AASA Partners With Latino and African-American Education Leader Associations To Address Childhood Obesity

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has officially partnered with the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) and the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS) to address childhood obesity among some of the most vulnerable communities in the country. For more than 30 years, AASA has worked with school leaders on prominent issues that affect children’s health and academic success.

The intent of this joint effort is to increase the capacity of NABSE and ALAS to provide black and Latino school district leaders with resources, research, policies, strategies and technical assistance to lead obesity prevention efforts. According to a May 2008 article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, nearly one-third of all children and adolescents in our country (more than 23 million youth) are overweight or obese. Black and Latino children and teens are at greatest risk for obesity. For example, among girls ages 12 to 19, almost 28 percent of blacks and almost 20 percent of Mexican-Americans are obese, compared with 14.5 percent of whites. And among boys ages 2 to 19, more than 23 percent of Mexican-Americans are obese, compared with more than 17 percent of blacks and almost 16 percent of whites.

NABSE and ALAS will begin seeking input from their members by hosting focus groups across the country. Then, with AASA’s assistance, they will hone strategies for their members and the students they serve. All three associations will share lessons learned through this project at their national conferences.

“AASA is excited to partner with NABSE and ALAS on this critical issue that is impacting the health and success of our youth,” said AASA Executive Director Paul D. Houston. “We look forward to the progress that together we can make to address childhood obesity in those communities most at-risk.”

In December 2007, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded AASA a two-year grant to continue its work with its Leadership for Healthy Communities national program. The grant helps AASA support school leaders in developing and implementing policies and programs that create healthier schools and communities, and it is supporting the joint work with NABSE and ALAS.

As part of its overall mission, AASA supports strong school system leadership to improve the lives of children. The association’s current health projects focus on asthma management, healthy school environments, youth development and healthy eating and active living, with a major emphasis on disparities or gaps in well-being among children from low-income families. For more information, visit www.aasa.org/focus.

About AASA
The American Association of School Administrators, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders across the United States. AASA’s mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. AASA’s major focus is standing up for public education.

About Leadership for Healthy Communities
Based in Washington, D.C., Leadership for Healthy Communities is a $10 million national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to support local and state government leaders nationwide in their efforts to reduce childhood obesity through public policies that promote active living, healthy eating and access to healthy foods.