



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Student Obesity Data Released Health Officials Call for Greater Community Involvement

- Parents Receive Health Report Cards beginning Wednesday -

PENSACOLA – At a time when many cities report high rates of obesity among adults and children, the Escambia County Health Department today released data showing no increase in obesity rates among 1st and 6th graders and a 1-2% increase for 3rd and 9th graders. Even with the 2% increase, 9th graders remain below their highest rate of the past five years. Beginning Wednesday, Escambia students take home Health Report Cards that provide parents with results of multiple screenings including vision, hearing, and Body Mass Index.

“While this is very encouraging news for our county – and comes at a time when we know that America’s obesity epidemic is at record-level highs – it also demonstrates that we must broaden our efforts beyond our schools,” said Health Department Director Dr. John Lanza. “Our city and county must commit to a community-wide effort that makes physical activity and healthy eating our way of life - I applaud Unite Escambia’s Health Solutions Team for spearheading the effort to change our community’s culture.”

Body Mass Index (BMI) data for 2008-2009 School Year, and a comparison with prior years, are:

Total Percentages

School Year	Normal	At Risk for		
		Overweight	Overweight	Underweight
2008-2009	62%	16%	20%	2%
2007-2008	63%	16%	19%	2%
2006-2007	60%	17%	21%	2%
2005-2006	61%	16%	21%	2%

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Percentages by Grade Level

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
First Grade	30%	30%	30%	28%	28%
Third Grade	35%	36%	35%	35%	36%
Sixth Grade	37%	42%	44%	41%	41%
Ninth Grade	36%	38%	41%	36%	38%

Community-wide Commitment

Spearheading a community-wide commitment to increased physical activity and nutrition is Unite Escambia's Health Solutions Team, which has as its goals to:

- Reduce rates of children who are overweight or obese from 30% to 20% by 2020.
- Increase by 14% the number of adults and children who are physically active and eat nutritious food by 2010.

Unite Escambia's Health Solutions Team is chaired by former President and CEO of Health First Network Robin Herr and is made up of community organizations and businesses who impact or are interested in Pensacola and Escambia's approach to healthy living. Mr. Herr is a retired business man with an extensive background and a passion for health and prevention.

A list of Unite Escambia team members and Health Solutions Team members is attached to this news release.

What is BMI?

- BMI is a measurement of body fat based on height and weight and is used to screen for health problems associated with an unhealthy body weight.
- The measurement of students' Body Mass Index in first, third and sixth grades is required by the State of Florida.
- Escambia measured 11,933 students this Fall.
- Escambia first collected BMI data in the 2004-2005 school year.

- more -

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Health Report Cards to Parents

- Beginning Wednesday, all parents of students receive health report cards for their students' health screenings.
- This report card includes the results of multiple screenings, including vision, hearing, and Body Mass Index.
- Parents are asked to obtain a physician's evaluation for any results noted as abnormal.

Attachments Enclosed

Attachment to the News Release: 1 of 2

Unite Escambia Health Solutions Team Members

Group/Organization	First Name	Last Name
American Lung Association of Florida	Patsy	Malley
UWF, Health, Leisure and Exercise Science	Debra	Vinci
Associate Director, Escambia County Health Dept.	Dr. Susan	Turner
Avid Outdoorsman (Retired)	Dr. Tom	Birdwell
CDAC	Gail	Honea
Chair, UWF, Health, Leisure, and Exercise Science	John	Todorovich
Chairman, Esc. Cty School Board	Patty	Hightower
Children's Services Director	MaryAnn	Bickerstaff
City of Pensacola Department of Parks & Recreation.	David	Flaherty
Congressman Miller's Office	Sheilah	Bowman
O'Sullivan Creel	Kathleen	Baldwin
Department of Children & Families	Tina	Balbas
West Florida Regional Planning Council	John	Gallagher
West Florida Regional Planning Council	Mary	Robinson
Escambia County Health Department, Director	Dr. John	Lanza
Director, Fricker Community Center	Kim	Carmody
Early Learning Coalition, Century	Jack	Moran
Escambia County Health Dept, Division of WIC & Nutrition	Laura	Snyder
Emergency Medical Services	Dr. Charles	Neal

