

## **Recess Before Lunch**

This article will highlight another change for elementary students as part of the Montgomery County R-II School Wellness Policy. This school year Montgomery and Jonesburg Elementary implemented “Recess Before Lunch”. Bellflower Elementary had Recess Before Lunch last school year and was one of the big reasons for us to implement it in the other two elementary buildings.

You may not even realize that your elementary aged child has recess before lunch; but many schools throughout the nation have implemented this and there are several benefits and reasons for why it is effective. Entrenched as it is in the school culture, the lunch-recess sequence has never made much sense from a health standpoint. Few adults eat a meal and then immediately exercise, because they know what could happen.

Most schools that have switched to Recess Before Lunch report greater nutrient consumption, as children tend to eat a more balanced diet. It has been shown that there is less plate waste or food thrown away, as children are more ready to eat and are not in a hurry to get outside to play. Before switching, many children would eat their food in a rush and then play and/or run a lot during recess which would often lead to stomachaches and headaches especially during the warm months of the year.

Recess before lunch has also shown to lead to better classroom performance, as it is easier to settle students back into the classroom after lunch . . .rather than after recess. Also students tend to pay more attention in class when they are not hungry after eating a healthy lunch.

While change is never easy, especially with something that has been done the same way for a long time, hopefully the benefits of Recess Before Lunch will be proven in elementary students within our school district.

Article submitted by Montgomery County R-II School Health Advisory Council