

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



Task Force Meeting Summary

January 28, 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; 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; Peggy Pryor, Physical Education Teacher, Quincy School District 172; Marjorie 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; Michael Wiggins, Physical Education Teacher, Hinsdale Central High School District 86; 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] Annie Atseff, Parent; Wendy Kaus; Terry Sportsman, Elementary PE teacher, Burlington Central High School

[In person, Chicago] Denise Rossa, District 65, Evanston, P.E. Department Chair

Presenters: Trisha Olsen, Assistant General Counsel, Illinois State Board of Education; Kathy Read, Fitnessgram Technical Director, Human Kinetics; Deb Vogel, Retired Physical Education Teacher; Stephanie Whyte, Chief Health Officer, Chicago Public Schools; 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, Mark Haller

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

Task Force Members not in attendance: Jason Leahy, Executive Director, Illinois Principals Association; Kelly Nowak, Vice President, Board of Education, Geneva CUSD 304

Opening Remarks

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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.

Task force members introduced themselves.

Review and Approve Meeting Summary from January 7, 2015

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

Continue discussion on protocols:

- 1.) Body composition: Determine recommendations (if any) the task force has for testing body composition

The task force considered three alternate recommendations, which were drafted based on previous discussions:

1) Recommend, but not require, that local school districts, in partnership with their communities, consider using the body composition (BMI) component of fitness testing, if they have in place sufficient safeguards and community resources needed to effectively support students with BMIs that are determined to be outside of the healthy fitness zone: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that schools follow safeguards if choosing to implement BMI screening, including (1) introduce the program to school staff and community members and obtain parental consent, (2) train staff in administering the program (ideally, implementation will be led by a highly qualified staff member, such as the school nurse), (3) establish safeguards to protect student privacy, (4) obtain and use accurate equipment, (5) accurately calculate and interpret the data, (6) develop efficient data collection procedures, (7) avoid using BMI results to evaluate student or teacher performance, and (8) regularly evaluate the program and its intended outcomes and unintended consequences. Additionally schools must appropriate refer students with a positive screening test to receive a more definitive evaluation and, if indicated, appropriate treatment.

2) Remain neutral on body composition testing, but recommend that education about the importance of understanding one's body composition be included in P.E. classes during implementation of State Learning Standard 20.

3) Do not make any recommendations around body composition testing, but include recognition of its presence in the Fitnessgram methodology in the Task Force final report.

Discussion

- Conny Mueller Moody: For the first recommendation, on the part where it says, "schools must appropriately refer students with a positive screening test to receive a more definitive evaluation," she would like the task force to be mindful of the difficulty in implementing that. Taking the word "must" out would be better.
- Doesn't BMI testing in schools require that we collect height and weight information? Yes, if you do the BMI screening in schools, you would need height and weight, but height and weight are collected in other places, such as a healthcare provider's office, and submitted on the school health form. So, for BMI surveillance, you don't need to collect it in the school itself.
- Elissa Bassler: Whatever its final form, the feeling of this task force is we don't want the recommendation to put up barriers or get in the way of schools already doing this or that will do this in the future.
- Tim Sanborn was concerned about specifically identifying school nurses as an example of a highly qualified staff member who should lead testing implementation because trained P.E teachers would be able to collect information without the aid of a nurse, so requiring it would add an unnecessary layer of complexity. It was ultimately decided that the wording did not preclude other qualified staff

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members from leading the testing, it only named nurses as an example. As such, the wording for this part was left as is.

