



November 6, 2009

Dr. Meria Carstarphen
Austin ISD
1111 W. 6th St.
Austin, TX 78703

Dear Dr. Carstarphen:

After review of possible changes and the potential implications, the AISD School Health Advisory Council unanimously recommends that AISD continue to require .5 credit of health and 1.5 credits of PE during the 2010-2011 school year.

While trying to provide more flexibility in course requirements last session, the state legislature changed the mandates for health and PE for the recommended degree plan; reducing PE by .5 credit and abolishing the .5 credit health requirement. The requirements remain at 1.5 credits of PE and .5 credit of health on the distinguished and minimum plans at this time. The State Board of Education will be voting in November on a rule to bring the recommended plan into compliance with this legislation, but will not take action on the dibest options for our schools, keeping in mind fiscal impacts at the same time we are promoting healthy learning environments. We would like our District to continue to lead in this area!

Here are the facts.

- **PE and Health have an impact on student test scores.** Recent AISD Fitnessgram data shows that our fit

___kids are scoring better on their TAKS tests than those who are not within the healthy range. Students in low performing schools are scoring lower on Fitnessgram. Students on the minimum degree plan are in the most need of health and PE to help them be healthy and enhance their performance on tests. We need more PE, not less.

- **Healthy kids stay in school. Sick kids cost the District money.** PE and health can give our students information they need to stay healthy. AISD has 83,000 students. The national average cost for absent students is \$9-20 per day. Obese children miss an average of 1 day of school per month. That equals nine days per year.

AISD has 83,000 students and 30% of those students are overweight or obese. At the low end of the cost (\$9 p/day) that would be over 2 million dollars per school year in lost revenue. If health and PE classes could help us reduce that cost by half, you would save the district 1 million dollars!

