

Physical Fitness Testing Information

Purpose and Content

The State Board of Education designated the FITNESSGRAM® as the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) for students in California public schools. The FITNESSGRAM® is a comprehensive, health-related physical fitness battery developed by The Cooper Institute. The primary goal of the FITNESSGRAM® is to assist students in establishing lifetime habits of regular physical activity.

Public school students in grades five, seven, and nine are required to take the PFT, whether or not they are enrolled in a physical education class or participate in a block schedule. These students include those enrolled in local educational agencies (LEAs) such as elementary, high, and unified school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools. LEAs must also test all students in alternate programs, including, but not limited to, continuation schools, independent study, community day schools, county community schools, and nonpublic schools. Students who are physically unable to take the entire test battery are to be given as much of the test as his or her condition will permit. (Education Code (EC) Section 60800 and the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 1041).

The PFT provides information that can be used by (1) students to assess and plan personal fitness programs; (2) teachers to design the curriculum for physical education programs; and (3) parents and guardians to understand their children's fitness levels. This program also provides results that are used to monitor changes in the physical fitness of California students. By law (EC Section 60800), all LEAs in California are required to administer the PFT annually to all students in grades five, seven, and nine.

The FITNESSGRAM® is composed of the following six fitness areas, with a number of test options provided for most areas:

Aerobic Capacity

- PACER (Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run)
- One-Mile Run

Abdominal Strength and Endurance

- Curl-Up

Upper Body Strength and Endurance

- Push-Up

Body Composition

- Body Mass Index

Trunk Extensor Strength and Flexibility

- Trunk Lift

Flexibility

- Back-Saver Sit and Reach
- Shoulder Stretch

The FITNESSGRAM® uses objective criteria to evaluate performance for each fitness area (e.g., body composition, abdominal strength, and endurance). The Cooper Institute established these criteria using current research and expert opinions. These criteria represent a level of fitness that offers some protection against the diseases associated with physical inactivity.

Background

The statewide physical fitness testing program was first authorized in 1976 and reestablished in 1995 as part of the California Assessment of Academic Achievement Act (Assembly Bill [AB] 265 which added EC Section 60800). In February 1996, the State Board of Education designated FITNESSGRAM® as the required physical fitness test that LEAs shall administer to California students in grades five, seven, and nine.

EC Section 60800 requires Schools to administer the physical fitness test (i.e., FITNESSGRAM®):

Schools shall administer the PFT annually during the months of February through May to all students in grades five, seven, and nine.

The California Department of Education (CDE) collects the physical fitness test results and provides aggregate results to the School Districts and the public.

The CDE reports the aggregate results to the Governor of California and the California Legislature.

After completing the PFT School Districts are to provide students with their individual results either orally, electronically or in writing.

Schools report the summary results of the PFT in their annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC).