

# Update on Recess/Unstructured Break Time

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# Communication from Superintendent Horton

August 15, 2025

Dear DCSD Elementary Parents/Guardians,

As we wrap up the second week of school, I want to thank you for your patience, support, and commitment as we settle into the rhythm of a new school year. I also want to follow up on the topic of recess and unstructured break time. **We recognize the vital role that a healthy balance of physical activity and mental breaks plays in helping students succeed, both in school and in life.**

To address this topic, I have organized a TregoEd meeting in September. TregoEd is a conflict-resolution process we use in DCSD, led by a trained facilitator. It brings together a variety of stakeholders for an intensive, four-hour, solution-focused discussion.

Once this process is complete, we will share our plan and next steps with you. Your partnership is valued, and I look forward to working together to make this school year an incredible one for our students.

**Note: Input collected at BOE Public Participation on August 11 and at the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council on August 19.**

September 8, 2025

**The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) recognizes the vital role that a healthy balance of physical activity and mental breaks plays in helping students succeed, both in school and in life.** To address this topic, we are organizing a TregoED meeting in September. TregoEd is a conflict-resolution process we use in DCSD, led by a trained facilitator. It brings together a variety of stakeholders for an intensive, four-hour, solution-focused discussion.

If you are interested in participating, please complete the form above. Once this process is complete, we will share our plan and next steps with you. Your partnership is valued, and we look forward to working together to support all students.

**Note: Input collected at BOE Public Participation on September 8 and at the Superintendent's Bilingual Parent Advisory Council on September 9.**

**Over 400 individuals applied for the TregoED, which consisted of 3 parents, 3 teachers, 3 principals, and 3 district staff from across the county.**

# Communication from Superintendent Horton

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September 29, 2025

Last week parents, teachers, principals, and district leaders from the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) met to discuss the community's request to extend the minimum time for recess, also called Unstructured Break Time (UBT). Using the TREGO-ED problem-solving process, the group focused on this guiding question: "How can DCSD honor the request to increase the minimum UBT time while supporting academics, required instructional minutes, and student social emotional growth?"

The meeting ended with shared recommendations including:

- Conduct Stakeholder Surveys
- Implement a Pilot Program
- Establish a Common Definition of UBT
- Re-evaluate the Master Schedule for Flexibility

These recommendations will be shared with district leadership and principals over the next two weeks and presented to the Board of Education on October 6. All stakeholders are invited to watch the Board meeting on DSTV.

# The Work of the TregoED

In alignment with DCSD Strategic Plan Goal Area Two: School, Family, and Community Engagement, DCSD recently hosted a TregoED session with a variety of stakeholders based on concerns related to recess/unstructured break time.

After an initial brainstorming session where participants raised questions about the cost, research basis, and scheduling impact, the group engaged in a detailed discussion to synthesize these concerns into a single, actionable question. The final, agreed-upon question that framed the remainder of the session was: **How can DCSD honor the request to increase the minimum UBT time while supporting academics, required instructional minutes, and student social emotional growth?**

Issues discussed included:

- Student Well-being and Performance
- Logistical and Curricular Constraints
- Equity and Standardization
- Definition and Parameters of UBT
- Research and Data

The meeting ended with shared recommendations including:

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- Implement a Pilot Program
- Establish a Common Definition of UBT
- Re-evaluate the Master Schedule for Flexibility

# Moving Forward

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Based on school and community feedback and findings from TregoED, **all DCSD elementary schools will implement a 30-minute daily recess/unstructured break time by January 2026.**

School leaders will receive a menu of options to update their master schedules to reflect this adjustment. Schools are encouraged to work collaboratively with staff and families to determine the changes that best support students. This menu will provide flexibility, allowing each school to meet the unique needs of its students and community.

We thank our stakeholders for bringing this concern forward and for working collaboratively with us to find a solution.