



April 2015

## **Athletic Placement Process for Interschool Athletic Programs (APP) – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The selection classification process was first developed in the early 1970's. This process was developed to screen students to determine their readiness to compete in interscholastic athletic competition by evaluating their physical maturity, fitness and skill. The intent of the program is to provide for students in grades 7 through 12 to safely participate at an appropriate level of competition based upon readiness rather than age and grade. After several years of implementation, in the 1990's the physical fitness standards were updated. In 2005, the selection classification standards were revised again, however, the physical maturity and physical fitness standards were not updated at that time. The Department has continued to receive feedback from the medical community, athletic administrators, and district administrators requesting that the standards for the process be updated to reflect changes in research regarding physical fitness and maturity. The newly announced Athletic Placement Process for Interschool Athletic Programs (APP) was revised to address those concerns in a comprehensive manner and to update the applicable standards in accordance with Commissioner's Regulation § 135.4(c)(7)(ii)(a). Private schools and charter schools participating in interschool athletics with public schools (e.g., New York State Public High School Athletic Association, NYSPHAA; or Public School Athletic League, PSAL) should comply with the APP as a condition of participation.

### **1. When does the current Selection Classification Process end and when will the APP be effective?**

The current Selection Classification Process, last updated in 2005, will continue to be in effect through the Spring 2015 season, and will be discontinued at the conclusion of that season. The APP will be effective beginning with the Fall 2015 season. See: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/pe/documents/Athletic-Placement-Process.pdf>

### **2. What are the major changes to the process outlined in the APP guidance?**

Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation § 135.4(c)(7)(ii)(a), a school district may choose to permit students to compete at a level of competition deemed appropriate to their physiological maturity, physical fitness, and skill level in relationship to other students at the desired level of competition. However, if a district chooses to adopt such a process, the district medical director, director of physical education/athletics and

ultimately the Board of Education are responsible for implementing the APP consistent with these standards.

- A student, teacher, coach, or parent/guardian may ask the Physical Education Director and/or Athletic Director to evaluate the student for the APP. However, students will not undergo the evaluation procedures without both a request from the physical education director and/or athletic director and written permission from the parent/guardian.

#### **A. Physical Fitness Standards**

- The previous guidance included separate fitness tests for specific sports and levels of play. Beginning in the fall of 2015, the President's Physical Fitness Test will be the physical fitness standard used in the APP. See: <https://www.presidentschallenge.org/challenge/physical/benchmarks.shtml> To meet the APP physical fitness standards the student must meet the 85th percentile level of the national norm for their age in 4 out of 5 test components (see Appendix E, I, and J in the APP document). For students trying out for swimming, students may choose either the 1 mile walk/run or the 500 yard swim. (See Appendix J).

➤ *Please note: Students who desire to try out for bowling or golf teams continue to be exempt from completing the physical fitness testing components.*

- Components of the President's Physical Fitness test include the following:
  - Curl-ups for one minute (Measures strength and endurance) – Partner holds the feet, arms are crossed, elbows touch knees, then scapulas (Shoulder blades) touch floor for one curl up. Reminder-Bouncing not permitted
  - Shuttle Run (Measures speed and agility) -2 parallel lines marked 30 feet apart-Student picks up 2 blocks or similar, cross starting line. Times counted in seconds.
  - One Mile Run/Walk (Measure heart/lung endurance) -Times are recorded in minutes and seconds.
  - Pullups -Option 1 (Measures upper body strength and endurance) Can use either overhand grasp (palms facing away from the body) or (palm facing towards the body). Chin must clear the bar to count as a pullup. Reminder-Smooth motion rather than jerky or swing motion.
  - Right Angle Pushups -Option 2 (For upper body strength and endurance) Keeping knees and back straight, lower body until 90-degree angle.

Sit and Reach Testing –2 Options: 1. V-Sit Reach in inches or 2. Sit & Reach in centimeters-Legs must remain straight; fingertips of both hands should reach evenly along the measuring line. (Measures flexibility of the lower back and hamstrings).

## **B. Maturity Assessment**

- The role of the medical director is essentially the same in the revised process, as the medical director continues to determine the physical maturity of the student. However, in the past Selection Classification Process, the Tanner scores were required scores, based exclusively on the Tanner staging of sexual development. The requirement meant the students must be at an identical level of development per the chart. This was not realistic as there is generally a range of ages playing at a high school competition level. Additionally, the Tanner scores were identical for both sexes. This did not accurately reflect the earlier age of development of adolescent females versus adolescent males, which made it more likely that a less physically mature female could be approved to play at a higher level against physically matured females, and therefore be at greater risk of injury. Therefore, the APP maturity assessment standards were revised as follows: **The medical director is instructed to take into consideration the height, weight, muscle mass, and Tanner rating as compared to the other athletes he/she would compete with.** This allows for a physician to use their professional judgment taking into account the totality of the student's overall physical development when determining whether or not the student is of a comparable or similar level of physical maturity in relation to those they wish to compete with. These changes to the Selection Classification Process were made to lessen, but not eliminate, the chances of injury for a younger student competing with older students who tend to be larger and more physically mature. This change is based on recommendations from multiple physicians and medical professionals.
- The Tanner scores on (chart H found in the APP document) are no longer required numbers, as was the case in the previous Selection Classification Process but, are **now recommended numbers** for the APP. Please note: The recommended Tanner scores are based on the average Tanner score of the average aged male or female that typically competes at those levels. Tanner scores are higher for females compared to males at the same levels, which more accurately reflects the earlier ages that females achieve physical maturity.

## **C. Mixed Competition**

The Department has received several questions regarding how the updated APP guidance relates to the standards for mixed competition reviews. It is important to clarify that the regulations surrounding mixed competition for participation interscholastic sports pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation §135.4(c)(7)(ii)(c) remain the same. However, the physical tests to be used under that regulation will be updated and will also follow the President's Physical Fitness Test. The Mixed Competition Guidelines are currently under review at the Department and further communication will follow in the near future.

Please note: In mixed competition review, the fitness scores are not intended to be qualifying or disqualifying scores. The scores that appear in the chart are not absolute requirements for the panel. The scores only provide a reference for the panel to

consider. If the scores of the student differ from the standards, the panel should assess the significance of that difference.

For further clarification on the New York State Education Department Commissioner's Regulations for Physical Education and Athletics please contact the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at (518) 474-5922. For inquiries specific to competition governance you may wish to contact the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) at (518) 690-0771 and/or toll free at (866) 598-2816.