

## Description of the Iowa FitnessGram Initiative

Research has demonstrated that physical activity and physical fitness are important for optimal growth and development in youth. Studies have also documented that physical activity programming can contribute to a positive culture and enhanced academic achievement in schools. The [Iowa FitnessGram® Initiative](#) was established to help schools to make more effective use of physical activity and physical fitness assessment tools in physical education.<sup>1</sup>

Schools in the network receive support and assistance with the effective use of FitnessGram® software, the default national fitness assessment tool used across the United States. The FitnessGram® battery and software provides a way to monitor patterns and trends in youth fitness and physical activity over time and we are positioned to support effective use. These opportunities are possible through my affiliation with The Cooper Institute® as the FitnessGram® Scientific Advisory Board Director. Schools in the network will also receive access to a range of other tools and resources to promote physical activity including the online Youth Activity Profile assessment and promotion system ([www.youthactivityprofile.org](http://www.youthactivityprofile.org)) developed by our team in the Physical Activity and Health Promotion (PAHP) lab in the Department of Kinesiology at Iowa State University (ISU). The tool is a simple online assessment that helps youth to learn about their physical activity behaviors, but the data provide valuable information to guide school programming.

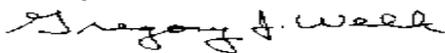
The [Iowa FitnessGram® Initiative](#) is set up as a “*participatory research network*” to help ensure mutual benefits. Schools receive access to the powerful capabilities of the FitnessGram® software and assistance with effective implementation. Our ISU research team, in turn, benefits by learning how to facilitate effective physical education programming and have the ability to monitor trends in youth fitness and physical activity. However, it is important for participating schools/districts to understand the nature of this commitment and expectations of all parties. The project goals and expectations are outlined below along with project assurances and data security considerations.

### Project assurances and data security considerations:

- The FitnessGram software application is managed by The Cooper Institute®, a 501(c)(3) non-profit research and education center. The Cooper Institute® has taken many precautions to ensure that data security complies with applicable privacy laws, including FERPA and COPPA. They will only provide access to de-identified data. Details on FitnessGram software and policies are available at <https://fitnessgram.net/software/>.
- The Youth Activity Profile system is copyrighted by ISU and managed by the ISU Web Development group. The system enables schools to independently manage enrollments of student data and does not retain individual student names or ID's. Therefore, no student identifiers are used in the system.
- Physical activity and fitness data entered into the FitnessGram software or the Youth Activity Profile system will be used for research purposes, with the goal to publish the findings in scientific or peer-reviewed journals. **All data will be de-identified to protect the confidentiality of students and/or participants, and all data will be handled in compliance with applicable privacy laws.**
- All procedures have been approved by Iowa State University's Institutional Review Board. The project is considered “exempt” as data will be collected anonymously and because the physical fitness and physical activity assessments are part of your normal school physical education programming.

Please complete the online registration form ([Link](#)) if you are interested in enrolling. A limited number of FitnessGram licenses are available but all schools are welcome to join to receive access to the other programming options and support. We look forward to working with your schools to support physical education and physical activity programming in your school.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Welk, Ph.D., Professor

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<sup>1</sup> The **Iowa FitnessGram® Initiative** is positioned to help support and enhance physical education programming in your school / district. The programming is an outreach initiative managed by the Dr. Welk at Iowa State University. Iowa State University shall hold harmless and indemnify The Cooper Institute® from and against any and all losses, damages, claims, suits, actions, liabilities and/or expense, including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees and disbursements of any character that arises from, are in connection with, or are attributable to the performance or nonperformance of Iowa State University or its subcontractors under this agreement. If you have any questions, email: [gwelk@iastate.edu](mailto:gwelk@iastate.edu) or call 515-294-3583.