

Health-Related Fitness Testing in Maryland

The goal of Physical Education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity. A physically literate individual may participate in a health-related fitness test that evaluates five components: aerobic capacity, body composition, flexibility, muscular endurance, and muscular strength.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) does not mandate fitness testing. However, Education Article, §7-409, Annotated Code of Maryland, states:

Each local school system may develop and implement an annual Wellness Policy Implementation and Monitoring Plan to be used to:

- (1) Establish baseline student data for the health-related components of physical fitness;*
- (2) Assist students with the development of personal physical fitness plans;*
- (3) Encourage appropriate interventions for students identified as having unhealthy levels of physical fitness;*
- (4) Identify effective practices for the improvement of student health-related physical fitness; and*
- (5) Encourage partnerships with health agencies to address student health-related issues in the State.*

The MSDE recognizes that health-related fitness testing can be a part of a standards-based Physical Education program. Physical Education is more than testing; it empowers students to be physically active and make healthy choices that contribute to their pursuit of a lifetime of physical activity.

The MSDE also recognizes that health-related fitness testing can be a screening tool which provides information to students about their health-related fitness. This tool can alert families to the potential health risks to which they might not otherwise have access.

SHAPE America recommends implementing an “Eight-Step Fitness Education Process” that provides rigorous and relevant instruction where students should:

1. Learn key fitness concepts
2. Prepare for the test
3. Practice the test
4. Participate in the test
5. Set goals and create personalized plans for improvement
6. Track and self-monitor progress
7. Retake the assessment periodically
8. Revise/refine personal goals and fitness program

Local school systems (LSSs) must ensure all students have an equal opportunity to participate in a standards-based Physical Education program. LSSs must also provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities in a Physical Education program including the five components of a health-related fitness test.

It is essential that the results of a health-related fitness test be used productively. Sharing the results with parents is a way to promote family involvement and engagement. It is important that physical educators thoroughly analyze grouped fitness-level data to enhance curricula. Individual results should *never* be posted or discussed publicly.

Teachers must encourage *personal* fitness improvement, *personal* bests, and *personal* skill achievement in order to empower students to view fitness as a lifelong goal.

Health-related fitness testing should not be used for:

- Evaluating students based on their achievement
- Evaluating teacher effectiveness - for example, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)
- Assessing students in third grade and below
- Course placement

Resources:

SHAPE America Position Statement: [Appropriate and Inappropriate Practices Related to Fitness Testing](#)

FitnessGram® Scientific Advisory Board Position Statement: [Appropriate & Inappropriate Use of Fitness Testing Data](#)

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR): [13A.04.13.01](#)



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