

Texas PTA Legislative Update – Texas School Students’ Fitness Levels Assessed
July 3, 2008

Who says things are quiet and uneventful during the Legislative Interim Period? A lot is happening in Austin and across the state as state agencies implement laws passed during the last Texas Legislative Session.

Of particular note to Texas PTA, results are in on the Texas FITNESSGRAM®, mandated by Senate Bill 530 in the 2007 Texas legislative session. The FITNESSGRAM® is a physical fitness assessment that was administered to all public school students in grades 3-12 this spring. The purpose of the assessment is to determine fitness levels for Texas children, to correlate fitness data to academic achievement, and to utilize fitness information to educate children and parents about healthy lifestyles.

Preliminary results show that fitness levels are highest in the elementary grades and decline steadily with each succeeding grade level. Scores ranged from a high of 32.9% of girls in 3rd grade reaching the healthy fitness zone (27.6% of 3rd grade boys reached the healthy fitness zone) to a low of 7.82% of girls in 12th grade (and 8.56% of boys) reaching the healthy fitness zone. [Click here for the link to the chart of fitness levels by grade level.](#)

The FITNESSGRAM® assesses body composition, aerobic capacity, strength, endurance and flexibility. Tests include a one mile run, curl ups, push-ups, trunk lift, shoulder stretches and a skin fold test. 2.6 million children in public schools were tested.

A 2007 report from Trust for America’s Health found that Texas ranked sixth among states in the obesity rate for children ages 10-17. 19.1 percent of Texas children in this age range were considered obese.

Texas is the first state to order a comprehensive physical assessment of public school students. The assessment was paid for with \$2.5 million in private funds raised to cover the first 2 years of operation. For more information on the state’s FITNESSGRAM® and specific [fitnessresults, click here](#) or visit <http://www.fitnessgram.net>.

Senate Bill 530 also mandated moderate or vigorous physical activity for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Students in 6th through 8th grades will be required to participate in physical activity for at least four of six semesters.