

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 7, 2005

HWTF STUDY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ADOPTED BY STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Board Chair Howard Lee Recognizes HWTF Chair Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue's
Leadership in Moving Physical Activity Policy Forward*

(RALEIGH, NC) –NC State Board of Education Chair Howard N. Lee acknowledged the leadership of NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) Chair Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue as the Board voted unanimously to approve a 30-minute daily physical activity requirement for students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Today's vote is based on recently released policy recommendations from HWTF's Study Committee on Childhood Obesity, *Fit Families NC*. This historic vote makes North Carolina the first state to pass a 30-minute physical activity policy at the State Board level.

"I would like to commend the Lieutenant Governor for her leadership in this area especially through the Health and Wellness Trust Fund," said Chairman Lee. "We are hopeful that the Trust Fund will take credit for where we are today with the vote of the State Board. I think that this is a wonderful step forward."

This requirement will be a revision to the Healthy Active Children Policy passed by the State Board of Education in 2003, which only recommended that schools increase physical activity. The new policy will be implemented during the 2006-2007 school year.

"This is a wonderful day, not only for North Carolina, but for our children," said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF chair and member of the State Board. "Research shows there is a direct link between the health of a child and their academic success, and today we as a Board have shown our commitment to the development of the whole child."

HWTF has taken a comprehensive approach to finding solutions to combat the growing childhood obesity epidemic in North Carolina. The study committee's recommendations were developed with input from school, health and industry representatives.

"I think this is symbolic of good leadership, and I thank the Lieutenant Governor for bringing us to this point," said Chairman Lee.

HWTF has taken a key role in finding solutions to combat the growing childhood obesity epidemic in North Carolina. In this state, one out of four youth between the ages 12 – 18 is overweight, while one in five children between ages 5 – 11 is overweight.

"Normally, I would be against this kind of policy, because I would prefer for the local school boards to make these decisions," said Richard Greene, a member of Buncombe County Board of Education, who serves on the HWTF study committee. "However, after studying the issues closely, I am convinced that we must require physical activity in schools if we are to address the problem of childhood obesity in North Carolina."

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 \$127 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.