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MAYOR RON DELLUMS AND ASSEMBLYMEMBER HAYASHI PROMOTE FITNESS STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS

Mayor Dellums Sponsors, Assemblymember Introduces Bill to Combat Childhood Obesity

OAKLAND – Mayor Ron Dellums and Assemblymember Mary Hayashi (D-Hayward) joined forces today in a pledge to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity in Oakland and California schools. Assemblymember Hayashi introduced AB 2072 - sponsored by a collaboration including Mayor Dellums, the city of Oakland, and the Oakland Unified School District – which will launch the Physical Education Award Program (PEAP) designed to encourage the practice of good physical fitness among students.

“This bill is rooted in our collective commitment to see that the young people of our community learn the value of a healthy and active lifestyle at an early age,” said Mayor Dellums. “A strong relationship between state and local government and our partners in education is vital to improving this looming public health issue, which is compromising the health and academic potential of our students.”

This is an important step towards remedying our state’s childhood obesity epidemic and will encourage students to establish lifetime habits of good health and physical activity. The legislation requires the State Board of Education to establish an award program for schools that conduct their physical education courses pursuant to the State’s existing standards and demonstrate increasing numbers of pupils enrolled in that school meet minimum standards on the physical performance test.

The state's physical fitness test, the FitnessGram, is administered to students in grades 5, 7, and 9 using criterion-referenced performance standards to evaluate fitness performance and is designed to test key fitness areas that represent three broad components of fitness, including: (1) aerobic capacity, (2) body composition, and (3) muscle strength, endurance and flexibility. This third component is further divided into four areas: abdominal strength and endurance, trunk extensor strength and flexibility, upper body strength and endurance, and flexibility.

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In 2005, 1,374,283 students in grades 5, 7, and 9 were tested and only 25 percent of the students in grades five, 29 percent in grade seven, and 27 percent in grade nine achieved the fitness standards for all six areas of the FitnessGram. Likewise, only 56 percent of the students across the three grades met the targeted performance standard for aerobic capacity, which is considered the most important of the six areas tested for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

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