



---

April 13, 2015

Assemblymember Gonzalez  
State Capitol Building's  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 949 Cheerleading instead of structured PE in schools**  
**AAP-CA Position: OPPOSE**

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez,

The California District of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP-CA), representing 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of the four California AAP regional Chapters, respectfully opposes your proposed legislation AB 949. This bill would prevent school districts to substitute cheerleading for physical education courses in school, as specified AAP-CA supports comprehensive physical fitness programs for all school children from kindergarten through grade twelve. Per National AAP policy, we o p p o s e substitution of other activities sports for PE classes.

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions. As a result, the current generation is now predicted to be the first generation not to outlive their parents. The health implications of this epidemic are profound. Insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea, poor self-esteem, and a lower health-related quality of life are among the comorbidities seen more commonly in affected children and youth than in their unaffected counterparts. In addition, up to 80% of obese youth continue this trend into adulthood.

Physical activity is a proven treatment strategy for obesity. Physical activity has been correlated with physical and emotional health, such as better relationships, less depression, fewer risk-taking behaviors, and higher grades. According to the National Standards for Health, Mental Health and Safety Guidelines for School Safety (of which AAP and the American Nursing Association were the major authors) planned, successfully-conducted physical education programs can provide many benefits for children and adolescents. These include improved levels of physical fitness, self-discipline, enhanced self-confidence and development of many skills. Because of the importance of both regular, supervised physical education for children and youth and their physical education regarding physical activity and its benefits the American Academy of Pediatrics supports comprehensive and regular physical education in the school setting without substitution. Specifically, the AAP recommends that school curriculum teach children and youth the health benefits of regular physical activity, and the importance of compulsory, quality, daily PE classes in all schools (kindergarten through grade 12) taught by qualified, trained educators.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose AB 949.

Sincerely,

*Kris E. Calvin* |

Kris Calvin  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California