

# Statewide Physical Fitness Assessment Results

## School Year 2016-17

In addition to sharing the School Year 2016-17 results, we wanted to provide context to help you interpret these results, and provide guidance on how you can use fitness testing data to help your students, physical education (P.E.) teachers, school and community maximize the benefits of physical fitness.

### 1) What are the SY16-17 statewide physical fitness assessment results?

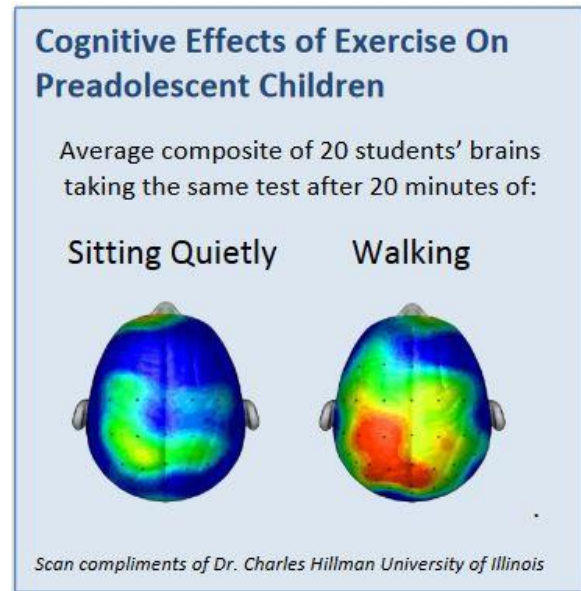
With results from 69% (2,475) of the 3,572 Illinois schools required to report:

- 63% of 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders across the state met the Healthy Fitness Zone for aerobic capacity, using either the PACER or Mile Run tests
- 65% of 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders across the state met the Healthy Fitness Zone for muscular strength, using the Push-up test
- 79% of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders across the state met the Healthy Fitness Zone for muscular endurance, using the Curl-up test
- 72% of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders across the state met the Healthy Fitness Zone for flexibility, using either the Back-saver Sit and Reach or Trunk Lift test

| % of Students Meeting Healthy Fitness Zones<br>Statewide by Grade |         |         |          |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------------------|
|                                                                   | Grade 5 | Grade 7 | Grade 10 | Statewide<br>Average |
| Aerobic<br>Capacity                                               | 67.09%  | 66.26%  | 53.89%   | 63%                  |
| Muscular<br>Strength                                              | 61.05%  | 65.96%  | 68.40%   | 65%                  |
| Muscular<br>Endurance                                             | 74.04%  | 80.60%  | 83.42%   | 79%                  |
| Flexibility                                                       | 69.40%  | 72.50%  | 75.82%   | 72%                  |

The Illinois physical fitness assessment data is available by school, district, and county under *Quick Links* at <https://www.isbe.net/EnhancedPhysicalEducation>.

## 2) What are the improved student outcomes associated with increased physical fitness?



**Better learners:** Physically fit children show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed, and perform better on standardized academic tests than children who are less active. Preliminary results from a 2010 study suggest that students in the Fitnessgram “Healthy Fitness Zone” for cardiorespiratory fitness were two to four times more likely to meet or exceed the Illinois Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT) reading and math test requirements than students who were not.

**Better behavior:** An analysis of Texas fitness testing results found that higher physical fitness achievement was associated with better school attendance rates and fewer disciplinary incidents.

**Better health:** Being physically fit and active can reduce the risk of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Physical fitness also improves physiological function. For example, upper body strength (muscular strength test) is important to maintaining functionality as we age. Strong abdominal muscles promote good posture and lower back health (endurance test), joint flexibility (flexibility test) can help reduce injuries, and research indicates that acceptable levels of aerobic capacity (aerobic capacity test) are specifically associated with a lower risk of chronic disease and other health problems in adults.

## 3) How will physical fitness assessments help schools optimize student performance and health outcomes?

Physical fitness assessments serve two purposes: 1) to teach students how to assess their fitness levels, set goals for improvement and monitor progress in reaching their goals, and 2) measure student growth and program effectiveness as it pertains to State Goal 20, which is for students to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness through continual self-assessment.

P.E. teachers can use physical fitness assessment data to a) ensure students meet State Goal 20, b) reinforce goals around teaching students the impact of fitness/physical activity on brain function and health, c) inform and adapt instruction (e.g. if students are not improving on a particular assessment, adjust approach to better meet their needs), and d) focus on developing physically literate students that have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop life-long skills for enhancing fitness and health.

## 4) What if my school's results were poor?

It's important to remember that many things influence fitness levels, including the community environment, family life, heredity, body composition, and more. In fact, the understanding that many factors influence fitness is one of the reasons the state prohibited using fitness testing results to grade students and/or evaluate teachers. If your school's scores leave room for improvement that should not be viewed negatively – assessing student fitness levels and then working to improve is the point of fitness testing. What is more important is what comes next:

determining your school's roadmap to begin realizing the short- and long-term benefits of physical fitness!

### **5) How can I best support my students in achieving a health-enhancing level of fitness?**

You can best support your students by adopting high-quality enhanced P.E. programming. Enhanced physical education, an evidence-based intervention recommended in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *Guide to Community Prevention Services*, entails increasing time spent engaged in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity to 50% of school-based P.E. class time. P.E. is one of the primary opportunities for schools to help students meet the recommended (CDC/SHAPE America) 60 minutes of physical activity per day.

Physical activity, defined as movement of the body that expends energy, is just one component of P.E, which is a planned, sequential, standards-based, developmentally-appropriate K-12 curriculum taught by a certified P.E. teacher. P.E. uses physical activity as a teaching tool. There is no substitute for P.E. in developing physically educated students with the skills and confidence to enjoy the lifetime benefits of fitness and healthy habits.

### **6) How as a school leader can I help support my P.E. teachers in adopting enhanced P.E. programming?**

- Provide daily P.E. Just like the process of becoming proficient in reading or math, becoming fit and physically educated takes time and regular effort.
- Adopt a standards-based P.E./health curriculum: With the 2014/15 revisions to the [Illinois Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health](#), schools now have a roadmap to physical fitness, in the short-term and for life.
- Send P.E. teachers to professional development opportunities. Contact Shawn Backs (SBACKS@isbe.net) at the Illinois State Board of Education to be connected to opportunities.
- Treat fitness testing as you would any other important assessment: Give your teachers time to conduct fitness assessments properly (get substitutes if possible). Also, while fitness testing is only required once per year, conducting assessments twice or more per year provides opportunity to measure progress and adjust instruction.
- Foster community buy-in: As described above, many factors, including family life, influence physical fitness. It's critical to have community buy-in to improve fitness levels and to foster support for enhanced P.E. Educate parents about fitness testing and the connection between enhanced P.E. and optimal student outcomes.

You will find more resources to help you implement the above steps at ISBE's Enhanced P.E. web page: <https://www.isbe.net/enhancedphysicaleducation>.

Together, we have made great strides in ensuring all Illinois students have access to high-quality enhanced P.E. ISBE applauds your efforts and looks forward to continuing to support your work.