



**TAFT HONORS OHIO SCHOOLS FOR
PROMOTING GOOD HEALTH**

COLUMBUS (May 18, 2004) -Governor Bob Taft today recognized 171 Ohio schools for excellence in providing a healthy environment for students. The schools will receive Gold awards from the Governor's Buckeye Best Healthy Schools Awards program, part of the statewide Healthy Ohioans initiative.

"We are pleased to see so many schools in Ohio providing exemplary, healthy environments and working hard to promote healthy lifestyles, a cornerstone of the Healthy Ohioans initiative," Taft said. "Healthy behaviors established during childhood will assist our children in becoming the future healthy leaders of tomorrow. We need to continue to encourage and honor schools that recognize the importance of helping students get off to a healthy start."

The Governor's Buckeye Best Awards program, sponsored by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the American Cancer Society (ACS), Ohio Division, honors schools for making health a priority through school programs or policies promoting good nutrition, physical activity and tobacco prevention.

The Gold Award winners will receive a specially designed, dated flag to fly outside their school buildings indicating they place a high priority on healthy students. Silver and Bronze award winners will receive plaques. All Ohio schools received Buckeye Best Award applications last fall and winners were selected based on each school's implementation of programs and activities recommended as best practices in health by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This year, more than 1,000 schools applied for the Governor's Buckeye Best Healthy Schools Awards program, a 22 percent increase in participation from last year.

The ACS, Ohio Division and local health departments throughout the state will provide technical assistance and best practices information to the schools to help them continue to improve their efforts.

###

Note to media: A list of all award winners can be found at: <http://www.odhpressroom.org>

Contact: Public Affairs, ODH, at 614-644-8562; or
Orest Holubec, Governor's Office, at 614-644-0957.