

# Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



## Task Force Agenda

January 7, 2015

9:00am-12:00pm

*Public Act 98-0859 created the Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education. The purpose of this Task Force is to submit recommendations (from which ISBE will adopt rules for implementation of physical fitness assessments and collect and report aggregate fitness information), including methods for ensuring validity and uniformity of fitness scores, including assessment administration protocols and professional development approaches for P.E. teachers; how often fitness scores should be reported to ISBE; grade levels within elementary, middle, and high school categories for which scores should be reported to ISBE; indicators that should be reported to ISBE, including scores for aerobic capacity (grades 4-12), muscular strength, endurance, flexibility; demographic information that should accompany the scores, including, but not limited to, grade and gender; development of protocols to protect students' confidentiality and individual info/identifiers; how fitness scores should be reported by ISBE to the public, including potential correlations with academic achievement, attendance, discipline data; and may also recommend methods for assessing student progress on Goals 19 & 21-24.*

Meeting was held via v-tel conferencing at the IL State Board of Education's Chicago Office (James R Thompson Center, 100 West Randolph, VTEL ROOM 14th Floor) AND Springfield Office (100 North 1st Street, VTEL Room 3rd Floor).

**Task Force Members Attending:** Jean Sophie, Superintendent, Lake Bluff School District 65; Mark Bishop, Vice President of Policy and Communications, Healthy School Campaign; Elissa Bassler, CEO, Illinois Public Health Institute; Jason Leahy, Executive Director, Illinois Principals Association; Antonio (Tony) Marquez, Chicago Public Schools, designee of Stephanie Whyte; Conny Mueller Moody, Assistant Deputy Director, Office of Health Promotion, Illinois Department of Public Health; Kelly Nowak, Vice President, Board of Education, Geneva CUSD 304; Peggy Pryor, Physical Education Teacher, Quincy School District 172; Marjurie Ribeiro, Principal Consultant, Data Analysis and Accountability, Illinois State Board of Education; Timothy A. Sanborn, Head, Division of Cardiology, NorthShore University Health System; Skip Williams, Assistant Professor of PE Teacher Education, School of Kinesiology and Recreation, Illinois State University; Deb Vogel, Retired Physical Education Teacher; Sarah Welch, Evaluation Manager, Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children, Lurie Children's Hospital; Stephanie Whyte, Chief Health Officer, Chicago Public Schools; Paul Zientarski, Learning Readiness PE Coordinator, Naperville Community School District 203

**Members of the Public:** [In absentia] Tracey Jakaitis, Student Wellness Curriculum Coordinator, Elgin School District U-46; Ron T. Malm, Administration, Focused Fitness

**Presenters:** Sarah Boucek, Legal Counsel, Illinois Association of School Administrators; Dale Brown, Professor, Illinois State University; Antonio (Tony) Marquez, Chicago Public Schools, designee of Stephanie Whyte; Sarah Welch, Evaluation Manager, Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children, Lurie Children's Hospital; Skip Williams, Assistant Professor of PE Teacher Education, School of Kinesiology and Recreation, Illinois State University

**Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff:** Shawn Backs

**Illinois Public Health Institute Support Staff:** Sarah Chusid; Janna Simon

**Task Force Members not in attendance:** N/A

## Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 9:01am. Chair Jean Sophie welcomed task force members and gave an overview of the objectives of the meeting.

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Task force members introduced themselves.

## **Review and Approve Meeting Summary from December 18, 2014**

Elissa Bassler moved to accept the summary without edits. Deb Vogel seconded the motion. The summary was unanimously approved.

## **Presentation: Methods for ensuring validity & uniformity in testing and reporting**

Drs. Dale Brown and Skip Williams from Illinois State University presented on methods for ensuring validity and uniformity in testing and reporting.

