

Dear Principals / District Coordinators / Physical Education Teachers

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.

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) 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 on page 2 and these must be signed agreed to in order to participate in the initiative. Project assurances and data security considerations are outlined below since we want to make sure to explain how data obtained through the project would be used.

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 hub for this project is set up to not retain individual student ID's. Therefore, no student identifiers will be 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 review and complete the form if you are interested in participating. 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

Department of Kinesiology, Iowa State University (515-294-3583 / gwelk@iastate.edu)

Project Goals and Expecations: The goal of the [Iowa FitnessGram® Initiative](#) is to establish mutually beneficial partnerships focused on evaluating ways to promote effective fitness education in schools. Our intent in establishing a relationship with Iowa schools is to provide direct assistance and support in whatever way we can but, as a participatory network, schools have autonomy to coordinate and plan programming as they see fit. The main request is to consider the various opportunities and to respond to periodic surveys to provide feedback about your physical education and school physical activity programming. A signed *Letter of Commitment* must be on file indicating that project assurances have been received and expectations have been communicated.

Please check the boxes below, scan and send to Dr. Welk at gwelk@iastate.edu.

- We understand that the [Iowa FitnessGram® Initiative](#) is a participatory network and that our involvement is completely voluntary.
- We understand that we will receive free access and use of the Youth Activity Profile software to facilitate the assessment and promotion of physical activity in our school(s).
- We understand that we are responsible for covering costs for purchase and maintenance of the FitnessGram® software and web-hosting for our schools from The Cooper Institute® (see www.fitnessgram.net) if we choose to use this tool.
- We acknowledge that we are choosing to use the FitnessGram® software and the Youth Activity Profile system to enhance our school programming and that we are responsible for taking advantage of the free online staff development and support resources available within these systems.
- We agree to have the de-identified data compiled through the FitnessGram® software and the Youth Activity Profile system used as part of the overall evaluation of programming in the network.
- We agree to consider supplemental projects coordinated through the [Iowa FitnessGram® Initiative](#) and to complete periodic (annual) surveys to provide feedback about physical education programming.

School Name: _____

District: _____
(A listing of participating schools in a district must be provided if enrolling as a District)

School / District Administrator: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

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 or call 515-294-3583.