- Peggy Pryor asked that an opt-out clause be added to recommendation one and, for the section on referring students for more definitive evaluations, the task force should specify that they should be referred to healthcare providers/pediatricians.
- Skip Williams asked to clarify if the task force meant to list body mass index (BMI) as the only body composition test because there are several other options, such as the biometric analyzer. The task force resolved to make the phrasing inclusive of other test options.
- Paul Zientarski asked the task force to reconsider the use of the “positive” in the sentence on screening referrals- why are we using the word “positive” for something that’s outside the healthy fitness zone. The Task Force resolved to change the wording to “Additionally, schools should appropriately refer students that fall outside the healthy fitness zone to receive a referral to a more definitive evaluation and, if indicated, appropriate treatment by a healthcare provider.”
- Peggy Pryor: Option two explicitly addresses the education component in terms of integrating the implementation of Learning Standard 20 into P.E. classes. She doesn’t see that in option one. That seems to her to indicate competing priorities. What is most important: collecting data or educating students?
 - Fitnessgram and its associated tests are designed to integrate education; education is embedded in the testing process. This is about body composition testing and, if the task force doesn’t adopt option one, then option two explicitly addresses the education around body composition. Option one implies inclusion of the education with the testing.

The task force took an initial vote on which of the three alternatives to adopt (with the above edits). The task force was adamant about the need to hear from a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) representative prior to taking this vote and had invited and received confirmation that one would attend. The task force put off the vote in hopes that the representative would arrive but finally had to go ahead with the vote due to time constraints.

Recommendation #1	Recommendation #2	Absent
Elissa Bassler Mark Bishop Tim Sanborn Sarah Welch Stephanie Whyte Michael Wiggins Skip Williams Paul Zientarski	Conny Mueller Moody Peggy Pryor Marjurie Ribeiro Chair Jean Sophie Deb Vogel	Jason Leahy Kelly Nowak
Total: 8	Total: 5	Total: 2

No further discussion was had after the initial vote and the task force adopted Recommendation One (with the above-named edits).

2.) Determine protocols for protecting student confidentiality

Discussion

- Chair Sophie gave an overview of how schools/teachers generally keep scores/grades confidential: Protecting student confidentiality is a national concern with all the data breaches that have happened. Students are protected by federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and state laws also. Things are much stricter than when many of the task force members were in grade school. As an example, last year in her district a staff member inadvertently sent test results to the wrong parent. It had to be handled like a major data breach with parent meetings, bringing in a speaker to address the entire staff, disciplining the involved staff members, etc. There are always concerns about transmitting data and there are more rules and regulations than ever because there

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have been so many data breaches. It's a serious matter and it's ramping up to become even more serious.

- Denisa Rossa provided some insight into how BMI testing data is handled in her district: The district sends a letter to inform parents they are doing BMI testing and to provide them with an opportunity to opt out with a two-week deadline to respond. Students who opt out are removed from the classroom so other students won't be made aware of their not participating. The district gives parents access to the results via an access link. This is all handled by Information Services.
- Elissa Bassler: It seems to her that districts have mechanisms/methodologies for data security already in place. They know how to comply with these rules and regulations.
- Chair Sophie: One of her concerns is that testing will be carried out by teachers, not administrators who know how to comply with federal/state regulations. Reporting will be done by individual schools to district administrators, so how do we ensure teachers and school administrators follow all procedures? How can the task force ensure compliance? She truly believes the task force will have to recommend policies and procedures in this area.
 - Elissa Bassler: Could ISBE just say, "schools shall adopt policies and procedures to protect students" and leave the details to those who know better?
 - Antonio Marquez: Especially because schools are already handling individual data. The task force doesn't have to break new ground here but just remind them. Chair Sophie was comfortable with that concept.
 - Elissa Bassler: She still has concerns about the practicality of this recommendation and suggested it should maybe say "shall have policies" instead of "shall adopt". Is this something schools already know how to protect or not?
 - Chair Sophie: You would probably get a different answer from all 862 schools. She's still concerned about teachers handling the data and would consider procedures such as having them delete data off individual laptops. Elissa Bassler pointed out that you wouldn't want to do that as you couldn't track progress or interventions. You wouldn't delete grades.
- Antonio Marquez: Perhaps the task force could recommend that a sample best practices procedure be developed based on one of the model districts.'
- The task force resolved to recommend that "schools shall have procedures for protecting student data that comply with state and federal data confidentiality laws."

