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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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September 5, 2012

**Ald. Michael J. Murphy**  
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**Ald. José G. Pérez**  
(414) 286-3762

## **Common Council Sets Standards for Elementary School Playgrounds**

On a unanimous vote, the Milwaukee Common Council today passed a measure (**see attached PDF**) that will require all new elementary schools in the city to provide a minimum amount of safe, open play space to help children stay healthy and active.

“To combat the epidemic of childhood obesity and high rates of diabetes, this legislation is providing an opportunity for all children to take part in physical activity during the school day,” Alderman and primary sponsor **Michael J. Murphy** said. “Academic research has shown a direct correlation between healthy minds and strong bodies. Now is the time to ensure our children have access to a healthy and active lifestyle.”

Alderman **José G. Pérez** and Alderman **Robert J. Bauman** co-sponsored the measure.

The measure requires new public, private and parochial elementary schools to provide at least 75 square feet of outdoor play space for each child using the space at a given time, and to surface the area underneath playground equipment with a soft, energy-absorbing material such as loose sand, pea gravel, mulch or shredded rubber, based on manufacturer’s recommendations.

Concrete or asphalt surfaces under climbing equipment and slides will now be prohibited.

**-More-**

## **School play/ADD ONE**

For new elementary schools that do not have the necessary outdoor play space on the premises, the measure allows schools to provide that space somewhere off-site. In order to qualify for that exception, the school must apply in writing and demonstrate a plan for the outdoor play space, including the means of transporting students to the space, that adequate supervision will be available, arrangements to meet children's toileting needs and that the area is safe and free of any hazards.

"This measure represents a great step forward for children's health and safety," Alderman **José G. Pérez** said. "Once they've safely spent some of their youthful energy on the playground, our students can return to their books with clearer heads and better focus."