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EDWARD G. RENDELL, Governor

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(Education)

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**GOVERNOR RENDELL ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF
INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE SPORTSMANSHIP
NEW PROGRAM FOR ATHLETES, PARENTS, COACHES**

HARRISBURG – Governor Edward G. Rendell today announced Pennsylvania's new partnership with the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletics Association, Inc. (PIAA) to bolster sportsmanship and to educate student athletes about the hazards of performance enhancing substances.

The Governor said Pennsylvania is investing \$250,000 to pilot the "STAR Sportsmanship" program. Participating schools will be selected throughout each of PIAA's 12 districts this month.

"Most of the high school students who participate in athletics are good sports, but there are some athletes who cross the line with unsportsmanlike behavior," Governor Rendell said. "Now, with the help of the PIAA, we are providing schools with a unique resource to help our athletes – and their parents and coaches – compete as good sports."

STAR Sportsmanship is a role-playing program designed to help students, coaches and parents make good decisions on and off the playing field. It also educates participants about the dangers of steroid abuse. STAR, which is also being piloted statewide in Texas and Alabama, includes specialized programs that are designed for elementary, middle and high school students, as well as for coaches.

STAR Sportsmanship was recently awarded the 2006 Educational Software Review Award (EDDIE) as the best social skills Web site for high school students. STAR was also awarded the 2005-06 Best Educational Software Award (BESSIE) for being the best upper elementary Web site for students.

Alabama recently adopted widespread implementation plans for all K-12 students after seeing the results of STAR's impact on its fourth grade students. After implementing STAR in K-12 this season, Alabama has seen a 49-percent reduction in football ejections of student-athletes and coaches.

"The incidences of poor sportsmanship and dangerous behavior at sporting events, even youth leagues, are on the rise," said PIAA Executive Director Bradley R. Cashman. "We are taking a proactive approach to this problem by educating young athletes about the virtues of sportsmanship, and we have selected STAR Sportsmanship as the training tool to deliver that message to Pennsylvania student-athletes, coaches and parents."

The "STAR Coaching" version includes parent training for pre-season orientation meetings. A pre-test and post-test will assess the program's impact on student attitudes and behaviors regarding sportsmanship. Participating schools will also track unsportsmanlike incidences, such as athlete ejections from competitions, to help determine the impact of the pilot program.

STAR Sportsmanship is published by Learning Through Sports (LTS), an educational publisher of interactive sports games. For more information on LTS, call 866-552-9192 or visit www.learningthroughsports.com. Media should contact Jennifer Harrison for LTS at 916-716-0636 or at Jennifer@harrisonpr.com

For more information on the EDDIE or BESSIE awards, visit www.computedgazette.com.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Education, please visit www.state.pa.us.

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