops kids ½ mile from school in the morning to get the whole school walking*

Opportunities to socialize and de-stress

*Less plate waste of healthier foods*

*fruits and dairy*

More activity throughout the day
What can we do?

* Support efforts by schools
  * Pedometers, maps, statewide incentive programs to build team work
  * Funding for a mascot
  * Making exercise and eating right fun!

* Bring along teachers
  * Build Recess Before Lunch Toolkit with ideas on scheduling
  * Use Professional Day to work with teachers
  * Keep tab of how it’s helping with classroom/recess behavior
Suggestion for Task Force Action

* Pilot and Research Program:
  * Choose 3 – 5 schools to conduct study on RBL
  * Measure
    * Plate Waste
    * Behavioral Change
    * Effect of Physical Activity
    * Assess needed resources
  * Build toolkit from research
  * Inclusion in School Wellness Policies
Questions?

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