

Mansfield Independent School District

Spring 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Senate Bill 530 requires beginning with the 2007-08 school year, that the FITNESSGRAM physical fitness assessment be administered to all students in grades 3-12. FITNESSGRAM is a health-related fitness assessment developed by The Cooper Institute for Aerobic research and is a research-based criterion referenced test.

MISD considers FITNESSGRAM a quality assessment for three reasons:

1. FITNESSGRAM establishes a baseline of a healthy fitness zone from which students can set goals and check their progress (non-competitive) to plan for lifelong physical activity and to maintain and improve their fitness level. Health-related fitness assessment measures students' aerobic capacity, muscular strength/endurance, flexibility and body composition.
2. FITNESSGRAM provides recommended activity program options that will help students reach healthy fitness zones in those areas where they need to improve.
3. FITNESSGRAM does not place an emphasis on skill or sports-related fitness such as speed measured by an individual's 40 yard dash time. It does not compare students to other students.

FITNESSGRAM tests all students regardless of age, gender, or ability. Students are encouraged to be self-aware of health-related fitness and take responsibility by setting personal fitness goals. When students focus on the process of doing their personal best, a more positive lifelong impact is achieved.

On your child's test day, he/she should wear athletic shorts, a t-shirt, socks and tennis shoes underneath an appropriate warm-up suit (jacket and pants) or underneath standardized dress. Testing in warm-ups is permitted and your child may wear the warm-up suit the entire day. If your child forgets proper testing attire, he/she will proceed with the fitness test in standardized dress.

You will receive a copy of your child's assessment inside one of the late spring report cards. Results for high school students will go out in the last report card in June. Results for students in grades 3-8 will go out in either the 5th or the 6th six weeks depending on when your child was tested. By providing you and your child with this health-related fitness information, MISD believes you can lead your child towards a healthy lifestyle. A healthy student is better prepared to learn and perform in all aspects of life.

For further information concerning the FITNESSGRAM Assessment, please refer to <http://www.fitnessgram.net/texas/>.

Sincerely,

Fred Garza
Science, Health, and PE Coordinator
Mansfield ISD

Frequently Asked Questions About Fitnessgram

1. Why is fitness testing important to me?

The FITNESSGRAM physical fitness assessment is based not on athletic ability, but on good health. No matter what your career path, you will live a happier, more productive life if you are healthy—and physical fitness is vital to overall health. FITNESSGRAM provides accurate and reliable information about your physical condition and how it can be improved.

2. Can I “fail” the FITNESSGRAM test?

No. FITNESSGRAM is a tool to help you determine your fitness needs and guides you in planning a personalized physical activity program. The test will not affect your grades in any way.

3. Will my child’s scores be posted or be made public?

No, individual student scores will not be made public. All the student scores, however, will be compiled to give an overall district result.

4. Will my results be compared to other students?

No. FITNESSGRAM uses Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZ) to determine your overall physical fitness. HFZs are not based on class averages or any other peer comparisons. The standards are set specifically for boys and girls of different ages using the best available research. If your score falls within the HFZ, it means you have achieved the recommended level of fitness for your age. If your score falls below the HFZ, you should engage in activities that will help you improve.

5. What are the FITNESSGRAM Test items?

There are six test items:

- a. One of the following: Either the Mile Run, the PACER (20 meter shuttle runs) or the Walk Test (measures aerobic capacity)
- b. Push-ups (measures upper body muscular strength/endurance)
- c. Curl-ups (measures abdominal muscular strength/endurance)
- d. Either the Back Saver Sit and Reach or Shoulder Stretch (measures flexibility)
- e. Trunk Lift (measures trunk extensor strength and flexibility)
- f. Body Mass Index (measures body composition: appropriateness of weight relative to height)

6. What can I do to prepare for the fitness test?

Actively play or move at least 60 minutes at least five days during the week. Walk, jog, play tennis, play racquetball or participate in any activity you enjoy. Do strength training activities such as sit-ups, push-ups, modified push-ups or climbing activities 2-3 days each week. Begin doing as many repetitions as possible and try to increase repetitions gradually. Also, eat a healthy diet by including more fruits and vegetables and reducing fats and sugars. Ask a physical education teacher or coach on your campus for specific tips on ways you can prepare not only for the FITNESSGRAM test, but for a lifetime of good overall health.