### Highlights

#### A) Dr. Dale Brown

- There is still confusion over the distinction between the Presidential Youth Fitness Program and Fitnessgram.
- He finds himself constantly reiterating to teachers that they need to strictly follow the testing guidelines for the testing to be meaningful. For example, even though we're not recommended body composition, he worked with a school where teachers were allowing students to wear shoes for weigh-ins when that wasn't procedure. Uniformity in test administration is absolutely critical.
- All recommended Fitnessgram assessments demonstrate adequate reliability and validity when specific guidelines are followed, but there needs to be a comprehensive reporting system to make use of it.
- Dr. Brown showed a comparison of test results for the recommended (PACER) and alternate (Mile Run) tests for Aerobic Capacity showing a high level (over 70%) of agreement between the two.
- Part of his work is to show the importance of fitness testing.

#### B) Dr. Skip Williams

- He's concerned with the volume of teachers that will be administering these tests. Fidelity to the protocols is crucial to producing accurate data.
- The data presented in the Fitnessgram manual comes from small, convenient examples. Real world conditions will be very different.
- The Fitnessgram tests are reliable, but the quality of the data is dependent on test administration.
- He has generally found that teacher-reported data is fairly reliable, but the task force needs to establish specific guidelines for teachers to follow.

### Discussion/Questions

- Chair Sophie: As an administrator, equipment costs are a concern.
  - Dale Brown: You can find low cost workarounds for the equipment.
  - Elissa Bassler: Part of why the task force chose to offer alternate tests was to help mitigate cost issues, e.g. Trunk lifts vs. Back-Saver Sit and Reach.
- There was a question on what ratio of agreement is considered high. Dr. Brown said, according to Fitnessgram standards, anything above 60% is considered to be within an appropriate range. He can check with Fitnessgram on the percentage that would be considered a low level of agreement.
  - Chair Sophie pointed out that 60% would not necessarily translate as a high level of agreement to the layman, but within the education system, it is quite good.
- Dale Brown: Part of his work is to try to get teachers to embrace fitness assessments. His message is that knowing the results is better than the status quo of knowing nothing. He emphasized that if the task force wants educators to do the fitness testing, providing options will be important. In terms of quality results, the most important thing is to ensure the testing is done accurately.
- Elissa Bassler asked the presenters to share their opinions on what open-ended questions remained on test administration protocols, as well as their answers, to enable the task force to make further recommendations.

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- Dr. Williams said, for any test that follows a cadence, the protocol should be the first form break is counted and the second form break signals the end of the test. On which flexibility test should be the recommended one, he feels they tests are not comparable because each tests different joints.

## 9:50 am      **Presentation: Lurie Children's Hospital's experiences with CPS data project**

Sarah Welch and Antonio Marquez presented on their experiences with CPS data collection project. Fitnessgram is one of many pieces of data being collected.

### Highlights

- While they work with P.E. teachers, Lurie's own research team administers the tests
- All people administering tests were trained in Fitnessgram
- Issues cropped up, even when the tests were administered by trained professionals:
  - It became clear testers were administering the tests differently, e.g. which form break to count.
  - Even something as seemingly straightforward as marking off a 20-meter line needed to be checked for accuracy. Lesson: The data collection system needs to be able to accommodate both 15 and 20 meter tests.
  - For the push-up test, they successfully used a guide to determine a 90 degree angle.
    - Deb Vogel countered that this particular guide will not work for all kids as there are varying body types
  - For the Back-Saver Sit and Reach, they used premises-made boxes instead of the purchased versions and it worked out fine.

## 10:15am      **Presentation: Sarah Boucek, Legal Counsel, Illinois Association of School Administrators, on concerns around BMI testing/data collection**

