FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
M. RONY FRANÇOIS, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
SECRETARY

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JOHN L. WINN
Commissioner of Education

Just Read, Florida!

September 1, 2006

Dear District Superintendent:

As you begin another new school year, we extend greetings on behalf of the Florida Departments of Health and Education.

The Florida Legislature and Governor Bush recognize that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity. To formalize and encourage this role, Florida passed SB 772 supporting Federal legislation (P.L. 108 – 265). We applaud the numerous school districts who have taken this opportunity to develop strong policies and interventions related to school food services, nutrition education, physical activity, and other food-related activities.

To further support school efforts in promoting wellness, Action for Healthy Kids, a non-profit organization formed to address childhood obesity issues in schools, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and working with the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Education and other leading organizations, has developed Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge. The challenge will inform, motivate, and mobilize support for school wellness. Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge is an all-inclusive, fun and FREE event for 5th-8th grade students, parents, teachers, administrators, and others to celebrate coming back to school with a fresh approach. Although the event is targeted for 5th-8th grade students, it is easily adapted for older and younger students. The Game On! event integrates nutrition, physical activity, and learning through a series of activity stations that will stimulate minds and bodies. Participation by adults and children is rewarded – not performance. You will find more information about Game On! at http://actionforhealthykids.org/special_GameOn.php.

We encourage your schools to host their own local Game On! event to celebrate the beginning of a healthy 2006-2007 school year.

Sincerely,

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

Sincerely,

John L. Winn
Commissioner, Department of Education

MRF/JLW/cbv