



August 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Pennsylvania Department of Health revised procedures in growth screening for Pennsylvania's school age children to include a measure of Body Mass Index (BMI). This mandate began in the 2005/2006 school year. During the 2010/2011 school year your child will be included in this screening process.

The Body Mass Index chart that the school district will use to plot your child's BMI percentile was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Body Mass calculation will be an extension of the height and weight measurements that are conducted by our school nurses. BMI is a weight for stature index that can be used to help determine whether a student is within a normal growth pattern, overweight, at risk of becoming overweight, or underweight. Caution should be observed; the BMI is a screening tool only, not a definitive measure of an overweight or underweight child. For example, some athletes may have a high BMI calculation due to increased muscle mass. This may be true for your child as well. As a parent, you will have discretion and the responsibility to use the screening measure and share it with your family doctor if you feel that it is appropriate.

Because we are concerned that students are often self-conscious about their body in reference to other students, the Body Mass Index calculation will not be shared directly with them. Instead, parents will receive a letter in the mail from the school nurse where your child attends school. The BMI calculation will be included in that letter. The BMI screenings will be completed by spring.

It is our desire to help you raise healthy children while complying with this mandate. The school district has developed a wellness policy and has partnered with the Health Promotion Council to assist in providing students with a more nutritional diet and healthy physical fitness activities.

If you have any questions regarding this mandate or how the school district is addressing this sensitive issue, please feel free to contact me at the District Office.

Sincerely,

Frank T. Gallagher  
Assistant Superintendent/Director of Pupil Service