To: N.C. Superintendents and Principals  
From: Dr. Claudette L. Smith, Program Leader FCS/4-H  
The Cooperative Extension Program, N. C. A&T State University  
Re: Student Attendance at the  
Youth Voice: Youth Choice - 4-H Force of 100 Training  
November 12-15, 2009

Beginning Nov. 12, approximately 100 youth from across the state are expected to arrive in Greensboro for an intensive, three-day training designed to make them ambassadors for healthy living in their communities.

Participants in this initiative, organized under the North Carolina 4-H program, will miss one day of school on Friday, Nov. 13. We ask your cooperation to give students who participate in the program an excused absence on this day. Participants will arrive in Greensboro Nov. 12, after school, with the training activities scheduled to begin the morning of Nov. 13 and conclude on Nov. 15.

The program is organized through North Carolina 4-H at North Carolina A&T State University, with funding from the Walmart Foundation for the National 4-H Council program Youth Voice: Youth Choice.

Through Youth Voice: Youth Choice a “Force of 100” young people, 13 to 16, are being recruited to develop and maintain healthy, active lifestyles. Teams of youth will be selected, based on referrals from sources such as churches, schools and county 4-H programs.

Our North Carolina initiative hopes to demonstrate that these youth are the very people capable of leading the fight to reverse the impact of health related conditions plaguing minority communities. As you are likely aware, North Carolina’s children account for the fifth highest obesity rate in the nation, with 15.2 percent of youth between 10 and 17 classified as obese. These children and their families are headed for a lifetime of heart and kidney disease, hypertension, diabetes and stroke, if something doesn’t change.

We’re counting on our “Force of 100” to make that change. These youth will be involved in experiential and interactive skill-building activities focused on nutrition, food safety, physical fitness techniques, facilitation skills and proper exercise techniques. The training will be conducted by qualified professionals at A&T, as well as by other participating partners from across the state.

After the training, participants will be expected to return home and: 1) work on personal lifestyle changes, 2) involve their household members in healthy lifestyle activities, 3) conduct two programs that involve friends, family and community members.

I hope you view this project as important enough to youth, your school and community to grant students an excused absence to be involved in this endeavor.

As you may know 4-H is the nation’s largest youth development organization and is sponsored by land-grant universities, including N.C. A&T and N.C. State University. 4-H programs are coordinated in local communities through county Cooperative Extension centers.

Your cooperation in enabling students to attend is greatly appreciated.