3.) Determine protocols for ensuring tests will be appropriate to students' developmental levels and physical abilities

Discussion

- Deb Vogel: Fitness assessments can be even more important for disabled students because they need to be able to know what they can do physically. Deb confirmed that Brockport tests are the only tool she knows of that is specifically designed to assess the fitness of youth with disabilities from ages 10 through 17.
- There is no cost to the Brockport test forms on the Presidential Youth Fitness Program website.
- The issue at hand is whether these tests are comparable to and can be reported in the same way as the regular-education Fitnessgram tests.
 - Deb Vogel: In her opinion, it depends on the particular disability. She doesn't think the correlation is there.
- Another consideration is the proportion of students who would be taking the Brockport tests and whether it is large enough to skew the data, in statistical terms, if the correlations between tests are not strong. Some task force members estimated that disabled students represent up to 13% of the total student body – a potentially significant proportion. If combining these test results for tests that aren't correlated with the other tests would alter the aggregate findings to such an extent that, for example, 70% of IL kids were reported to be in the HFZ for Aerobic Capacity where it would have been 90% otherwise, then we're dealing with a range of difference with major implications for public health in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the testing and tracking progress.
- ISBE Assistant General Counsel Trisha Olsen provided her feedback on the discussion:

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- Decisions around testing can't be made at student level, must be done by IEP team.
- Anytime disabled/special education students are treated differently than general education students, you could have a disparate impact claim. She wants to make sure decision not made lightly.
- In her opinion, any program that starts by only considering general education students is inherently discriminatory.
- Her overarching concern is she doesn't know how the information will be used by ISBE so cannot advise the task force properly.
- If the purpose is to help students improve and track progress over time, disabled students must be given the same opportunities as non-disabled students. These considerations become even more important if these state reporting outcomes are going to be used to drive decision making.
- The concept that students with disabilities would skew healthy data is a problematic concept and would be offensive to advocates. The other members clarified that they meant "skew" in statistical terms for two tests being aggregated together that weren't meant to correlate/relate, not in that the students with disabilities would "skew" the "normal" results.
- Elissa-Bassler: Since we're already saying it's okay for the trunk lift and Sit and Reach to be clumped together even though they measure different joints, I don't see the difference is saying any Brockport exam for flexibility could be used, etc.
- How do Georgia and Texas handle reporting for Brockport? IPHI staff can look into it.
- Task Force recommendation: Schools should use the Brockport fitness testing methodologies, when appropriate as determined by an IEP team, for students with disabilities. Schools and Districts should report the total number of students testing (using recommended tests or Brockport alternatives) for each fitness component and then number of students falling in the healthy fitness zone or needs improvement zone.

Presentation: Overview of professional development opportunities in Illinois and anticipated professional development needs for implementing fitness testing

- 1.) Deb Vogel, IAHPERD, presented on her work with P.E. teachers across the state and what professional development opportunities are available (or could be available) through IAHPERD.
- 2.) Dr. Whyte, Chicago Public Schools, presented on opportunities and challenges she faces at CPS in making sure all teachers/administrators are ready for changes in P.E. standards and fitness testing.
- 3.) Dr. Williams, Illinois State University, presented on his teacher preparation work and Fitnessgram training expertise.
- 4.) Jean Smith, Illinois Principals Association presented on opportunities/needs and challenges for administrators/principals/school leadership.
- 5.) Kathy Read, Human Kinetics, presented on professional development opportunities available through Human Kinetics.

Discussion

- Are the fees associated with the Human Kinetics training videos per individual or by school? They are per individual.
- The Shape America prices are much higher - by thousands of dollars - why? That's for in-person training for about twenty people. Task force members were dismayed at the small audience size for the amount of money and asked Dr. Williams to check if there was any way to increase the number who could participate in each training.
- Elissa Bassler: IPHI has grant to develop P.E. trainings, including Fitnessgram trainings, in Cook County. As a result, there will be cadre of trainers. The goal would be to figure out how to make them available statewide as the grant only covers Cook County. The cost for sending these trainers around would be significantly less than the quotes we've seen here.
 - Chair Sophie: Once the cadre is developed, perhaps they could work through regional offices. If you charge admission, the cost would be more manageable.

