

# Stakeholder and Expert Task Force on Physical Education



**Meeting Summary**  
**December 1, 2014**  
**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; 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; Antonio 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; 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; 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

**Member of the Public:** Ashley Jones, intern and guest of Timothy Sanborn

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

**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 designee Antonio Marquez); Deb Vogel, Retired Physical Education Teacher

## **Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order at 12:00pm. Chair Jean Sophie welcomed task force members and gave an overview of the objectives of the meeting and an outline of the plan for future meetings.

Task force members and the member of the public in attendance introduced themselves.

## **Review and Approve Meeting Summary from November 13, 2014**

Task Force members reviewed the summary from the 11/13 meeting. Elissa Bassler moved to accept without changes and Antonio Marquez seconded the motion. The summary was unanimously approved.

## **Overview of current data systems**

Chair Sophie provided an overview of current data systems, including the Illinois Interactive School Report Card (IIRC), the Employment Information System (EIS) and the Student Information System (SIS), and reporting.

## Highlights

- Her district doesn't have a dedicated data person, a significant challenge in reporting that will be true of many other districts, especially those with fewer resources.
- There are certain times of year when reports are due and everyone is consumed with fulfilling that obligation. The reports discussed here represent only a fraction of the total reports schools must file.
- There are many different systems schools use to submit reports. Many of the results ultimately show up on the IIRC, which is viewable by the public.

## Discussion

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- Do schools compile the numbers for the full district or does the ISBE system add it up and report the numbers back? Most schools report individually to ISBE and ISBE compiles.
- Who does the analysis for the school environmental survey? ISBE works with University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to carry out the survey. When schools report, the data goes directly to UIC.
- Who at ISBE is reviewing all these reports? Or is the review process automated? In Chair Sophie's experience, different ISBE staff members work on the various reports. Shawn Backs said her department is nutrition focused and collects only data prescribed by the USDA such as meal reimbursement, free and reduced meal eligibility, and paid lunch prices. This data is reported for purposes of Nutrition Programs and she couldn't speak to specifics on the analysis and reporting that occurs in connection with other reports submitted to ISBE.
- Immunizations are only reported at the aggregate level. Not a percentage, just the total number of students that met immunization requirements.
- Principals can choose what to write about on the report card part of the IIRC? Chair Sophie affirmed that districts can choose what to write about in the narrative section.
- Observation: The power of this type of reporting lies not in making comparisons but in spurring local engagement.
- The task force will talk about how to make this reporting meaningful and not just a compliance activity.

## Overview of available fitness tests

Paul Zientarski and Skip Williams provided an overview of the Fitnessgram test option, with video examples.

### Highlights

- Age and gender are the only data fields required for reporting test results, except for BMI which is covered further down in the notes.
- PACER: A progressive test that is very different from traditional mile run. Most schools would already have the required equipment. Easy to administer, could test a class in a single day. Also can be done in a variety of settings.
- Mile run: The P.E. teachers in attendance did not recommend this test. 1) Requires a track or you would need to approximate a track. An additional complication is that most tracks are 1,600 meters - longer than a mile - so schools would have to make adjustments. 2) Not everyone has the option to administer the test outside so would

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need space to run a mile. Also, the surface has to be taken into account; grass, for example, would impact the results. For consistency, they recommend a single test all schools can use. 3) The mile run can be daunting to students; it's easier to motivate them to do the PACER. 4) The PACER is a more positive test because strong runners can continue on and don't have to wait for others to be done.

- Mile walk: Not recommended as is difficult to assess (requires heart rate and  $VO_2$  max, a formula copyrighted by Fitnessgram). The walk is new, meant mainly for adults who can't run the PACER or mile.
- Pull-ups: This test was not recommended as it requires a lot of equipment and takes a long time to administer.
- Curl-ups: This test is the hardest to administer because there are a lot of elements that must be monitored, which means only approximately four students can be tested at a time, which would be a challenge for schools. The marking strips cost approximately \$4.29 per strip. Some schools use painter's tape.
- Trunk lifts: Students must be tested individually and it takes approximately 30-40 seconds per student. Teachers have to have some activity for the other students not being tested.
- Back-Saver Sit and Reach: Equipment prohibitive as costs \$230 a piece.
- BMI: There's a formula established by the medical community that uses height, weight and circumference.
  - Skinfold measurements: Not recommended as requires training and good calipers are necessary.
  - Biometric Impedance Analyzers: Not recommended as equipment is very expensive.
  - Even using ordinary scales for weight is in issue as a good scale costs about \$250 and not all schools have them.
  - When are children weighed by school nurses? Kindergarten, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade. There is a lot of variation on how that is done, e.g. with or without shoes. It would need to be a uniform procedure for BMI testing.

