composition, upper body strength, and flexibility. The strongest showing across all grades was in trunk strength, where 80 to 86 percent of the students met the minimum standard.

"The fact that a majority of students are not aerobically fit indicates a need for more emphasis on cardiovascular activity. Schools should provide the opportunity to address these low levels of physical fitness in our children by providing quality physical education experiences with sound instructional practices," said O'Connell.

The average school day includes additional opportunities for physical activity such as recess/break activities and organized activities that take place at lunch and before and after school. These diverse activities are designed to meet the needs and interests of all students.

A recent analysis by the CDE compared 2001 results of physical fitness testing with the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT 9), given as part of the California Standardized Testing and Reporting Program. The analysis showed a significant relationship between academic achievement and fitness.

"In addition to health concerns, the positive and distinct relationship between physical fitness and academic achievement provides yet another factor for our schools to consider when making decisions and designing programs for our students," O'Connell said. "Annual fitness testing should be seen as a useful source of information on program effectiveness, much like academic testing."

The 2002 physical fitness results for schools, districts, counties, and the state are available on the CDE's Web site: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/pe/pe.html>. No individual student data is reported on the Internet.