



Fighting obesity among Ohio schoolchildren the right way: editorial

By The Plain Dealer Editorial Board

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It has taken some months, but this time, Ohio Sen. Kevin Coughlin, a Republican from Cuyahoga Falls, has come up with a proposal to fight childhood obesity that isn't heavy-handed.

It just passed the Ohio Senate and it deserves the consideration of the Ohio House.

The recently amended version of Senate Bill 210 wisely does away with a requirement that every school provide students with 30 minutes of exercise a day -- an unfunded mandate that raised schools' objections during a time when they are hungry for funds. Daily exercise is important, but school districts can get waivers for financial hardship -- the bill ought to say how long the waivers last -- if they can't provide it.

Schools can also get waivers for body mass index testing aimed at kindergartners, third-graders, fifth-graders and ninth-graders each year. The information is confidential, as it ought to be.

One of the best ideas in the bill is the creation of a healthy children council to suggest how parents and schools can make good food and exercise a daily habit of children.

The bill would give Ohioans a gentle push, while recognizing that the best physical activity police aren't in schools, but in homes.

Call them Mom and Dad.

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