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- Chair Sophie: Principals really need to understand what they are doing. A webinar would be a great option for those that have trouble leaving their districts. Jean Smith said IPA would be willing to work with whoever is tasked with this on posting to their site. There is no cost to this; it is a service they provide.
- IAHPERD opportunities are only open to members (IRS rules) but any charge for non-members usually includes the cost of membership.
- Chair Sophie felt communicating through IAHPERD's monthly newsletter would be an excellent channel to reach a wide swath of the target audience. They also might want to consider nontraditional outlets such as the superintendent professional development roundtable held through Twitter. She also thinks there should always be sessions on P.E. at IAHPERD conferences from here on out.
- Stephanie Whyte: Chicago Public Schools is holding professional development webinars on this but she's uncertain how relevant it would be to other districts in the state since this is tailored to their system. On accountability, it is her experience that hands-on supervision is needed to ensure it.
 - Chair Sophie: If we want teachers to be accountable to attending trainings, we need to find a way to make it feasible. As it is, many teachers have to take a personal day to attend trainings.
 - Once teachers are certified, there's no fee for recertification.
 - There was also some discussion over the course level assigned to the ISU course as only graduate level courses are allowed to be counted toward tuition reimbursement for schools still able to provide that. As a workaround, someone could create an explanatory page that teachers could submit to administrators explaining the distinction.

Discussion: Recommendations on professional development approaches for physical education teachers

Task force members reviewed the free PYFP excel spreadsheet for fitness testing and were walked through how healthy fitness zones are calculated.

Discussion

- Deb Vogel: The spreadsheet has other tests listed beyond the ones we've selected. She worries teachers will pick and choose and said either Illinois has to create its own (which may violate copyright law), or ask PYFP/Cooper Institute to adapt it for us. Teachers also have to hand compare the spreadsheet scores to the HFZ chart to calculate, a process prone to error.
 - Elissa Bassler: We might need to do a professional development recommendation around scoring.
 - Janna Simon: A potential recommendation could be to have ISBE work with PYFP to revise the spreadsheet.
- Elissa Bassler: A minimum task force recommendation would be that P.E. teachers or fitness testing administrators must receive in-person or distance training on administering fitness testing for the required components. Also that should receive in-person or distance training on integrating fitness testing into P.E. curriculum.
 - Chair Sophie recommended IAHPERD work with ISBE on professional development opportunities for integrating fitness testing into P.E. curriculum.
- Elissa Bassler: Another recommendation could be that ISBE work with associations to create training to post to the Illinois Principals Association's website.
- Janna Simon reviewed the recommendations that have been provided by the task force:
 - Every person administering fitness testing in Illinois must receive in-person or web-based professional development training related to administering and scoring the fitness tests for the required fitness components. ISBE may work with Global Compliance Network to create trainings that all teachers can access.
 - ISBE should work with IAHPERD to develop professional development opportunities for integrating fitness testing into P.E. class and work with stakeholders to disseminate the training across the state.

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- ISBE should work with partners to develop webinars that are accessible on the ISBE website for school administrators and teachers to understand fitness testing.
- ISBE should work to compile all free and paid resources and trainings available related to fitness testing and post the compendium, with links to other resources, on its website (or via a link to a partner's website with the comprehensive listing)
- ISBE should work with Presidential Youth Fitness Program to modify the excel reporting spreadsheet to meet the specific needs/requirements in Illinois.

Review running list of Task Force recommendations and any remaining Task Force charges

- Deb Vogel: Another recommendation should be to compile all these resources into one central place, making sure it's kept up to date. Perhaps ISBE's site since all parties can access it, unlike IAHPERD's.
 - If this recommendation is adopted, the task force could get rid of the draft recommendation to create a tip sheet on test administration as the compendium would include that information – will be revisited at the next meeting.
- Should there be recommendations on communications around the rollout of the fitness testing? Will be discussed next meeting.
- Dr. Sanborn would like to revisit the recommendation on looking for funding for Fitnessgram software. In the interim, there will be work done to try and get a better sense of the budget.

