

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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 first phase of A+ Fit School

RALEIGH, NC – Today the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the first 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 new 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 conducted a study that linked physical activity programs to stronger academic achievement and improved test scores.

"North Carolina's schools can take the lead to help their children and staff become healthier," said HWTF chair Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue. "An *A+ Fit School* designation will be highly regarded among schools across North Carolina as an attractive asset that makes students, staff, teachers and parents proud of their success."

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 plaque for the principal's office
- Recognition on the Fit Kids Web site, www.FitKidsNC.com
- 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.FitKidsNC.com and click on the News section. **Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on February 20th, 2009.**

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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