Passing along some very exciting news regarding physical fitness test scores and math/reading scores in California! This is being released to the media December 10, 2003, at 10:00 AM PST.

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STATE STUDY PROVES PHYSICALLY FIT KIDS PERFORM BETTER ACADEMICALLY

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin today announced that the results of a recent study conducted by the California Department of Education (CDE) show a distinct relationship between academic achievement and the physical fitness of California’s public school students.

“This statewide study provides compelling evidence that the physical well-being of students has a direct impact on their ability to achieve academically,” said Eastin. “We now have the proof we’ve been looking for: students achieve best when they are physically fit. Thousands of years ago, the Greeks understood the importance of improving spirit, mind, and body. The research presented here validates their philosophic approach with scientific validation.”

The newly completed research study individually matched scores from the spring 2001 administration of the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT-9), given as part of California’s Standardized Testing and Reporting Program, with results of the state-mandated physical fitness test, known as the Fitnessgram, given in 2001 to students in grades five, seven, and nine.

In the study, reading and mathematics scores were matched with fitness scores of 353,000 fifth graders, 322,000 seventh graders, and 279,000 ninth graders. The attached bar graphs for each grade level show a significant relationship between the two types of scores that were matched.

Key findings of the study are:

- Higher achievement was associated with higher levels of fitness at each of the three grade levels measured.
- The relationship between academic achievement and fitness was greater in mathematics than in reading, particularly at higher fitness levels.
- Students who met minimum fitness levels in three or more physical fitness areas showed the greatest gains in academic achievement at all three grade levels.

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