Dear Principals / District Coordinators / Physical Education Teachers

Research has increasingly demonstrated that healthy and fit children perform better in school. Iowa has a well deserved reputation as a state that values education and it has recently established the goal of becoming the healthiest state in the country. To help promote health-related fitness in Iowa youth, we have established the Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative.

The Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative is a participatory network of Iowa K-12 schools and University partners committed to promoting physical fitness in Iowa schools. The FITNESSGRAM battery and software provides a way to effectively monitor patterns and trends in fitness and physical activity in youth. Our goal in establishing a participatory relationship with the schools is to assist you in using the FITNESSGRAM program to effectively assess and promote fitness in your school. Through the network we also hope to build visibility and support for physical education at the state level. By working together we can more effectively contribute to Iowa’s goal of becoming the healthiest state.

The Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative is managed through a partnership with the Cooper Institute (CI) in Dallas Texas – the developer of FITNESSGRAM. The CI has agreed to support the network to facilitate tracking of data and evaluation of effective physical education programming. Schools can connect to the Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative by purchasing the software (version 9.0) and the associated web hosting services from the CI (see www.fitnessgram.net for details). As a participating school (or school district), you will receive free online training and support needed to use FITNESSGRAM program in your school(s). You will also have opportunities to participate in optional programming designed to help promote physical activity in school children. In return for this support, we would like to have access to the data you collect and enter as part of your school’s routine fitness and activity testing. The data is tracked in FITNESSGRAM using coded ID numbers to avoid issues with confidentiality and any supplemental assessments will also be conducted without the use of any names or identifiers. We would use this data as part of our program evaluation but results for individual schools or districts would never be shared or posted online.

The attached documents describe the Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative in more detail, the associated benefits from the partnership and our expectations from participating schools. Please return the attached form indicating your interest in participating (by email or FAX) so we can help your school get linked to the project. We look forward to working with your schools to help enhance your physical education programming.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Welk, Ph.D.  gwelk@iastate.edu
Iowa State University

Michelle Ihmels, Ph.D.  mihmles@iastate.edu
Iowa State University

Kevin Finn, Ph.D.  kevin.finn@uni.edu
University of Northern Iowa

Kathleen Janz, Ed.D.  kathleen-janz@uiowa.edu
University of Iowa
The goal of the **Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative** is to help promote effective fitness education and activity promotion in Iowa schools. We realize that adopting and using new software presents logistical and technical challenges to schools but we are willing to help facilitate this process. We also recognize that training is needed to ensure effective implementation of the program and we are willing to help with this as well. Our intent in establishing a participatory 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 Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State has reviewed the procedures for the **Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative** and it is considered “exempt” since data will be collected anonymously and because the assessments are part of your normal school physical education programming. However, we would like to ask that you complete this agreement form indicating that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. **Please check the boxes, sign the form and FAX to our office at 515-294-8740.**

☐ We understand that the Iowa FITNESSGRAM Partnership is a participatory network and that our involvement is completely voluntary.

☐ We understand that we are responsible for covering the cost of the FITNESSGRAM 9.0 software and server fees for our schools through the Cooper Institute (see www.fitnessgram.net).

☐ We understand that we will freely receive online support and training needed to make effective use of the FITNESSGRAM program but that the responsibility for programming and implementation is in our hands.

☐ We agree to provide the necessary administrative support and leadership to ensure that we are making effective use of the FITNESSGRAM software and that we are complying with the recommendations as closely as possible.

☐ We agree to share the de-identified data compiled through the FITNESSGRAM software as part of the overall state wide tracking initiative.

☐ We agree to complete periodic (typically annual) surveys to provide feedback about the programming and to facilitate evaluation of the Iowa FITNESSGRAM initiative.

**School Name:**

__________________________________________________________

**School Address:**

__________________________________________________________

**Primary Contact:** ____________________________

**Phone:** ____________________________

**E-Mail:** ____________________________

**Signature** ____________________________

**Administrator:** ____________________________

**Signature** ____________________________

The **Iowa FITNESSGRAM Initiative** is positioned to help support and enhance physical education programming in your school. If you have any questions about the project please contact the program leaders (Dr. Greg Welk (gwelk@iastate.edu / 515-294-3583) and Dr. Michelle Ihmels (mihmels@iastate.edu / 515-294-8755). Thanks.

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Dr. Gregory J. Welk
Scientific Director of FITNESSGRAM