The task force will review and vote on the full list of recommendations at the next meeting.

Public Comment

- Denise Rossa offered to be a resource on Evanston's experiences/challenges with body composition testing. She also asked if and what recommendations the task force will make around interventions for students who fall in both the Needs Improvement and At Risk zones for body composition testing.
- Chair Sophie directed task force members to read the other three written public comments provided in their folders and included below:

1) Submitted by Terry Sportsman, Elementary PE teacher at Burlington Central High School

"As elementary PE teachers here in school district 301 (Burlington), we are concerned with the state mandated fitness testing.

While we understand the importance of fitness and have no problem with the testing, we feel the rumored three times a year would be excessive since we only really have actual PE contact time with the kids three times a week for 30 minutes. By our estimation, this fitness testing could cut into up to 20-25% of our PE time. With the push for more activity, we feel this would contradict that notion. We strive for high percentages of activity time and we want to keep it that way! I know some school districts have even less PE contact time than us and they would be even more hard pressed. We feel mandating fitness testing once a year would be adequate for grades 3-5, especially for those districts that don't have elementary PE 5 times a week."

2) Submitted by Annie Atseff, Lake Bluff 65 Parent

"Sorry to be the voice of dissension but I think BMI testing is a brilliant idea. Childhood obesity leads to lifelong health problems. Parents need to be held accountable for their children's diets. Who do you think will be paying the healthcare bills of all these obese adults in the next 20 or 30 years. Your children."

3) Submitted by Wendy Kaus, Lake Bluff, IL

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"I am shocked and disappointed to learn of the Task Force's consideration of mandatory fitness and BMI testing in Illinois schools.

Hearing and vision testing in schools has been occurring for decades. Does a hearing problem affect learning in the classroom? Of course. A vision problem? Absolutely. A BMI percentage outside the recommended range? No way. School testing of hearing and vision is appropriate; generalized fitness and BMI testing is not.

Fitness goals should be unique to each child. A child with a larger frame is going to have fitness goals different from a child with a slight frame. Physical feats easy for one child may be unattainable for another child, not necessarily because of obesity, but because of body type and other factors. Generalized fitness testing will no doubt serve as an embarrassing public assumption that these children don't measure up. Schools have been trying in recent years to decrease peer bullying. Generalized fitness testing would simply add fuel to the fire.

What is the benefit to BMI testing? According to the COE Report entitled Body Mass Index Measurement in Schools, "Little is known about the outcomes of BMI measurement programs, including effects on weight-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of youth and their families. As a result, no consensus exists on the utility of BMI screening programs for young people." The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force concluded that insufficient evidence exists to recommend for or against BMI screening programs for youth in clinical settings as a means to prevent adverse health outcomes; however, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that BMI should be calculated and plotted annually on all youth as part of normal health supervision within the child's medical home. The outcome of school BMI testing, in my opinion, will be just another hit to our youth's self-image and self-confidence. The child whose thicker body type renders her "number" too high? The child whose body is naturally putting on a few pounds in preparation for a growth spurt? Trust me, these children are well aware of weighing more than their peers. As a mother of three, ages 15, 13 and 9, all active 4+ days a week in sports or dance, I have seen it happen, and I'm willing to bet you have, too. Do you really want to give a young child a complex that may result in depression, eating disorders, etc.? Have you considered the long-term consequences?

I strongly feel that fitness and BMI testing in our schools serves no purpose other than to shame our most fragile members of society in a public forum. Schools are supposed to lift their students up, not add to what tears them down.

I truly hope your Task Force is consulting with mental health professionals as to the many dangers these proposed measures present to a child's self-image, self-confidence, self-worth and overall mental health.

Fitness and BMI testing should remain personalized, private topics to be addressed among child, parent and pediatrician, period."

Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:46am.

Meeting Objectives:

1. Finalize recommendations around protocols for fitness testing.
2. Determine professional development approaches for physical education teachers that will help ensure the validity and uniformity of reported physical fitness scores.

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3. Determine informational/other needs to prepare to review and approve final recommendations at 2/10 meeting.