

Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



Meeting Summary

Thursday, November 13, 2014

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; Elissa Bassler, CEO, Illinois Public Health Institute; Mark Bishop, Vice President of Policy and Communications, Healthy School Campaign; Jason Leahy, Executive Director, Illinois Principals Association; 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; 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; Michael Wiggins, Physical Education Teacher, Hinsdale Central High School District 86; Skip Williams, Assistant Professor of PE Teacher Education, School of Kinesiology and Recreation, Illinois State University; Paul Zientarski, Learning Readiness PE Coordinator, Naperville Community School District 203

Presenters: Sarah Lee, Team Lead, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, School Health Branch; Jane Wargo, Program Director, Presidential Youth Fitness Program

Guests: Katelin Anderson, Youth Initiative Coordinator, The Cooper Institute; Don Disney, Director of Youth Initiatives, The Cooper Institute; Jeff McClaine, Associate Director, The President's Challenge

Member of the Public: Antonio Marquez, Chicago Public Schools

Illinois State Board of Education Staff: Shawn Backs; Jessica Gerdes; Mark Haller; Diane Zaleski

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

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Task Force Members not in attendance: 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;

Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 9:06am. Chair Jean Sophie welcomed task force members and delivered opening remarks on the connection between enhanced P.E. and improved learning outcomes, and the importance of the work before the task force. She then reviewed the meeting agenda and thanked supporting staff.

Task force members, presenters and guests then introduced themselves.

OMA & Ethics Requirements

Shawn Backs reviewed the Open Meetings Act and ethics requirements for the task force.

Adoption of Bylaws

Elissa Bassler provided an overview of the bylaws. Deb Vogel moved to accept as approved and Peggy Pryor seconded the motion. The bylaws were unanimously adopted.

Overview of Enhanced P.E. in Illinois

Elissa Bassler provided an overview of the genesis of enhanced physical education work in Illinois through to the work of the Enhance P.E. Task Force and its recommendations.

Review PA 098-0859 and Task Force Charge

Chair Sophie reviewed the purpose of Public Act 98-0859 (see opening section of meeting summary). The task force shall submit its recommendations on physical fitness assessments on or before April 1, 2015.

Chair Sophie provided an overview of the current climate for schools and administrator considerations, which is that the majority of districts are experiencing funding issues and are primarily concerned with implementing Common Core, as well as adapting to changes in state testing standards. At a recent superintendent conference, there was a great deal of unease over mandates.

She has also heard great concern among P.E. teachers about how P.E. teacher evaluation will be handled with the implementation of the new fitness testing, as well as how to ensure student confidentiality. A lack of familiarity with Governor-elect Rauner adds another layer of uncertainty to the current climate. She stressed that she was relaying this information not to diminish the importance of this work, but to impress upon the task force the current mind frame of many educators and administrators in Illinois. She herself experienced a significant change in mind set after hearing about correlation between enhanced P.E. and improved learning outcomes as a member of the previous task force.

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Discussion

- To Chair Sophie's point on evaluation, Janna Simon pointed out that Public Act 98-0859 stipulates that fitness testing scores cannot be used to evaluate teachers.
- Deb Vogel informed the task force that the Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (IAHPERD) will address teacher evaluation at its state conference next week and that the Association is also writing standards-based assessments for every standard at every grade level, a resource which can inform the work of the task force.
- Elissa Bassler stated the previous task force's intentions in regards to fitness testing, which was to serve two high level purposes: 1) Do annual testing in schools in order to help students grow and become more fit, and 2) Gather state level data so we can see how we're doing as a state. Also, although it's not written into the law, the task force recommended districts also monitor the data so they can be aware of how they are doing. She reiterated the purpose was not to conduct high stakes testing but to help kids get more fit and to help identify and address gaps.
- Antonio asked Elissa to clarify if Fitnessgram had already been selected as the program Illinois would be using. Elissa responded that the law doesn't name a specific program but only identified the four components (at a minimum; this task force can choose to add additional components) that would be tested and that the previous task force had recommended the Presidential Youth Fitness Program (PYFP). Body Mass Index (BMI) was specifically left off the list because of the controversy surrounding the measure but this task force can choose to add that. Chair Sophie added that PYFP is free, an important consideration.
- Mark Bishop asked for a presentation on how scores in other areas (e.g. math or reading) are currently being reported to ISBE for context.