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Escambia Boys and Girls Clubs	Hattie	Grace
Escambia Community Clinic	Don	Turner
Escambia County School District	Glenna	Taylor
Escambia County School District, Supervisory Dietitian	Jaleena	Wortham
Escambia County School District Health/Wellness/PE	Manny	Harageones
Graduate student UWF	Jill	Pait
Gulf Power Company, Wellness Coordinator	Deborah	Napier
Health First Network	Pat	Ast
Health First Network	Dr. William	Whibbs
Health in Motion	Carolyn	Haltinner
Escambia County School District, Health Services	Karen	Thoennes
Baptist Hospital, Medical Affairs Office	Sue	Westendorf
Nemours Children's Clinic	Dr. Michele	Zerah
Pensacola Young Professionals	Tracy	James
PTA	Dawn	Johnson
Registered Nurse Specialist	Sharon	Leventhal
Retired MD	Dr. Paula	Montgomery
Retired Navy Endocrinologist	Ann	Yoshihashi
Salvation Army	Buddy	Keen
Scared Heart Hospital	Debbie	Bostic
Scared Heart Hospital ER	Jennifer	Griffin
Sports Plex	Stephania	Wilson
United Way of Escambia County	Kris	Thoma
University of West Florida, Nursing Department	Geri	Tuttell
West Florida Area Health Educ. Center (AHEC)	Paige	Collier
West Florida Area Health Educ. Center (AHEC)	Susan	Cook
West Florida Hospital	Kendrick	Dodge
West Florida Hospital	Margie	Hobbs
West Pensacola Outreach Center	Geraldine	Wicks
YMCA Northwest Florida	Skip	Vogelsang

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Attachment to the News Release: 2 of 2

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY

2008-2009 BMI Results

District and school administrators, teachers, and staff are to be commended for taking this threat to our children's health seriously and for implementing programs and strategies that are making a difference in prompting the importance of lifelong healthy nutrition and physical activity for students and their families. Some of those programs and strategies include the following:

- Commitment of schools **to implement the district's Wellness Policy** utilizing the Coordinated School Health Program model.
- Work **of the wellness teams in each school** patterned after the eight components of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Coordinated School Health Program model.
- Leadership and **collaborative efforts** of the schools' physical education teachers, wellness coordinators, school nurses, and school food services personnel.
- Inclusion of a **student wellness goal and an employee wellness goal** in each school's School Improvement Plan to facilitate a healthy school environment and to address the promotion of lifelong healthy nutrition and physical activity.
- Cooperation and collaboration with community agencies to **promote the importance of lifelong healthy nutrition and physical activity** for students and their families (i.e. Kids Marathon, Healthy Families Day event, Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart, etc.).
- Implementation of **the requirement for 150-minutes of physical education/physical activity** per week for all students in grades K-5.
- Use of **new health and physical education textbooks** (i.e. purchase of new health education textbooks for elementary and middle schools and purchase of new personal fitness textbooks for high schools).

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- **Expansion of schools participating in the Healthy Schools Program** sponsored by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.
- Acquisition of **new resource materials** as a result of our school district being one of ten districts in Florida that make up the Healthy District Collaborative sponsored by the Florida Department of Education and the Florida Department of Health.

School District Food Services Goals for 2008-2009 School Year

- Provide reimbursable meals that are in compliance with the recommendations set forth in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
 - Decrease the serving of fried foods
 - Increase available fruits and vegetables
 - Increase complex carbohydrates
 - Use portion control methods to ensure appropriate serving sizes
 - Provide options that encourage variety in the diets of our students
- Review all foods currently available for a la carte sale in the cafeteria, as well as the snack vending machines available to students on campus.
 - Ensure appropriate portion sizes for age group of students being served
 - Monitor these products to limit fat and added sugar content per serving
 - Identify products that are nutrient dense and not just energy dense

The ECSD Food Services is currently in the process of implementing USDA and Wellness Policy goals.

- Changes to secondary menus include the replacement of fast food style combos with lower fat, more traditional style reimbursable meals, chef salads offered daily and fried French fries offered only one day per week on the reimbursable meal.
- Elementary and secondary schools throughout the district are increasingly offering more whole grain breads including hamburger and hotdog buns.
- All beverage machines meet the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's beverage guidelines. These guidelines include only offering unflavored water, milk and 100% juice at the middle school level, while high school students may have those items in addition to diet soda, flavored water, low calorie sports drinks (20 oz) and full strength sports drinks (12 oz).

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- In August of 2008 one-third of the Food Service employees participated in a training provided by the Alliance for Healthier Generations, Dole Foods and McCain Foods with an emphasis on reducing fat, sugar and increasing fiber in school meals.
- Recipes are being reviewed for opportunities to reduce fat and increase fiber while maintaining the quality that students have come to enjoy.
- Nutritional information is being collected for all foods served in school cafeterias.
- The food industry now recognizes the public's demand for implementing wellness policies in school districts and is diligently producing healthier/more nutritious options to meet this demand.

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