



Dario Lopez-Mills | Associated Press

Students play ball during recess at the St. Agnes Elementary School in Phoenix, Ariz., on March 3, 2020.



Matt York | Associated Press

Whittier Elementary School students enjoy recess on Oct. 18, 2022 in Mesa, Ariz.

Pediatrics group issues first new recess guidance in 13 years

BY LAURA UNGAR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Recess isn't just a fun break for grade schoolers. It's crucial to good health and good grades for kids of all ages.

That's the message from a leading pediatricians group, which just released the first new guidance in 13 years about this unstructured time at school and how it needs to be protected.

The updated policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics comes after years of shrinking recesses and worsening children's health.

The group "has always supported play — free play for kids — but it's been increasingly threatened over time," partly by the drive for higher test scores, said Dr. Robert Murray, a lead author. "It has a very powerful benefit if it's used to the fullest."

The new guidance, published Monday in the journal *Pediatrics*, is similar to the previous policy statement but cites the latest research on why these breaks are essential for kids' academic success and mental, physical, social and emotional growth.

For example, new evidence shows that kids need pauses between concentrated bouts of learning so the brain can hold and store the infor-

mation. Researchers also say recess gives kids a chance to navigate relationships and build confidence, which is just as important for older kids as younger ones.

Murray and his colleagues also stressed the importance of physical activity in preventing obesity, a condition that now affects about 1 in 5 U.S. children and teens.

Given these benefits, they recommend that recess be protected and never withheld for academic or punitive reasons, as sometimes happens in schools.

"If the child is disruptive or rude and disrespectful, recess is one of the things that teachers use to punish kids," Murray said, adding that students struggling with behavioral issues or grades are often the ones who need recess most.

But those students aren't the only ones losing out. Recess has been waning for all kids. Since the mid-2000s, up to 40% of school districts nationally have reduced or eliminated recess, according to data from the group Springboard to Active Schools in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Today, the duration of recess varies widely across U.S. schools, ranging from less than 10 minutes to more than an

hour a day, the pediatrics group said. Older kids generally get less time than younger ones.

Ideally, studies show, kids should get a minimum of 20 minutes a day and multiple breaks. In other countries such as Denmark, Japan and the United Kingdom, students get breaks after every 45 minutes to 50 minutes of classroom instruction.

"They should get a long enough period of time where they can de-stress and blow off steam and prepare for the next class," Murray said.

Dr. Lauren Fiechtner, a childhood obesity expert at Mass General Brigham for Children in Boston, said she's glad about the updated recess recommendations. She's seen the importance of recess as both a doctor and mother of two. She recalled how her 8-year-old son learned how to play basketball at recess and now loves the game.

Fiechtner, who wasn't involved in creating the guidance, agrees with the recommendation that middle and high school students need recess, too.

"As kids get older, they're more on their screens. So it's really helpful, I think, for outdoor activity and recess to be happening," she said. "Recess is great. We all kind of need recess."

Big changes arrive July 1 for student borrowers, including in loan repayments

BY SHAUNEEN MIRANDA
STATES NEWSROOM

WASHINGTON — The federal student loan system is set to see a dramatic overhaul beginning this summer, and critics warn it likely will make loans more expensive and difficult to obtain for borrowers — driving them to private lenders or altering their plans for higher education.

Among the major changes are new loan limits for graduate and professional students, a restructured repayment system where new borrowers will have only two plans to choose from and the elimination of a key loan program for graduate and professional students that allowed for unlimited borrowing.

The provisions — most of which will take effect July 1 — stem from congressional Republicans' mega tax and spending cut bill that President Donald Trump signed into law last year.

The U.S. Department of Education finalized regulations, published May 1, that implement sweeping changes outlined in the GOP's "big, beautiful" law. The department received more than 80,000 public comments before the rule was finalized.

Under Secretary of Education Nicholas Kent said that "at a high level," the reforms center on "lowering the cost of college, simplifying student loan repayment and restoring accountability to the federal student lending system," during an April 30 call with reporters regarding the new regulations.

The average federal student loan debt balance stands at \$39,547, according to the Education Data Initiative.

As July 1 approaches, here's a closer look at some of the biggest changes coming to the federal student loan system:

Elimination of Grad PLUS

The Grad PLUS program, which allowed for graduate and professional students to borrow up to the full cost of attendance, will soon be eliminated under the package and unavailable for new borrowers.

"If you are currently borrowing Grad PLUS loans, so you borrowed Grad PLUS loans before July 1, you will be allowed to continue using Grad PLUS until you finish your program, or until three years have expired, basically whichever is sooner," said Preston Cooper, senior fellow in higher education policy at the American Enterprise Institute, a right-leaning think tank.

"Current students are grandfathered in — it will only be new graduate students, as of this fall, after July 1, who will be subject to the new loan limits," Cooper said.

NEW BORROWING CAPS

The package also sets forth new annual and aggregate loan limits for graduate and professional students, along with parents who take out federal

student loans for dependent undergraduate students.