### Highlights

- Represents state superintendents.
- Doesn't believe BMI data collection is necessary and constitutes an invasion of privacy.
- Will passionately oppose any efforts to collect BMI information. Although it doesn't currently violate the law, the School Management Alliance is working to incorporate language on this into a data privacy law being written.
- Feels talking about BMI is a doctor's job, not the school's. BMI could be used against a child and there are negative socio emotional effects associated with knowledge of an unhealthy BMI.
- The four entities in the management alliance, which includes the IASA, the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO) and the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), would strongly oppose this.
- Paul Zientarski: BMI is one of the components of fitness and he doesn't understand why the state would want an incomplete data set.
- Elissa Bassler: She's all for BMI surveillance. The public health sector needs to know this information. Keep in mind the purpose of reporting is only surveillance (Surveillance is the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data from a consensus or representative sample. Screening identifies individuals who are at risk of complications due to underweight, overweight, and obesity.) Her suggestion is to recommend, but not require, that BMI be included among the fitness testing protocols that schools implement, and that it be done or negotiated in partnership with local communities. The task force could put out resources on how to talk to communities and parents about why the surveillance is being done. She's keenly aware of the sensitivity around BMI as she followed the controversy in Evanston. The task force will need to vote on this eventually.
- Chair Sophie: She feels strongly that the task force needs to hear from a PTA representative on this and that we may not want to even recommend BMI be collected, even if we leave it up to the local level.

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- Deb Vogel: She's looked into what different states say about their BMI efforts. Most states do not recommend schools do the BMI data collection, but many do work on BMI surveillance efforts
  - Dale Brown: Georgia was doing BMI testing. As they started reporting, BMI started to fall because of higher awareness. Then were some complaints about the reporting and now they seeing BMI go back up.
- Chair Sophie: The school code says if you collect unique physiological data, it is classified as biometric under school code, which means there are lots of procedural rules about how the information must be kept, disposed of, etc. It will be tied to school confidentiality law. Even if the task force recommends it and districts do it, there would need to be extremely strict procedures that would be in alignment with the law (not written yet).
- Deb Vogel: We do not want BMI controversy to derail all the good work that's been accomplished for the last two and a half years.
- Paul Zientarski: For people to understand what BMI really means and how it affects current and future health outcomes, it needs to be collected. This is a critical educational piece.
  - Chair Sophie: If we're just educating and not taking data, she'd be all for students learning about it.
  - Kelly Nowak: She completely agrees with that sentiment. She doesn't disagree it's very important; it's a vital tool for managing health. But it's a very slippery slope when being tied to hard data. In terms of overall security, data is being compromised more often than we know. She also doesn't want to compromise all the work that's been accomplished.
- Antonio Marquez: He hears many reservations about BMI screening, which is collected at the individual level, but the data that would be reported to the state would be only at the aggregate level.
- Tim Sanborn: His struggle is that obesity is a problem. We need awareness of what obesity is. Look at this as taking small steps: Start with fitness, broach it in nutrition classes, etc. But at some point there needs to be an open discussion about obesity.
- Chair Sophie: Parent education going to be critical. Another important thing is to write grants to secure funding for education. Many communities have a large proportion of students on free and reduced price lunch. Much about fitness and nutrition is new to these families.
  - Tim Sanborn: Maybe recommend that BMI be assessed in pediatrician's office?
    - It is assessed there, is on the forms. It's not always done, however.
- Resolution: A vote on BMI will be tabled until the task force can hear from a PTA representative. IPHI staff will write up two versions of what was heard today for discussion and vote at the next meeting.

10:15 am      **Discussion: Finalize fitness components and determining protocols for fitness testing**

## Discussion

### 1) Aerobic Capacity (Proposed: Recommended test: PACER, Alternate test: Mile run)

- To Lurie's point about gym measurement, the task force will add a recommendation that, upon initial testing, the school will measure out the 15 or 20-meter mark off point, or the mile run distance, and will have another staff member double check the measurement. Going forward, the school need only re-measure if something about the space changes or the markings deteriorate.
- On form breaks, the task force will recommend that the first form break be counted and the second form break signals the end of the test.
- Audio is needed for the tests that require a cadence, so the task force will have to make sure this is covered somehow.
  - Elissa Bassler then put forward the idea that the task force should create or add a recommendation that tip sheets be created to go along with each test, offering best practices, alternates (like alternate audio options), etc.

