

‘Physical fitness’ program changing to ‘youth fitness’ next year

By Jan Schultz

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Chase County Elementary students in grades 5-8 last year again earned their school the President’s Challenge Physical Fitness State Champion Award.

State Champions are the schools with the highest percentage of students qualifying for the Presidential Physical Fitness Award by earning scores in the 85th percentile or higher on the five physical fitness tests in the school’s enrollment category:

Category 1: Schools with 50-200 students

Category 2: Schools with 201-500 students

Category 3: Schools with over 500 students

According to the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition website, CCS Elementary won in Category 1 with 16 percent, or 27 students, in grades 5-8 who last year reached the 85th percentile on the tests.

That was the highest percentage out of the schools who chose to take part in the annual fitness testing in 2011-12.

The students were tested and timed on curl-ups, shuttle run, endurance run (mile), pull-ups or flexed arm hang and the v-sit and reach.

All 27 CCS students meeting the 85th percentile goal will receive an award emblem. Chase County Schools also will receive a certificate as the winning school.

It was the 30th time in 35 years Chase County has won the state championship.

However, things will be changing next year.

CCS physical education teacher Jodie Schuller said the President’s Council is replacing the program next year, so CCS will be among the final schools to win the award in its current form.

“They are moving away from measuring athletic performance to more of a barometer on student health,” she said this week.

“Yes, it will be easier,” she said.

According to the council the new Presidential Youth Fitness Program includes “an assessment, professional development and motivational recognition to empower students to adopt and maintain an active lifestyle.

“The rollout of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program signals a move from measuring performance using the President’s Challenge Youth Fitness Test to assessing health using FITNESSGRAM.”

Schuller said she doesn’t know all the details yet, but the new program will measure the student’s fitness in different ways, one of which includes measuring their BMI (body mass index), or basically taking their height and weight and comparing that to where they should be.

Other tests will continue to measure aerobic capacity, abdominal strength/endurance and upper body strength, but in different ways.

According to Shellie Pfohl, executive director of the President’s Council, in a WebMD Health News article, “The most important difference about the new program is helping kids reach a healthy fitness zone.”

She added with the new program, “Kids won’t be measured on how fast they can run compared

to their classmates, it will be based on what they can do and what their own goal is.”

Each test score will then be evaluated using the “Healthy Fitness Zone” standards. A student meeting the standards in five of the six events will receive the Presidential Youth Fitness Award.

Students who don’t meet the standards will be placed in the “needs improvement” zone. They will then be given information on the health risks linked to low fitness.

Current 2012-13 fitness testing for the new program is underway, Schuller noted. The new software has been ordered for the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, which will include a report to parents on how their student did.

The other Nebraska school named a state champion was Windy Hills Elementary in Kearney in Category II.