

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Each year your son/daughter participates in the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment (CPFA), a mandated test for grades 4, 6, 8, and 10. This letter will briefly describe what the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment is and how you can help your son/daughter improve his or her score. Continuing to be active over the summer is extremely important as the testing starts in the beginning of the school year.

In the CPFA there are three zones that determine your child's score. There is a needs improvement zone, health fitness zone and a high fitness zone. Students who perform at the needs improvement zone demonstrate skills that do not meet the health-related standards for their age. Generally, students who score in this range need to improve the skill. Below you will find "tips" to help your son/daughter improve upon these skills in which they can engage in over the summer.

Students who perform at the health fitness zone meet health related standards. Generally, students who score in this range engage in physical activities two or more times a week and may be at a reduced risk for certain injuries and diseases that are related to a sedentary lifestyle. The health standard for each task is considered to be a challenging yet attainable standard for most students.

Students who perform at the high fitness performance zone demonstrate exceptional fitness-related skills for their age. Generally, students who fall in this range engage in rigorous physical activities several times per week and may again be at a reduced risk for certain injuries and diseases related to a sedentary lifestyle. Students who perform in this range are motivated to achieve and maintain a high level of fitness.

The CPFA is given annually and consists of four components of fitness. This information is to inform parents and guardians about the importance of physical fitness. The following describes each area of the test and cites example activities to help students improve in each area.

- 1) *Flexibility (Back saver sit and reach)*: The objective of this test is to reach a specified distance on the right and left sides. It measures flexibility in the lower back and hamstrings. Proper hamstring flexibility helps avoid lower back pain.
TIPS: * Hold a leg stretch for 15-30 seconds with a slow and controlled motion.
* Hold the leg muscles in that position to the point of tension – not pain.
- 2) *Abdominal Strength and Endurance (Curl-Ups)*: The objective of this test is to complete as many curl-ups as possible in a rhythmic pace. Abdominal fitness is important for reducing bad posture and lower back pain.
TIPS: * Learn to pace yourself.
* Build the core of your body (abdominal area) through exercises such as curl-ups, bicycle crunches, superboy/supergirl.
* Superboy/supergirl: Lie flat on your stomach on the floor with your hands extended above you. Lift your hands and legs off the ground and hold in that position for 15 seconds. Do this 30 times with a 5 second rest between every 10.
- 3) *Upper Body Strength and Endurance (90 degree Push-Ups)*: The objective of this test is to complete as many 90 degree push-ups as possible at a rhythmic pace. Upper body muscle fitness is required in order to perform daily living and recreational activities with vigor and without undue fatigue.

- TIPS:**
- * Push-Up position: Raise hand to wave – switch hands
 - * Overhead tricep extension: Stand in upright position. Hold a light weight in your right hand. The right arm should be extended straight above your head; let right elbow slowly fold down so the weight is lowered behind your head. Extend arm back up to starting position. Repeat this 40 times with a 5 second break between every 10.
 - * Dumbbell curl up (Bicep): Stand in upright position. Place a light weight dumbbell in your right hand. Your right arm should be extended down along the side of your body. With elbow resting along the side of your body, curl your forearm up towards your shoulder and then extend it back down. Repeat this 40 times with a 5 second break between every 10. Switch the weight to your left hand and repeat.
 - * Shoulder taps: Get in push-up position. Right hand will cross over and tap the left shoulder and then the left hand will tap the right shoulder. Continue this 30 times.
 - * Table slaps: Get in push-up position facing a table. Take right hand and tap the legs of the table. Then take the left hand and tap the table legs. Continue this 30 times.

- 4) *Cardio respiratory Fitness (Mile run/walk):* The objective of the test is to measure cardio respiratory and aerobic endurance. The one-mile run/walk is a good indicator of the ability of the circulatory and respiratory systems to supply oxygen to functioning muscles.

- TIPS:**
- * Accumulate at least 30 min. of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.
 - * Practice pacing!
 - * Participate in activities that require constant movement for an extended period of time. The following are some examples of aerobic exercises that increase your heart rate:

Walking Briskly	Jumping rope	Hiking	Dancing
Bicycling	Swimming	Jogging	
Riding a Stationary bike	Wii Fit: jogging activity		

Health Component: Please encourage your child to eat a varied and balanced diet to provide the essential nutrients needed to achieve optimal physical capacity. In addition, supply and encourage your child to stay hydrated regularly during all physical activity. Water is the recommended source. Limit sport drinks and sodas.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Physical Education Department. You can also check out the state website to take a look at the CPFA manual at:

[CPFA Manual](#)

Middle School PE Department

