



Dear Parents,

As we prepare students for college and career readiness, the Howard County Public School System recognizes the connection between health and student achievement. Students in HCPSS learn about physical literacy through a physical education program in Grades K-9 and in elective courses in Grades 10-12. The goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthy physical activity.

For over ten years, the HCPSS Physical Education program has used the National Health Fitness Assessment, *FitnessGram*, for students in Grades 4-9 as an integrated component of the physical education curriculum. This bi-annual physical fitness assessment is not based on athletic ability, but on good health. FitnessGram provides accurate and reliable information about your child's level of physical fitness. The FitnessGram reports students' health-related fitness in the following areas: cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition. Scores are evaluated against objective criterion-based standards called Healthy Fitness Zones that indicate the level of fitness. The Healthy Fitness Zone standards were established by the FitnessGram Advisory Board at the Cooper Institute and include some of the foremost scientists and practitioners in fitness and physical activity.

We are excited about expanding the FitnessGram program during the 2015-2016 school year. Physical Education teachers will be trained in the new web-based FitnessGram 10.0 program that allows easier access to data entry and for FitnessGram reports to be sent to parents electronically or as a hard copy.

In preparation for the FitnessGram testing to begin in Grade 4, students in Grades K-3 will have their height and weight measured annually by school staff that are trained in best practices for collecting this information, including guidelines for establishing a safe and supportive environment for students of all body sizes. Height and weight will continue to be collected at the school for students in Grades 4 to 9 as part of the FitnessGram.

Height and weight data is collected in order to determine Body Mass Index (BMI). The FitnessGram standards for BMI are based on the level of fitness recommended for good health. Body Mass Index is only one assessment tool therefore, it is important that a child's health care provider should make the final determination as to the status of the child's health. This data is confidential and is part of the total health fitness assessment report that will be sent home to parents.

The HCPSS five-year strategic plan, *Vision 2018 Fulfilling the Promise of Preparation*, focuses on the whole child to encompass the students' social, emotional, and physical needs.

HCPSS is working in collaboration with the Horizon Foundation to promote the health and wellness of our students in support of Outcome 1.8 of the strategic plan, which states that “schools support student well-being and the development of balanced lifestyles.” HCPSS has an agreement with the Horizon Foundation to share de-identifiable data from the FitnessGram health-related fitness assessment. Students will not be identified by name or school. The Horizon Foundation does not receive the full FitnessGram report, instead HCPSS will send them a file with de-identifiable data points.

If you prefer to NOT have your child’s height and weight information collected at the school, please send in the form below to your child’s school. If you prefer to have this data sent in from your child’s physician to include in your child’s FitnessGram profile, please send this information to your child’s physical education teacher.

If you would like additional information about the FitnessGram program, please contact your child’s physical education teacher at the school or call the Office of Health and Physical Education at (410) 313-7015. You may also access FitnessGram: Frequently Asked Questions by Parents at <http://www.fitnessgram.net/faquestions>.

Sincerely,

Mike Senisi
Instructional Facilitator, Physical Education

I DO NOT wish for my child to participate in the height/weight data collection as part of the FitnessGram Health Fitness Assessment.

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____