

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



Task Force Summary

February 10, 2015

12:00pm-3:00pm

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; Kelly Nowak, Vice President, Board of Education, Geneva CUSD 304; 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; 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; 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

Advisory Task Force Members: Brian Minsker, Vice President, Program Services, Illinois Parent Teacher Association

Members of the Public: [In absentia] Julie Moreschi, Dietetic Internship Director, Benedictine University; Anne Stewart; Sherry Zaerr, Dewey School Physical Education

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: Stephanie Whyte, Chief Health Officer, Chicago Public Schools, represented by Antonio (Tony) Marquez, Chicago Public Schools

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 12:10pm.

Task force members introduced themselves.

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



Review and approve meeting summary from January, 28 2015

The summary was unanimously approved with an edit to add Michael Wiggins to the attendance list.

Body composition discussion

At the request of Elissa Bassler, who was not adequately prepared for the vote at the last meeting, the discussion on whether to include body composition as one of the fitness components for testing was reopened.

Discussion

- Elissa Bassler: She thanked the task force for allowing the reopening of the discussion. At the time of the last vote, she didn't get a chance to hear a rehashing of the different points of view. In the meantime, she was able to give more thought to the Centers for Disease Control's recommendations around body composition testing, and to all the things that would need to be in place to make it possible and how far Illinois is from being ready to implement it at this time. Equally important, she's concerned about the sensitivity around body composition testing and fears the backlash that would definitely be provoked if the task force were to attempt a suggestion on it, especially given the rash of anti-P.E. bills that have been introduced this legislative session.

Jean Sophie facilitated a revisiting of the key positions in favor of and in opposition to body composition testing:

- Brian Minsker: Had several concerns: 1) the sensitivity around the topic; 2) concerns around data collection. He's heard anecdotal stories from schools about collected measurements being shared in front of peers and students being teased. Without adequate protection, these measurements will be used as a tool for bullying. The results should not be shared with a third party without parental permission and parents should be able to opt in rather than opt out. There should be a compelling reason why sensitive information like this should be shared by anyone outside of a student's parents, and there has been no such reason stated.
 - Kelly Nowak stated that she agrees with everything Brian said wholeheartedly.
 - Paul Zientarski stated that he does not agree. He submitted a written statement (found in the Public Comment section) outlining his position in favor of body composition testing.
- Tim Sanborn: BMI is a standard used by CDC to assess body composition and is a more accepted measure than waist circumference. The issues that came up with BMI in Evanston were process issues and the process was adjusted so students are measured privately; the results are not given to the students or their peers, but are sent on to parents. Parents of students with results outside of the healthy fitness zone are advised to seek counseling with a healthcare provider. This adjustment alleviated the concerns parents had. The results are reported in aggregate at the school level. One P.E teacher instructed on how to perform the test can readily provide accurate results, it does not have to be done with a medical assistant. Safeguards do need to be implemented. BMI helps provide a complete fitness assessment and is needed to educate parents and students. If we don't address body composition, the state is going to continue to have significant health issues and more disease. With the appropriate safeguards in place he strongly recommends making BMI one of the required components of fitness for assessment.
- Jason Leahy: Speaking on behalf of the IL Principals Association, he agreed with the PTA position, specifically on parental permission. His association is concerned about healthy children being mischaracterized as unhealthy and thinks body composition should be addressed in the doctor's office, where HIPPA laws followed closely. Kids are required to get physicals so this is a more appropriate place for that to occur. Also, with the unfunded mandate P.E. bill before the General Assembly, privacy issues on legislative landscape and the political risk involved, the concerns about BMI undoing our work are real and need to be taken seriously. Everything could be at risk, even if it is just a suggestion. Education about BMI is appropriate, but recommending schools do testing is a

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



mistake. As an organization working with other groups dealing with a host of concerns (e.g. Common Core, etc.), BMI will add fuel to fire to oppose all the recommendations. It could also present unique liability issues for schools in terms of how the measurements are handled. IAP will not recommend BMI testing and that is the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance's position as well.