Physical Activity Break

Deb Vogel led a physical activity break and, with assistance from Janna Simon, demonstrated one of Fitnessgram flexibility tests.

Overview of Presidential Youth Fitness Program and other assessment tools

Jane Wargo gave a presentation on PYFP, followed by a presentation by Sarah Lee on using PYFP to monitor student fitness.

Discussion

- Sarah Welch asked how PYFP's recommendation to conduct testing only periodically aligned with Illinois' plans to do annual testing and also how annual testing would fare in terms of being able to meaningfully assess student growth. Sarah Lee emphasized that in terms of institutional measurement, PYFP recommends periodic reporting of the testing data, and that there is a distinction between what they recommend in the classroom (yearly or twice yearly) and what they recommend for use at aggregate level.

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- Deb Vogel asked if some Fitnessgram tests require BMI, which Don confirmed as correct; to produce the most accurate assessment you must input gender, age, height and weight. Some states don't collect body composition data but PYFP recommends using it as it is important to process of monitoring and assessing physical fitness.
- Deb Vogel also asked it if was true that The Cooper Institute was thinking about changing protocol around curl ups as she's heard there are issues around obtaining accurate results for this test. Don stated that their scientific advisory board is continually looking at all the test components and it is his understanding that the curl up is discussed quite a bit but there is no talk of altering the test in the short term.
- Elissa Bassler asked PYFP to confirm that, though there is more than one type of test for several of the fitness components (e.g. the PACER test or the mile run to determine cardiovascular endurance), it is important to have uniform testing across the state otherwise the tests will not be comparable. This is an important point as it was the intention of the previous task force to ensure flexibility in implementation at the local level. Caitlin answered that from a scientific standpoint, it would be optimal to use the same tests statewide, but the Cooper Institute answered that, from a practice standpoint, you can opt to use different tests within the same fitness component category and get fairly similar/accurate results.
- Timothy Sandborn asked for any lessons that can be learned from implementation efforts in other states. Don Disney said Fitnessgram has been around for thirty years and is constantly evolving. They are currently developing a new platform that will provide better access for users (parents/students) and more reports. Staff development has emerged as a critical component. Jane Wargo will pass along contact information for a person in Georgia who can speak to their experience.
- Chair Sophie asked if PYFP provides time estimates for teachers on conducting the tests and Don Disney said the manual does include time estimates but sometimes it's hard to be precise as variables like class size must be factored in.
- Elissa asked PYFP to clarify what aspects of Fitnessgram are free and what must be purchased. There was also a question about how much it would cost to get Fitnessgram for all schools in Illinois. Don Disney said it depends on the number of schools and to follow up with him to get a quote. Elissa said in her initial talks with The Cooper Institute there seems to be an initial cost to buy in and then subsequent fees to maintain the system. She reiterated it's important to implement this with as much fidelity as possible, while keeping costs as low as possible. Jane added that PYFP offers a free webinar series as a resource but that virtual and in-person trainings are available for purchase.

ISBE – Overview on ability and readiness to collect & report data

Marjurie Ribeiro gave a presentation on ISBE's ability and readiness to collect and report data.

Determine work plan: Structure and timeline

Chair Sophie asked task force members to identify what information is still needed to proceed forward.

Discussion

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- Chair Sophie would like more information on what schools already report and also to hear from an ISBE attorney on considerations around the collection of BMI data.
- Stephanie Whyte said that CPS is interested in incorporating this reporting into its existing database. There is concern over mandates around Fitnessgram and asked the task force to keep the focus on preserving local control over how to meet these goals.
- Jean Sophie asked if it was possible to determine how many districts are currently assessing this type of information. There was a general consensus that it would not be possible to determine that. As an example, Paul Zientarski said Naperville has informally been using Fitnessgram for twenty years.
- Mark Bishop said the task force needs to have a conversation about how detailed they want to get on the information that will be collected at the state level.
- Jason Leahy said he would prefer this to be as low impact as possible, with as little data reporting as possible and, if a higher level of reporting is desired, there will need to be funding. He also wants flexibility in terms of how much data has to be reported.
- Skip Williams said the most important thing for him is accountability with P.E. teachers – how to ensure they are following protocols so we have reliable data.

Public Comment

The sole member of the public in attendance did not provide comment.

Adjourn

Elissa Bassler moved to adjourn the meeting and Chair Sophie seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned 12pm.