A recent poll found that 80% of Illinois voters support physical education at every grade level and the majority would like to strengthen Illinois’ P.E. requirements

Frequently Asked Questions

What fitness assessment will be used? The Task Force is charged with making recommendations on the specific assessment protocols, but the FITNESSGRAM physical fitness testing methodology is a nationally recognized, reliable and valid test to help students assess and achieve their fitness goals, and was recommended for use in schools by the Illinois Enhance P.E. Task Force. It includes tests for the indicators referenced in the legislation: endurance, muscular strength, aerobic capacity and flexibility.

How much will it cost? The FITNESSGRAM assessment methods and training are available FREE to schools through the Presidential Youth Fitness Program. There is also a paid version that has additional resources and tools, but that is not required.

Is this like the Presidential Youth Fitness Program we used when I was in school? No, the FITNESSGRAM tests are criterion-referenced assessment that helps students identify areas of self-improvement rather than comparing them to others.

Is fitness assessment a new requirement for schools? No, fitness assessment to help students set and achieve personal fitness goals is embedded as a component of State Goal 20 of Illinois’ new P.E. standards, adopted this year.

Do districts have flexibility in fitness assessments? The Task Force will make recommendations on the specific protocols, but FITNESSGRAM/Presidential Youth Fitness offers several comparable options for how to test for the
identified fitness indicators, so it is anticipated that schools will have the option to choose which of the tests to use. Some comparability must be in place in order to have data that can be analyzed to understand how well we’re doing in Illinois in producing fit kids.

**Who will use the state level data?** The Task Force will make recommendations on how ISBE should report on the data so that parents, policy-makers and health and education experts can see how the state is doing and identify how we can do better. The Task Force will also make recommendations on how ISBE could correlate fitness data with data on academic achievement, attendance and discipline. Many studies have shown that fit kids have better performance on these measures.

**Will parents get the information on student fitness?** The legislation lets districts decide how to report their results to the public and parents.

**Will students be graded on their fitness?** No. The legislation says that fitness assessments are to be used to support instruction and individual goal setting. It specifically precludes grading students or evaluating teachers based on fitness results.

**Will students’ individual information be protected?** Yes. The legislation charges the Task Force with developing protocols for protecting individual students’ information.

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**The Benefits of Enhancing P.E. and Fitness Include:**

- **Improved Test Scores:** Students with good cardio-respiratory fitness at one Illinois school were twice as likely to meet ISAT standards¹
- **Improved Academics:** Studies show a positive association between fitness and academic achievement²
- **Better Behavior:** A Texas study showed that higher physical fitness was associated with better school attendance rates and fewer disciplinary incidents³
- **Improved Health:** Being physically active reduces the risk of chronic diseases. Regular exercise has been shown to improve muscular endurance and flexibility, reduce stress and improve mental health⁴

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**Organizations that support HB 5397 include:** *(List in formation)*

| American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network | Illinois Public Health Institute |
| American Heart Association, Midwest Affiliate | Illinois Society of Public Health Educators (ISOPHE) |
| Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children | Illinois Statewide Alliance of YMCAs |
| genHkids Coalition | Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium (NIPHC) |
| Illinois Academy of Family Physicians | Playworks Illinois |
| Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention | Seven Generations Ahead |
| Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity | Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance |
| Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance | Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics |

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