

# DROPPING THE BALL

SCHOOLS FAIL TO MEET PHYSICAL EDUCATION MANDATES

## CALIFORNIA'S *Childhood Obesity Epidemic*

Based on information collected through a Public Records Act request, more than half of California school districts assessed by the California Department of Education (CDE) failed to meet the mandated elementary school physical education (P.E.) requirement of 200 minutes every ten days. This is especially concerning since physical activity and diet are the two behavioral factors shaping California's childhood obesity epidemic. The severity of this epidemic cannot be underestimated:

- In 2004, 28.1 percent of 5th, 7th and 9th grade students in California were overweight<sup>1</sup>
- In 2005, only 25 percent of the state's 5th grade students achieve the fitness standards for all six areas of the California Department of Education fitness test, the FITNESSGRAM<sup>2</sup>
- 80 percent of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes are overweight<sup>3</sup>
- 33 percent of boys born in 2000 will develop diabetes if current trends continue<sup>4</sup>
- 39 percent of girls born in 2000 will develop diabetes if current trends continue<sup>4</sup>
- 75 percent of overweight adolescents are likely to be obese as adults<sup>5</sup>
- The yearly cost of physical inactivity, obesity and overweight to Californians in 2000 in direct medical expenses and lost productivity was \$22 billion<sup>6</sup>
- There are 10 chronic diseases directly associated with childhood overweight<sup>7,8</sup>
- Children who are overweight are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes mellitus, asthma and orthopedic problems; they are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease (such as increased blood pressure and cholesterol); and they are more likely to have behavioral problems and depression.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Childhood Overweight Rates on the Rise in California Assembly Districts" California Center for Public Health Advocacy, 2005

<sup>2</sup> "State Superintendent Jack O'Connell Announces 2005 Fitness Test Results for California Student" California Department of Education, November 21, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Ogden CL, Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Johnson CL. "Prevalence and Trends in Overweight Among US Children and Adolescents, 1999-2000." Journal of the American Medical Association 2002, vol. 288, pp. 1728-1732.

<sup>4</sup> ADA (American Diabetes Association. Children and Diabetes. ADA Web site [[http://www.diabetes.org/main/application/commercewf?origin=\\* .jsp&event=link \(B4\\_3\)](http://www.diabetes.org/main/application/commercewf?origin=* .jsp&event=link (B4_3))].

<sup>5</sup> Guo SS, Wu W, Cumlea WC, Roche AF. Predicting overweight and obesity in adulthood from body mass index values in adolescence. Am J Clin Nutr. 2002; 76:653-8

<sup>6</sup> Chenoweth D. The economic costs of physical inactivity, obesity and overweight in California adults: health care, workers' compensation, and lost productivity. Sacramento: Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section, California Department of Health Services; 2005.

<sup>7</sup> California Teen Eating, Exercise and Nutrition Survey. 1998.

<sup>8</sup> USDHHS. The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. Atlanta, GA, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> "Health Consequences of Obesity" Archives of Disease in Childhood, 2003; "Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in Balance" Institute of Medicine, 2005.

