

2009 – 2010 Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment Program

The Greenwich Public Schools' Physical Education and Wellness Department and The State of Connecticut are committed to helping all children achieve and maintain optimal lifetime fitness and nutrition practices. One aspect of this ongoing effort is to assess student fitness levels in four health-related fitness components through the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment Program (CPFA). This program includes health-related fitness tests designed to assess muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. The CPFA is administered from September 21 through November 13, 2009, to all students in Grades 4, 6, 8 and 10. For the 2009-2010 school year there is a significant change in the cardiovascular endurance test from previous years. Districts have the option of selecting either the one-mile run/walk or the P.A.C.E.R.* to determine VO₂MAX (the volume of oxygen you can consume while exercising at your maximum capacity). GPS has opted to use the P.A.C.E.R. instrument this year, (although we will continue to use the mile run in our instructional program and for our own program assessment purposes).

The test scores are used to educate and motivate children and their families to increase physical activity, to develop lifetime fitness habits and to become confident, competent, joyful movers for a lifetime. It is strongly recommended that the interpretation of the test results be based on the individual child's health status as it relates to his or her physical activity.

Improvements to the fitness assessment represent one component of a larger physical fitness promotion program statewide. Connecticut's fitness assessment aligns with the national movement to encourage adults to assess their own health-related physical fitness. The primary purposes of the physical fitness assessment program continue to be: individual fitness assessment and monitoring; identification of strengths and weaknesses in health-related physical fitness; informing students and their families of health-related physical fitness status and ways to improve; and informing program improvement. Obesity and lack of physical activity are growing concerns for the State's students, thus calling attention to the need for increased physical activity and improved physical fitness.

The following are the components of the CPFA that Greenwich will be assessing. The age level standards are on the back of this page. For additional information, contact your child's Physical Education teacher.

***P.A.C.E.R.** stands for **Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run**. It is a multi-stage fitness test, performed in a shuttle-run format, that helps children pace themselves effectively, and is generally regarded as more fun for younger children than the mile run. The P.A.C.E.R. is a viable alternative to the mile run, even though both tests measure **aerobic endurance**, because it can be administered indoors or in a much smaller area than is needed for the mile run, and accommodates inclement weather. Additionally, we can administer it on regular intervals throughout the school year to reassess student fitness achievement.

The **back-saver sit-and-reach** is a measure of joint **flexibility**, which is important to overall functional health. Stretch-ability and symmetry of the hamstring muscles at the back of the legs, and flexibility of the spine are important to general fitness, injury avoidance and long-term back health. The revised version of the test allows greater accommodation for the differences in the length of the arms and legs of growing children, thus is more accurate, and reduces strain on the knees.

The **90 degree push-up** is a test of **upper body muscle strength and endurance**. Strength and endurance of the muscles of the upper body are important in activities of daily living, maintaining functional health and promoting good posture.

The **curl-up** is a test of **abdominal strength and endurance**. Strength and endurance of abdominal muscles are important in promoting good posture and correct pelvic alignment, both important elements in back health. The previous version of the curl-up sometimes caused neck strain and did not account for the differences in the length of arms and legs of growing children. The improved version addresses both of these problems as well as better isolating the abdominal muscles.