A5151/S.2724 (Crespo/Klein)  
AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to screening for childhood obesity and instruction in good health and reducing the incidence of obesity

The New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) supports the above-referenced legislation, which would add obesity and diabetes screenings to normal school health checks. Additionally, this bill encourages better health education and allows the board of regents to mandate, at its discretion, a minimum of 120 minutes of physical activity per week for students.

Childhood obesity is a major epidemic with well-documented health, social and economic costs. Because no single behavioral or environmental factor alone contributed to obesity, multiple interventions, done simultaneously are more likely to prove effective. These include physical education and activity, nutrition, and environmental factors. This proposal would encourage better information gathering and reporting procedures for schools regarding the incidence of childhood obesity as well as related health issues, including type 2 Diabetes. Furthermore, this bill encourages better communication between schools and parents in relation to the weight status of their children and of potential collaborative interventions. The bill also seeks to increase physical activity in schools to the recommended 120 minutes a week and aims to expand education related to healthy nutrition and lifestyles.

Children spend a significant part of each day in the school environment. Good nutrition and physical activity play key roles in children’s ability to learn. NYSACHO supports this legislation which provides a means to raise parental and school awareness regarding obesity and its related diseases by increasing schools’ roles in tackling the obesity epidemic and giving educators the means to collaborate with parents to improve children’s health.

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