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**A+ Fit School Designations and Grants Promoting Healthy Schools
Available to All NC Public Schools K-12**

NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund announces second phase of A+ Fit School Program

RALEIGH, NC – Today the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the second phase of its *A+ Fit School* designation and grants program.

According to Trust for America's Health, North Carolina has the 5th highest childhood obesity rate in the nation. With escalating numbers of diseases and preventable deaths in North Carolina linked to physical inactivity and poor nutrition, the public health implications of being overweight have become a growing priority for HWTF. These behaviors increase the risks for cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity, and many other serious chronic illnesses.

HWTF's initiative is further supported by the growing body of evidence linking physical activity and healthy eating to improved academic performance. In 2001, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education released a study that indicated physical activity programs are linked to stronger academic achievement and improved test scores.

"A number of North Carolina's schools have made great strides toward creating healthier environments for all students and staff," said Dr. Chuck Willson, HWTF chair. "An *A+ Fit School* designation represents the achievements of an individual school in fostering healthy lifestyles for all students, and staff."

All North Carolina public schools, K-12, are eligible to apply for the designation. Schools chosen for the *A+ Fit School* designation will receive:

- A banner for the entrance to their school
- A \$1,000 discretionary stipend for the individual school
- Use of the *A+ Fit School* designation logo for all communications

In order to support the efforts of promising schools, one-year grants of \$7,500 will be awarded to schools that demonstrate need, proven capacity, and opportunity for positive change in addressing physical activity and/or healthy eating in North Carolina schools. The selected school grantees will implement projects that promote physical activity and healthy eating ranging from staff wellness programs to providing playground and healthy cooking equipment. HWTF is committed to selecting grantees and designees that represent a broad geographic range, diversity of needs, and range of strategies used to address those needs.

There is no fee to apply for the *A+ Fit School* designation or grant. For more information about the *A+ Fit School program*, or to download an *A+ Fit School* application, please visit www.aplusfitschoolsnc.com. **Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on February 24th, 2010.**

About the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$199 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$102 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

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