



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA**

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**Statement to the Fairfax County School Board
July 28, 2011**

Good evening Chairman Strauss, members of the board, and Superintendent Dale. I'm Helen Kelly, Action Director of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. I speak on behalf of the League membership in Fairfax County.

In its most recent Executive Summary Report, the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) recommended that schools specify a minimum daily recess period and insist that children cannot miss recess for failure to complete class assignments or for disciplinary reasons.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends that the minimum daily recess period should be at least 20 minutes in length.

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area supports both SHAC and NASPE in their recommendations. We believe that all elementary students should participate in a daily recess period lasting at least 20 minutes.

In the most recent Fairfax County Youth Survey data, only one-third of county students report getting the minimum recommended amount of daily exercise. While it is important in reversing the epidemic of childhood obesity, exercise is not the only benefit students can gain from recess. According to NASPE, besides offering students the opportunity to engage in physical activity, recess also allows them "to practice life skills such as cooperation, taking turns, following rules, sharing, communication, negotiation, problem solving and conflict resolution."

The U.S. Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children report that school recess is "an integral component of a child's physical, social and academic development." With its many recognized benefits, we support the 20-minute minimum daily recess period for Fairfax County Schools.

The League of Women Voters appreciates the efforts you have made to maintain a high quality educational system. We also understand that teachers have numerous academic goals to meet in a limited amount of time. We calculate that in order to have enough time to allow 20 minutes of recess per day, the overall amount of time the children spend in school would need to be increased by 50 minutes per week.

Because of the many advantages it offers our students, we urge you to adopt the 20-minute minimum daily recess period for the 2012-2013 school year.