



NEWS RELEASE

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**THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION PRESENTS
CENLA SCHOOL WELLNESS SUMMIT**

WOODWORTH – Teams from nine parish school districts attended The Rapides Foundation’s first Central Louisiana School Wellness Summit on Friday to hear results from the state’s report card on physical activity and learn how to make public schools healthier.

The summit, part of the Foundation’s focus on Diet and Physical Activity, was held Friday, Dec. 5, at The Wesley Center in Woodworth.

Peter Katzmarzyk, professor and Associate Executive Director for Population Science at Pennington Biomedical Research Center, presented results from the Louisiana Report Card on Physical Activity & Health for Children and Youth 2008. The report card assesses the level of physical activity and sedentary behaviors in Louisiana children and provides recommendations for improvement.

Millie Naquin, professor of health studies at Southeastern Louisiana University, delivered a keynote address that focused on “Strengthening Healthy Schools in Cenla.”

The School Wellness Summit is intended to encourage and support school health and wellness efforts in The Rapides Foundation’s nine-parish service area. The Foundation will fund school health and wellness grants in 2009.

“The Foundation is committed to improving diet and physical activity as a pathway to improved health. We believe schools must play an essential role in these improvements,” said Joe Rosier, president and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

Central Louisiana school districts sent wellness teams to the summit. Teams included superintendents, central office staff members, nutrition staff, school nurses, principals and health and physical education teachers.

The Rapides Foundation is a philanthropic organization that develops initiatives and provides grants to organizations that share the Foundation's mission to improve the health status of Central Louisiana. The Foundation's service area consists of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn parishes.