#### Suggestions for tip sheets:

- What schools need to administer tests properly, e.g. sit and reach box.
- How to handle changes associated with age/growth
- Having a practice round of tests to help prepare students
- Tips for communicating results to students and families

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- Prominent reminder: Fitness scores shall not be used for grading students or evaluating teachers.
  - The task force voted unanimously to adopt the PACER as the recommended test for Aerobic Capacity and the Mile Run as the alternate and the Fitnessgram protocols for administering those tests.
- 2) Muscular Strength (Proposed: Recommended test: Push-ups, Alternate: N/A)
- The task force voted unanimously to adopt push-ups as the recommended test for Muscular Strength with no alternate, and the Fitnessgram protocols for administering that test.
- 3) Muscular Endurance (Proposed: Recommended test: Curl-ups, Alternate: N/A)
- The task force voted unanimously to adopt curl-ups as the recommended test for Muscular Endurance with no alternate, and the Fitnessgram protocols for administering that test.
- 4) Flexibility (Proposed: Recommended test: Back-Saver Sit and Reach, Alternate: Trunk Lifts)
- At a previous meeting, Deb Vogel advocated that the Back-Saver sit and reach be the recommended test and the Trunk Lift be made the alternate. The reasons are 1) the equipment concerns (not all schools have the Back-Saver box) are unfounded as the boxes can be made out of simple materials, such as a milk crate, 2) the trunk lift carries a risk of neck hyper-extension, and 3) also takes the entire focus of the teacher to administer.
  - Skip Williams pointed out that Fitnessgram recommends the trunk lift and the Back-Saver as the alternate.
  - There was some question as to whether both tests are needed because they each measure different aspects of flexibility, different joints. The general consensus was that it's true the tests measure different aspect of flexibility so it would be optimal if both were administered, but we don't want to add another required test. There are more issues with chronic back pain in the public that may make the Sit and Reach more relevant to health surveillance in the state.
  - The task force considered the options, which would include keeping the order as it (Trunk lift as recommended, Back-Saver as alternate), requiring both tests and not having an alternate, or letting schools decide which to do and report.
  - Antonio Marquez put forward a motion to flip the order and make the Back-Saver the recommended test and make the trunk-list the alternate. Deb Vogel seconded the motion and the task force voted unanimously to adopt, along with the Fitnessgram protocols for those tests.

The task force then voted unanimously to adopt the Fitnessgram protocols for test administration for each of the above components.

[From above] On BMI, resolution: A vote on BMI will be tabled until the task force can hear from a PTA representative.

The task force also considered what tests should be used for students with disabilities. The Brockport test methodology is the accepted adaptive fitness testing methodology, but there was concern over reporting results for Brockport tests, since there are so many tests that could be administered, depending on the student's needs. There are many variations, making them incomparable to the standard tests. Would not reporting these results constitute discrimination? If so, how shall these be reported to ISBE? The task force will discuss this at their next meeting.

10:55 am      **Recommendations for integrating fitness testing into physical education courses (20 mins)**

- Deb Vogel briefly reviewed the new IL Goals and Standards for Physical Development & Health. Assessing individual fitness and setting fitness goals were written into State Goal 20.
- Deb Vogel: Much of the initial feedback she's hearing is from teachers hung up on whether fitness scores will be used to evaluate them or grade students. On point one, teachers won't be as this is prohibited by the law. To point two, the task force has to make sure educators understand that kids

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need to own their own fitness. That kids aren't being graded on these scores will be figured out by students quickly. The key is to get them to buy in to their fitness scores.

- Elissa Bassler: The task force has talked frequently about this work as part of a larger paradigm shift about the important of P.E. Hopefully, the new standards will help drive this change. To her, part of integration question is how to tell teachers to implement curricula and class activities that address where kids (either individually or as group) are having challenges, are not as fit. It's providing guidance on what comes after the testing. In practical terms for the task force, the questions are what more can we put into place, recommend or suggest to respond to the tests. We're only reporting sometimes, but we're testing every year.
  - Tim Sanborn: For example, what to do in P.E. class if a student can only do two push-ups?
  - Skip Williams: It's ultimately up to each teacher. He teaches a class on integrating, through activity, a curriculum that teaches about improving fitness. There's also an accountability issue as sometimes older teachers will dampen down on a younger teachers' enthusiasm for new methods.
    - Chair Sophie: From an administrator's perspective, the accountability piece is where changes will need to be made. Coaches still living in old days but can get away with it if they have an award-winning team. Maybe the recommendation would be that administrator's need to understand what's going on.
- Deb Vogel: The task force will need to provide guidance on integration for schools that only have P.E. once a week, or broad recommendations that will fit the situation for a diverse array of schools.
  - There was some pushback to this as these schools would not be in compliance with the daily P.E. requirement, but the constraints are real.

