

A Motivating Mandate: How Fitness Assessment Inspires Physical Activity in Texas

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Topics

- Obesity Prevention Policies in Texas
- Challenges to Implementation
- Fitness Assessment Requirements
- Steps to Success
- Call to Action
- Texas Resources

Student-Focused Obesity Prevention Policies

Grades K-8

- Daily/Weekly Time Requirements for Physical Activity
- Health/Physical Education part of required curriculum
- Coordinated School Health Programming

Grades 9-12

- 1 ½ Credits-Physical Education, ½ Credit-Health Education, substitutes permitted

Other Supporting Obesity Prevention Policies

School Districts

- School Health Advisory Councils
- Annual School Health Survey
- District Wellness Policies
- Reimbursable School Meal Guidelines

State Agencies

- Texas School Health Advisory Council
- Interagency Obesity Council
- Worksite Wellness Advisory Committee

Challenges to Implementing School Health Policies

- State/school district size and demography
- Lack of administrative or parental support
- School day time restraints
- Focus on sports and activity, not education
- Lack of funding and resources

Fitness Assessment Requirements and Principles

- Measure aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility (6 test items)
- Assess all students in grades 3-12 once annually
- Utilize FITNESSGRAM, by Cooper Institute
- Permit exemptions for students with restrictions
- Prevent grading, competition or penalties
- Provide parents/guardians with student results
- Use assessment as teaching opportunity

Steps to Success

- Step 1: Identify Issues
- Step 2: Cultivate Stakeholder Support
- Step 3: Empower and Inform Implementers
- Step 4: Celebrate Success
- Step 5: Commit to Continuous Improvement

Step 1: Identify Issues

- Obese children = obese adults
- Obesity and type 2 diabetes major health concern for Texas
- Existing policies not fully implemented
- Schools focused on accountability system, core curriculum
- Stakeholders not working in unison
- Disconnect between school personnel

Step 2: Cultivate Stakeholder Support

- Identify all invested parties
- Invite these parties to discuss needs
- Listen and be open to new ideas
- Identify leaders and develop champions
- Solicit funding and resources

Step 3: Empower and Inform Implementers

- Determine who will be responsible
- Engage implementers in problem-solving
- Maintain a solutions-driven mindset
- Emphasize vertical teams
- Provide ongoing opportunity for dialogue
- Establish system for training (train-the-trainers model, listservs, websites, regional centers, videoconferencing, professional conferences)

Texas Fitness Assessment Data

2007-2008

Total # of Students Assessed: 2,658,665

Grade	Total # of Students Assessed			FITNESSGRAM [®] Test (% Achieving Healthy Fitness Zone on all 6 tests)		
	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys
3	331,379	162,429	168,950	102,342	33.25	28.6
6	298,930	146,881	152,049	60,663	23.08	17.6
9	272,255	130,877	141,378	39,456	13.9	15.04
12	152,144	75,673	76,471	13,040	8.18	8.96

1,074 out of 1,267 districts submitted data (84.77%)

Step 4: Celebrate Success

- Collect anecdotal evidence of success
- Conduct a press conference
- Educate newspaper writers
- Focus on the positive
- Acknowledge stakeholders and implementers

Step 5: Commit to Continuous Improvement

- Conduct pre and post assessments
- Determine resources based on data
- Focus on best practices, identify models
- Identify methods for providing physical activity and health education with student, parental and community involvement
- Strengthen coordinated school health at all levels

Call To Action

- Assist with implementation of your school district's wellness policy
- Initiate or become involved in a School Health Advisory Council
- Support school health initiatives by advocating within your professional association
- Build a statewide alliance with diverse representation, identify policy priorities, communicate collaborative message
- Share your knowledge and vision with decision-makers

Texas Resources

- Texas Education Agency www.tea.state.tx.us
- Texas Department of Agriculture
www.squaremeals.org
- Texas Department of State Health Services
www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth
- Texas Legislature Online www.legis.state.tx.us
(Senate Bill 530-fitness assessment)
- FITNESSGRAM www.fitnessgram.net/texas
- Coordinated School Health Model
www.cdc.gov/dash
- Partnership for a Healthy Texas, Legislative
Session Priorities www.texashealthinstitute.org

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