

## **ALERT: middle school physical activity policies may conflict with LOTE**

In response to Senate Bill 42, the State Board of Education (SBOE) requested that school districts develop a policy on physical activity. TFLA members will need to be alert to the possibility of districts forming policies to the detriment of electives such as LOTE, music and art.

At the SBOE meeting April 27, representatives of the physical education community advocated a requirement of one semester of PE per year. TFLA and Fine Arts testified for leaving the issue as a local issue. A PE requirement could limit the number of students able to take LOTE and/or force students to choose between Fine Arts and LOTE.

TFLA was concerned that a middle school physical activity requirement could have a negative impact on LOTE programs. We do not minimize the importance of childhood obesity and Type II diabetes; however, we believe it is extremely important to protect the opportunity for local districts to address solutions. We encourage districts to continue to allow students a wide variety of electives in middle school/junior high. This allows students to focus on educational goals at a time when academic choices are so important.

During the last legislative season SB42 was voted into law giving the SBOE the authority to write rules mandating physical activity in middle school and junior high school. The intent was to expand the requirements authorized by SB19 in 2001 for elementary schools, which gave the SBOE the authority to write rules mandating physical activity in elementary school. The SBOE established code policy that thirty minutes per day or 135 minutes per week of physical activity be required of each student in an elementary setting.