## 11:15 am **Review running list of Task Force recommendations**

- Dr. Sanborn expressed an interest in seeing more work around possibly securing funding for the paid version of Fitnessgram. Chair Sophie said the task force could consider forming or making a recommendation to form an advisory group to look for funding.
- At an earlier meeting, it was a suggested recommendation that ISBE collect data from those who are already using Fitnessgram for a more complete data set for those schools, Chair Sophie reported that, according to Fitnessgram, only 10.76 % of IL schools use some form of Fitnessgram, a pretty small percentage to consider for data collection.

## 11:25 am **Discussion: What is needed to discuss professional development at next meeting?**

- Elissa Bassler would like to be walked through PYFP's free spreadsheet to see if any guidance needs to be given about how to calculate the "healthy fitness zone" for each fitness component.

## 11:35 am **Public Comment**

Chair Sophie read two public comments sent in advance of the meeting:

### 1) Submitted by Tracey Jakaitis, Student Wellness Curriculum Coordinator, Elgin School District U-46

I am the PE Coordinator for Elgin School District U-46. The task force decision for fitness testing 4-12 is on the front of my radar and we are very worried about the plans. We currently only offer elementary PE 1 day a week, how will we be able to implement fitness testing at this level and still teach the other standards? I realize we are suppose to have daily PE, but we don't and there is not process for accountability in PE. I guess my question will be: How do schools that do not offer daily physical education meet the mandate for testing and data sharing? Will the information discussed during this meeting be shared with us as some point?

### 2) Submitted by Ron T. Malm, Focused Fitness

Thank you for allowing my public comment. Since 1995, I have had a unique opportunity to work first as a physical educator and now as a business owner and provider of curriculums, software and professional development in the area of physical education and physical activity for youth. I have had the opportunity to

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utilize fitness measurements within my teaching and instruct teachers on proper implementation of fitness measurements and have seen firsthand the positive impact that fitness data can provide when utilized to its full extent. The data that is gathered as the result of assessing health-related fitness components can and should be used by many different people to inform, validate and educate on children's health and quality physical education.

If fitness measurements are administered following proper protocols the data can provide teachers the opportunity to objectively assess their physical education programs and make necessary adjustments to ensure students are having opportunities to improve or maintain their fitness levels. In addition, administrators can use the fitness results to better provide resources in the form of equipment, curricula and/professional development.

Students can use relevant data to better answer the question why. Why should I eat a balanced healthy diet? Why should I drink water? Why should I get at least 8 hours of sleep? Why should I be physically active? If students are to fully understand their bodies and their choices, then it is imperative that they see the connection between their fitness and their choices. Parents can be provided with reports that clearly outline their students current levels of fitness and offer suggestions for improvements.

Fitness data when administered correctly, hosted securely and reported clearly provides all stakeholders with key information to make informed decisions regarding the health of our youth. It is my hope that regardless of the fitness measurements or standards to be used, educators and administrators will be educated on best practices for the administration of fitness measurements and all available options for data collection will be examined.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share and I wish your team the best of luck as you continue your work on behalf of the health of all children.

11:45 am      **Adjourn**

Several P.E. teachers noted they have a conflict with the 3/18 meeting as they will be away at the national Shape America convention. The schedule will be reviewed and changes may be made.

Elissa Bassler put forward a motion to adjourn the meeting. Deb Vogel seconded the motion and the task force unanimously moved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50am.

## **Meeting Objectives:**

1. Determine protocols around fitness testing and how it integrates into physical education classes.
2. Determine informational/other needs to prepare for professional development discussion at 1/28/15 meeting.