

## Statement Regarding Fitness Assessments

The Blue Valley School District's physical education curriculum focuses on fitness development for all K-12 students. With an alarming increase of childhood obesity students need to understand the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle. Each physical education class (elementary, middle and high school) focus on developmentally appropriate skills and activities to promote fitness within each child.

The Blue Valley School District uses an assessment called Fitnessgram to measure our students' fitness level. This tool has been used to monitor student health since the 2007-2008 school year. This assessment, also known as fitness testing, is completed each year beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The areas that will be assessed include cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, strength, flexibility and body mass index (BMI).

The purpose of this document is to inform you of changes that will be reflected on the fitness report you receive on your student concerning body mass index (BMI) and body composition.

The key points are as follows:

BMI stands for body mass index. BMI is a ratio of weight over height. Recent charts have been published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for quickly determining body mass index (BMI) in boys and girls, ages 2 to 20 years. These charts are percentiles showing the distribution of BMI at a given age and can be used to identify children who are overweight (however they may not be overfat). BMI provides a better estimate than height and weight tables.

Body composition is the division of total body weight (mass) into different components, most commonly fat mass and fat free mass. Percent body fat indicates the proportion of total body weight that is fat. Body mass index does not indicate the composition of the body weight. It is an index that provides an estimate of the appropriateness of the weight for the height.

**There is no required body composition testing at any level.** Elementary and middle school students will not be assessed in the area of body composition. Beginning at high school body composition testing will be optional and completed at the request of the student. The actual measurement will be conducted in a private environment. The results for the body composition will be shared with the student through a handout and/or verbally.

The Blue Valley School District feels that BMI/body composition testing is important because research has shown that high levels of body fatness are associated with increased risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, some cancers, and joint problems. Obesity and heart disease risk factors are known to track through the life span.

On the student's assessment report you will find the following information:

- A record of the student's height and weight. This was done privately with the child.
- A field that identifies whether the student's Body Mass Index is too low, at healthy weight, or at-risk. Remember, this is an estimate determined from a general fitness assessment.

- Cardiovascular (heart), strength and muscular endurance, and flexibility will be marked in the categories below zone, in zone or above zone.
- A final overall fitness score will be based on the data gathered from the total fitness assessment given.

The district encourages all parents to work with their family physician to monitor the health of their children. If there are questions about the fitness assessment conducted at your school, please contact your child's physical educator.