

# TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION

## **House Public Health Committee Written Testimony of the Texas Public Health Coalition House Bill 1018 by Rep. Diane Patrick March 27, 2013**

Madame Chair and distinguished members, the Texas Public Health Coalition is pleased to express support for HB 1018 by Rep. Diane Patrick to require the development of goals and policy recommendations for improving fitness in our Texas schools. The coalition comprises more than 20 organizations that have joined to identify and promote effective public health approaches to our most pressing health issues in Texas, including obesity. Developing goals and planning for fitness in our schools is a reasonable step.

We recognize that improving physical activity in our schools starts with developing local goals for physical activity and recommending ways to achieve them. Doing so at the local level is appropriate; interested parties who work with the school population and know about the community's resources are best able to identify what can be done.

We appreciate HB 1018 designates local school health advisory councils (SHAC) to be responsible for contributing to campus fitness goals. This builds on the charge you have given SHACs and helps identify these councils as important policy resources for the community.

We also support HB 1018's provision that would include fitness goals as part of the campus improvement plan. This step will help integrate physical activity objectives with other campus goals related to academic achievement, coordinated school health, and parental involvement. Physical activity goals in the campus improvement plan will increase school and community involvement and accountability to improve fitness.

We understand some schools continue to struggle ensuring their local SHACs are fully staffed and working effectively. Appointing a separate subcommittee to the council to address physical activity and fitness may be more difficult for some.

Most of our students and schools understand fitness is essential to personal health and long-term achievement. HB 1018 will help ensure health remains a priority within a school by encouraging local planning and goal-setting. This is an effective and efficient way to use school resources. We urge you to support HB 1018 to help get this effort started. Thank you for your time today.