## Physical Activity Break

Peggy Pryor led the task force in a physical activity break.

## Discussion: Which tests to require?

- One route would be to offer all the tests and let schools choose, another would be to recommend one in particular for a category and offer alternatives. The Presidential

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Youth Fitness Program recommends consensus on one standardized test but concedes that may not be feasible. Ensuring local flexibility is a priority for the task force.

- Kelly Nowak: Speaking for school board members, she would like to see schools given as many choices as possible. For example, some schools favor the mile run. If schools are already successfully using certain tests, they should be allowed to continue.
- If we're choosing a preferred test, why have other options?
  - The rationale is that all districts across Illinois need choices.
- Paul Zientarski thinks Illinois needs to purchase Fitnessgram. In the purchased version, there's a test to become certified to administer. States like Georgia found ways to have cost picked up by a sponsor—*Added to running list of recommendations.*
- For flexibility, there was a discussion over whether to designate both the trunk lift and the shoulder stretch as the preferred tests as they use different muscles. Ultimately, the task force decided simplicity was the dominant consideration, especially as the law requires the task force identify only the minimum fitness indicators to be reported to ISBE, so went with only the trunk lift as the required test and the Back-Saver Sit and Reach as the alternative.
- Timothy Sanborn emphasized that an important part of this is to educate people on why this testing matters.
  - Michael Wiggins reinforced the point saying the scores will provide an opportunity to raise awareness among parents, especially on how fitness or a lack of fitness is related to the development of metabolic syndrome.
- BMI testing:
  - Paul Zientarski feels strongly that BMI is one of the five components of fitness and, as such, should be tested. The objection is that the tests are invasive and personal, but do we not address other subjects with students when they have trouble simply because it's uncomfortable to do so?
  - Elissa Bassler said speaking as the Executive Director of the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO), there are concerns in the public health world around the difference between BMI screening and BMI surveillance, which is a high priority for IAPO. From a policy standpoint, no one is advocating for BMI screening in Illinois because of validity and other concerns. From a public health standpoint, it's critically important to have BMI information. BMI was deliberately left out the list of required fitness indicators in the law due to the controversy surrounding it.

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- Kelly Nowak said it's hard to get a consistent measure for BMI as so many factors influence it.
- Jason Leahy said this is a very touchy subject and the task force needs to be very careful. He doesn't think the task force can require it. Even if it's included as a recommendation, the task force needs to be careful. His association can't support school personnel being responsible for this.
- Jean Sophie is concerned that a firestorm over BMI would undo all the other important work being done here.

Conclusion: Elissa Bassler made a motion to table BMI and have the task force revisit whether to add it as a required measure when overall approaches are discussed. Paul Zientarski seconded the motion. All voted in favor, none opposed.

Category	Recommended Test	Alternate (if applicable)
Aerobic Capacity	PACER	Mile Run
Muscular Strength	Push-Ups	N/A
Muscular Endurance	Curl-Ups	N/A
Flexibility	Trunk Lifts	Back-Saver Sit and Reach
Body Composition	N/A - tabled for now	N/A - tabled for now

Running list of recommendations (to be further developed as discussions continue):

- 1) Seek funding for Fitnessgram
- 2) Table BMI testing for now, revisit question of whether will be added as another required measure when overall approaches are discussed

## Discussion: Which data fields get reported?

- At what level of detail should schools report (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, etc.)?
  - Jean Sophie felt the task force must be sensitive to the burden level to schools, e.g. less reporting is better.
  - What is the distinction between health data and education data? If there's an educational component, it should be followed up with guidance for students who don't fall in the Healthy Fitness Zone.
  - How will reporting account for students waived from P.E.? As it stands, ISBE calculates the denominator and schools report the numerator. ISBE will have to figure out how to adjust for kids who don't participate. This will be revisited at a later time.

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- If reporting is broken down by race/gender, etc., would allow for more specific interventions. For example, districts could respond with special kinds of teacher development.
- Ethnicity reporting is difficult.

This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

## **Discussion: How often do schools report?**

The task force did not get to this discussion; it will continued at the next meeting.

## **Next steps: Plan for next several meetings**

At the next meeting, the task force will discuss the details of what/ how schools should report to ISBE, how ISBE should report to the public, and how to maintain student confidentiality

ISBE will present on considerations around data collection and student confidentiality.

A representative from Georgia will report on state experiences with purchased version of Fitnessgram and state reporting.

## **Public Comment**

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

## **Adjourn**

Timothy Sanborn moved to adjourn the meeting, Peggy Pryor seconded the motion. The task force voted unanimously to end the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 12pm.