- Mark Bishop: He recognized the concerns that were raised. There are lots of issues about privacy. Also, given the political reality, he has many concerns about the risk. Risking all this work over one indicator not worth it.
 - Conny Mueller Moody: She fully agrees with Mark Bishop.
 - Peggy Pryor: Agrees that the risk is too great.
 - Skip Williams: Agreed on risk, but values body composition testing. He values both sides.
 - Jean Sophie: She's most in agreement with Brian and Jason. The Alliance attorney was adamantly against BMI testing and they are a force to be reckoned with. Her biggest concerns are around confidentiality – the process and the storing of data – as well as the social emotional piece and the political risk. We've done lots of work, there's progress being made and she doesn't want to lose it.
- Michael Wiggins: Working with kids, he feels a responsibility to use best practices and BMI is a best practice, as laid out by Paul Zientarski and Dr. Sanborn. He's also seen firsthand the benefits of BMI testing. Dr. Sanborn talked about how to address the concerns that have been raised and, speaking as a P.E. instructor, he knows it can be done properly if the expectations are communicated to educators and if they are given clear procedures/rules to follow.
- Deb Vogel: Agrees that the political realities are there and having been involved in this work for two and a half years, she would like to protect what's been done. She also agrees that educating students on this is important. In this climate, there should definitely be an opt in option if the task force goes ahead with this.
- Sarah Welch: There is room for the task force to make this a school-level choice; the legislation leaves room for this to be interpreted that way. She leans toward Dr. Sanborn's position and it has not been made clear to her that people know about and are aware of BMI. She's not involved in politics, but it seems to her that recommending, but not requiring, body composition testing should be a good enough compromise. She could be swayed and doesn't think BMI should derail all the progress that's been made. If the task force is comfortable trusting that all the other data is going to be collected in responsible way, then why the discomfort here?
- Antonio Marquez: Recognizing the potential political ramifications, he agrees with pro-BMI arguments. We want to give students and families the full picture on fitness and the state would be missing a vital piece if the body composition component were omitted. As a task force we can figure out the details to avoid the pitfalls that have been raised, but students will not have a complete picture if we omit BMI.
- Marjurie Ribeiro had no comment.
- Elissa Bassler: She reiterated that she is concerned about the political ramifications and added that the high risk should be carefully weighed against what is really a very weak suggestion. There is no discussion of reporting body composition results to ISBE and her understanding was that the proposed suggestion would be school-level only. This suggestion won't change anything – those doing it, will do it and those that aren't will continue to not do so. She doesn't see any upside to inviting fallout when there won't be much change. Schools still have the option to do it no matter what. Also, the safeguards are essential. She doesn't want the task force to recommend doing this until all the safeguards can also be thoroughly addressed.
- Timothy Sanborn: Body composition is written into the State Goal 20, so wasn't the intention to do education on that, along with the other components of fitness?
 - Deb Vogel: She led the effort to write the revised learning standards. These standards were written before Public Act 98-0859 was created. The law deliberately left it up to the task force to determine which components of fitness would be subject to assessment. Whatever is decided here will supersede what is in the standards.

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



- Jason: It's worth noting that the General Assembly did not pass standards - that happened through the State Board of Education. If the General Assembly were to have taken this up, they might have turned out very differently.

With that, the task force voted on the two alternate suggestions:

A) Vote one: Yes or No

Recommend, but not require, that local school districts, in partnership with their communities, consider using the body composition 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 P.E. teacher or 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 should appropriately refer students that fall outside the healthy fitness zone to receive a more definitive evaluation and, if indicated, appropriate treatment by a healthcare provider. Parents should also be provided an opportunity to opt out of body composition testing. The opt-out option is only for body composition testing, not for testing for the other fitness components.

| Results for vote one | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Vote: | Yes | No |
| List of TF members | Antonio Marquez Timothy Sanborn Michael Wiggins Skip Williams Paul Zientarski | Elissa Bassler Mark Bishop Jason Leahy Conny Mueller Moody Kelly Nowak Peggy Pryor Marjurie Ribeiro Jean Sophie Sarah Welch Deb Vogel |
| Total: | 5 | 10 |

Per the vote, the above suggestion was not adopted.

