

**Response by Dr. Oxiris Barbot, Commissioner of Health to
Baltimore City Council Resolution 09-0167R:
Baltimore City Public Schools-
Are Current Physical Education Requirements Enough?**



The Health Department welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion of how system-wide consistent implementation of a physical education program in public schools is a critical component of addressing childhood obesity. BCHD is also working to address nutrition, the second critical component. Physical fitness promotes health, and health is a prerequisite for achievement. Therefore, we must acknowledge the association between fitness and positive academic performance, as has been proven by studies conducted in California and New York.

STANDARDIZED CURRICULUM

Standardize physical education curriculum city-wide with a focus on fitness as a way to address childhood obesity.

Instilling healthier, lifelong habits in children will help develop the cognitive and behavioral skills needed to stay active through adolescence and into adulthood.

SYSTEM-WIDE ASSESSMENTS

Perform system-wide yearly or bi-annual assessments of fitness outcome measures such as:

- Aerobic Capacity
- Muscular Strength, Endurance, and Flexibility
- Body Composition or Body Mass Index

Annual assessments allow student improvement to be measured over time against their previous performance.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Use annual assessments to give students objective feedback on their fitness and concrete suggestions on reaching the next fitness level.

Reports would give parents updates on their child's fitness progress and provide ways they can support their child's fitness during non-school hours. Analysis of computerized annual assessments would enable progress in the fight to reduce childhood obesity to be charted over time.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Since standardized physical education curriculum is only part of the solution, organized physical activity opportunities for school-age children must also be incorporated into after-school programs.

This can be accomplished in collaboration with community partners such as BCHD, foundations, and parent organizations.

**For more information, please visit our website
www.baltimorehealth.org**