Graduate student loans will be capped at \$20,500 annually, with a \$100,000 aggregate limit.

Parent PLUS borrowers will have an annual cap of \$20,000 and an aggregate cap of \$65,000 per dependent.

Professional student loans will have a \$50,000 annual limit and an aggregate cap of \$200,000.

The programs that fall within the department's "professional" category and are subject to that larger loan cap include: pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, chiropractic, law, medicine, optometry, osteopathic medicine, podiatry, theology and clinical psychology.

The department clarified in a fact sheet on the finalized regulations that the "professional" student classifications "do not express a value judgment about the importance of any occupation or field" but instead serve a "loan-administration function."

The agency has received immense pushback from groups representing people in fields that do not fall under the department's definition and will thus be subject to lower annual and lifetime borrowing caps.

INCOMING REPAYMENT OPTIONS

In another major shift, the regulations replace prior repayment options with two new plans — the Repayment Assistance Plan, or RAP, and the Tiered Standard plan — both of which will launch July 1.

RAP is an income-based repayment plan that "waives unpaid interest for borrowers who make on-time payments that do not fully cover accruing interest," per the department's fact sheet.

Balances under the plan will also "decline with each on-time payment, as unpaid interest is fully waived and the Department then reduces principal by an amount equal to the borrower's payment, up to \$50," per the agency.

The Tiered Standard plan offers fixed monthly payments, ranging from a 10-year to 25-year period, depending on the outstanding principal balance of the borrower.

"A lot more expensive"

"The upshot is that loan repayment is going to get a lot more expensive for almost everyone, and for some people, it's going to get significantly more expensive, and the transition is also going to be difficult for a lot of people to manage," Michele Zampini, associate vice president for federal policy and advocacy at the Institute for College Access & Success, told States Newsroom.

Zampini, whose organization aims to advance affordability, accountability and equity in higher education, said she thinks "there will be a lot of students who will have to turn to the private loan market, who otherwise would have been able to cover their

costs through the (Grad PLUS) program."

Victoria Jackson, assistant director of higher education policy at the nonprofit policy and advocacy group EdTrust, said that with the new loan limits and "drastic cuts to aid availability" in the regulations, "you would really hope that it would come with other, more affordable and better forms of financial aid."

"And what they've done is just created this vacuum that right now can really only be filled with private loans, which are costlier and riskier for students, or students are just not going to go," Jackson said.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration continues its efforts to eliminate the Department of Education, including through a series of interagency agreements that transfer several of its responsibilities to other departments.

Under the most recent agreement, the Treasury Department will take over Education's responsibility for collecting on defaulted federal student loan debt — the first step in a multiphase process toward Treasury taking on Education's entire, roughly \$1.7 trillion federal student loan portfolio.

TRANSITION TO NEW SYSTEM

Zampini noted that, when it comes to the incoming student loan regulations, she does not have confidence in the Education Department's "ability at this moment to successfully manage the transition without a lot of issues, as far as servicing and as far as account tracking and plan enrollment and things like that."

Jackson, of EdTrust, said that "by weakening the federal financial aid system, I think there's a weakening of our higher education system and making it more difficult for low-income students, students of color and other marginalized students to access graduate education."

She added that "people who complete those degrees tend to have more financial security in the future — they earn more over their lifetimes and, on markers of financial success and opportunity, do better."

"I think this is one prong of a plan of undermining our overall higher education system."

LEGAL NOTICE

DAVIESS COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVITATION TO BID

The Daviess County Board of Education will receive sealed bids for the following:

- Bid #26-14 Instructional & Office Supplies
- Bid #26-15 Copy Paper
- Bid #26-16 Athletic Supplies
- Bid #26-17 Custodial Paper Products
- Bid #26-18 Custodial Chemicals
- Bid #26-19 Custodial Supplies
- Bid #26-20 District Vehicles

Bids will be received up to the hour of 10:00 A.M. (Central Standard Time), Thursday, June 4, 2026 at the Office of the Purchasing Supervisor, 1621 Southtown Blvd., Owensboro, Kentucky 42301. At the above mentioned time, the bids will be opened and read publicly.

Title I, Title II, Title IV, IDEA-B and other Federal Funds may be used in part to purchase from this bid.

No awards will be made at that time.

Kelsey Trunnell
KELSEY TRUNNELL,
PURCHASING SUPERVISOR
DAVIESS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

OCTC hosting CDL program information session May 21

BY KATIE POWERS
OCTC

Individuals interested in earning a commercial driver's license (CDL) are invited to a CDL information session on Thursday, May 21 from 5 to 6 p.m. at the OCTC downtown campus, 1501 Frederica Street.

This free, one-hour session is designed for community members who

are exploring a career in commercial driving or seeking training options. Attendees will learn about the CDL class, enrollment steps, and what to expect from training.

Representatives from the Kentucky Career Center will be on site to discuss available funding resources, including financial assistance

options for individuals who qualify and may need help covering the cost of CDL training. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and connect directly with career and workforce development professionals.

The CDL Information Session is open to the public, and no prior registration is required.

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