B) Vote two: Yes or No

Amend the task force suggestion to schools/district on integrating fitness testing into P.E. classes to include education on the five components of fitness as follows:

ISBE suggest that schools integrate fitness testing into P.E. class when covering content related to Illinois State Learning Standard 20. Education about the importance of the five components of fitness (aerobic capacity, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility and body composition) should be included. Teachers should follow the State Learning Standard 20 performance descriptors to identify appropriate times to integrate fitness testing and fitness component education into class.

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



| Results for vote two | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------|
| Vote: | Yes | No |
| List of TF members | Elissa Bassler Mark Bishop Jason Leahy Antonio Marquez Conny Mueller Moody Kelly Nowak Peggy Pryor Marjorie Ribeiro Timothy Sanborn Sarah Welch Michael Wiggins Skip Williams Deb Vogel Paul Zientarski | Jean Sophie |
| Total: | 14 | 1 |

Per the vote, the above suggestion was adopted.

Discussion finding funding for Fitnessgram statewide

Per the request of Timothy Sanborn, Chair Sophie moved this item up on the agenda. One of the proposed task force suggestions is for ISBE to convene a committee formed of interested stakeholders to look for funding for Fitnessgram software. A sustained funding source would help ensure longevity and would also make available enhanced versions of Fitnessgram (e.g. more professional development resources).

Discussion

- Paul Zientarski: There needs to be a high-powered person leading the effort. Hospitals and insurance companies should be on the list of entities to approach. His recommendation is for a state committee to be formed so we have clout to get into those places.
 - Timothy Sanborn: He agrees and would add sports teams to the list.
 - Janna Simon: Georgia uses sports teams. Dr. Cooper of The Cooper Institute is a big advocate and his staff offered him as a resource in helping to make pitches.

Review of recommended requirements

The task force reviewed the draft recommendations/suggestions.

Discussion/edit highlights

- On the confidentiality recommendation, per the request of the task force, staff checked into it and GA and TX do not follow Illinois law so those states' approaches will not work here.
- Added to the professional development suggestion: "ISBE shall create compliance oversight mechanism to ensure everyone required has completed the training."
- Tweaked the suggestion to schools on testing to say that ISBE will suggest that schools include all students in annual testing *whether they are enrolled in P.E. or not* because every student should be provided the opportunity to assess, set goals and track progress related to their fitness levels.
- To address concerns about providing clear guidance on making correlations between fitness scores with other available data, like attendance, academic performance, behavior, the task force amended the suggestion to say that ISBE work with state universities to develop methodologies/tools to facilitate the correlation of fitness scores with other available data.

Physical activity break – Skip Williams led the task force in a PA break.

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



Public comment

Chair Sophie directed task force members to read the other four written public comments provided in their folders and included below

1) Paul Zientarski, task force member

I just feel if we are going to make progress improving PE and the health of students in Illinois we need to include BM/ surveillance as well as the other tests we agreed on. It seems a shame that in the 2015 we have people hanging on to old beliefs about obesity and the metabolic syndrome. BM/ testing doesn't lead to bulimia and anorexia. I agree that education about body composition has to occur. Stigma's are attached to results in all the other areas of testing. You think the first student who has to stop the pacer doesn't have the same anxiety as the person listed as not in the healthy zone for BM/. Same is true of those students not meeting the necessary zones in any of the fitness tests. We can't let emotions rule what is best practices. If the leading research facility in the country "The Cooper Clinic" believes BM/ testing is important why would we ignore their recommendation.

Please understand that I stand by my beliefs knowing that I'm in the obese category using BM/ measurements. I have strived to get myself to the overweight category without success so far. Acknowledging that I have a health issue is the first step, owning that information and working to improve the situation is the goal we want for our students. Without the necessary information students and parents would just maintain the status quo. I fear that with me not being able to attend that the vote will be tilted in the wrong direction. If I could cast my vote through proxy, I **would vote the same way for proposal #1.**

Along with this [comment] I'm [direct you to] a press release from The Forward Committee of DuPage that just was released: <http://www.rwjf.org/en/about-rwjf/newsroom/newsroom-content/2013/07/dupagecounty-il-signs-of-progress.html>. I want others to know that BM/ surveillance has been going on for a while in DuPage County. As a committee whose goal it was decrease childhood obesity in our area we agreed we needed to measure what we wanted to improve. Without data we couldn't say that steps we were taking were making a difference

2) Sherry Zaerr, Dewey School Physical Education, Quincy, IL

I have a few concerns about fitness testing at the primary grade levels (K-3). According to the National Standards, formal fitness testing does not occur until 4th grade. During the primary grades, students are learning the proper form to perform these tests as well as the knowledge related to the components of the Fitnessgram.

