

Mansfield Independent School District

Questions and Answers Concerning S.B. 530 – Required Fitness Testing

1. Why test?

Research has shown that being overweight in childhood often continues into obesity in adulthood. It is essential that healthy habits begin early in life to establish a foundation that will last a lifetime. Senate Bill 530 strengthens the physical activity requirements for elementary and middle school students **and establishes a confidential fitness assessment as a tool to gauge fitness level.** The State wants to find correlations between the results of the physical fitness test and the following: student academic achievement levels; student attendance levels; student obesity; student disciplinary problems; and school meal programs. It will also be used to assess the effectiveness of the district coordinated school health program.

2. What test instrument will be used?

TEA has announced that Texas schools must use the computerized Fitnessgram program to provide mandatory physical fitness assessment. This test was developed by the Cooper Clinic in Dallas.

3. When will the test be administered?

Schools will have a 2 month window period to give the testing. Testing may take place anytime between February 1st through March 28th. Schools will be allowed to select the time period best suited for them.

4. What are the FitnessGram test components?

The Fitness Gram test will measure various health related components:

There are six test items:

Either the Mile Run, the PACER (20 meter shuttle runs) or the Walk Test (measures aerobic capacity)

Push-ups (measures upper body muscular strength/endurance)

Curl-ups (measures abdominal muscular strength/endurance)

Either the Back Saver Sit and Reach or Shoulder Stretch (measures flexibility)

Trunk Lift (measures trunk extensor strength and flexibility)

Body Mass Index (measures body composition: appropriateness of weight relative to height)

5. How are test scores analyzed?

The Fitnessgram is a criterion-referenced test. This means that a student must achieve a specific level of fitness based on their age and gender. Students try to achieve what is referred to as the “Healthy Fitness Zone.” If they don’t reach the healthy fitness zone, they are scored as “Needs Improvement.”

6. Do parents need to give permission for students to be tested?

No. Since this is required of school districts as mandated by the State Legislature, parents do not have to give permission for their child to be tested.

7. Will recommendations for doctors be made based on test results?

No. Recommendations for doctors will not be made based on the test results.

8. How do parents receive a report?

Parents will receive a copy of their child's results enclosed in the 5th or 6th week grading period depending on the grade level. High school students will receive them at the end of the spring semester. Other grade level schools should be able to include the results in the 5th six week or 6th six weeks depending on when they concluded the testing.

9. What privacy will be instituted to protect disclosure in reference to height/weight?

S.B. 530 prohibits the summary results from containing the names of individual students or teachers. It also provides that individual results of student performance on the assessment instrument are confidential and are authorized to be released only in accordance with state and federal law.

10. How many times will this physical fitness test be given?

At least once a year as required by Senate Bill 530.

11. Will anyone be touching my child as part of this test? No.

12. How will body mass index be determined? Calipers **will not** be used to determine skin fold measurement in MISD. Only height and weight will be taken to determine body mass index by an adult.

13. Is the fitness test for a grade? No. The results of the test will in no way be incorporated into a six-weeks grade (or nine-weeks grade for high school).

14. Will students get a reward for passing? No rewards or prizes will be given.

15. Will all students be taking the test? Senate Bill 530 requires testing of all students in grades 3-12. However, a school district is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of a disability or other condition, it is identified as inappropriate.

16. Will there be a make-up session if the student is absent? Possible arrangements will need to be made with the PE teacher to give every student the opportunity to be tested. Since teachers will have a large window of time to give these tests, students who miss it during their regularly scheduled period could be worked in during another class period.

17. How will you train my child to pass the test? This test is a tool to gauge fitness level. Every child's level of fitness is an ongoing concern in all PE classes. Moderate to vigorous activity is recommended on a daily basis to provide training and improve health-related fitness.

18. How will the teacher deal with the self-esteem of each student in relation to the test?

Teachers will approach each student in the same supportive manner that they do during the regular PE class period. As always, PE teachers are there to encourage each student and not criticize their performance.

19. Is this a local, state or national initiative? This is a State of Texas initiative.