I am [including] a correspondence

(http://classroom.kleinisd.net/users/0274/docs/fitnessgram_referenceguide.pdf) from the Cooper Institute, Fitnessgram, that I received concerning formal fitness testing at the primary level. They do not recommend any formal testing until 4th grade. According to Pangrazi (Dynamic Physical Education for Elementary School Children), he also recommends waiting until 4th grade to administer formal testing. Graham is also a publisher of Elementary Physical Education textbooks and notes the same information.

I am not opposed to fitness testing but do have many concerns particularly with the emotional stress that it may impose upon some children. Children at this age still have most of their body weight in the top 50% of their body, may have genetic factors that influence their testing results (which is difficult for them to understand), or have environmental factors (not enough exposure to physical activities at home or poor nutrition). Our focus at the primary level should be teaching students correct form, encouraging more physical activity to promote a health-related lifestyle and giving students opportunities for success in physical education.

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



Using a personal self-testing method of fitness testing where students set their own goals would be a more accurate measurement of their fitness levels and knowledge. Personal success is the key. The Fitnessgram can be used for this type of testing. The Physical Educator would be responsible for teaching students how to set personal goals for the students' growth.

I have tried testing students in both circumstances over my 27 years as a Physical Educator. Most of the students who were successful at achieving the national standards were "athletic" children who were involved in individual or team sports outside of the school setting or had exposure to physical activities through their parents. Those children who did not have these opportunities (probably 80%) were not successful in meeting the standards. There is nothing worse than watching those children who need to be successful feel disappointment. A reward system should be intrinsic, not extrinsic. Our students should learn to set goals for themselves according to their own capabilities and then work to achieve that goal.

3) Anne Stewart

It has come to my attention that the state of Illinois is attempting to make body mass indexing (BMI) of students mandatory and I am writing to you to convey my discontent. There are several reasons why I believe this is concerning and many questions that arise from this potential mandate.

First, the determination of obesity or any weight that a student has is between the student, parent and their physician. This is confidential medical information that is subject to HIPAA standards. How can all schools possibly be expected to keep this information private?

Second, the implications of students' having their BMI tested in a school setting may prove to have negative social/emotional consequences. Weight for many people is a source of extreme stress and is linked to negative self worth, potentially leading to eating disorders. Schools should focus efforts on improving students' self-concept and not destroying it.

Third, the State of Illinois is in debt. I am assuming that the cost to run this test on all students would be expensive. Who plans on paying for this? I don't want my tax dollars going to test BMI on everyone when it can be done, **if warranted**, in a physician's office with the consent of the student and parent.

Fourth, please help me understand how knowing BMI will change a student's eating habits and consequently reduce their BMI? Has the state conducted market research to prove that a "reasonable" amount of parents will actually change their purchasing habits and actively manage their child's nutrition intake so as to reduce body mass? Changing eating habits requires education, access, willingness and the financial ability to purchase foods that are healthy. This is a tall order for many families.

Lastly, what does knowing BMI have to do with improving education?

4) Julie M. Moreschi, MS, RDN, LD, Dietetic Internship
Director, Benedictine University, Lisle, IL

I am part of the advisory board of the FORWARD obesity prevention coalition. I believe that BMI data can be helpful in informing children and parents regarding their overall health and a tool to use in prevention of chronic disease. I would like to ask that including BMI as part of fitness testing and report cards be read as a public comment. Thank you for your consideration of my request

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



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 2:37pm.

Meeting Objectives:

1. Come to consensus on body composition testing
2. Review, finalize and vote to adopt task force recommendations
3. Review final report draft outline
4. Determine timeline and other needs to prepare to review draft final report at 3/12 meeting