

ESASD Body Mass Index Screenings

East Stroudsburg Area School District addresses its students' health and wellness needs with a comprehensive approach that includes health screenings, physical activity, nutrition and education. Every year, the school nurses measure each student's height and weight, which is a reflection of their growth. Along these lines, beginning this September, the PA Department of Health is requiring that this information be calculated as a BMI (Body Mass Index) percentile. BMI percentile is a ratio of height, weight, age and gender.

Healthy children come in all sizes and shapes, and BMI percentile is used as a guideline to help assess whether a student may be overweight or underweight. A high or low BMI percentile may be a sign of a potential health problem. For example, a student who is overweight may have an increased risk of developing heart disease or diabetes. Similarly, a student who is underweight may have an increased risk of heart problems, loss of bone mass, and anemia.

It is important to note that the BMI percentile is only a screening tool. Many factors, including sports participation, family history or stage of puberty, can influence the BMI percentile. Therefore, it is important that parents share the results with the student's health care provider who can best evaluate that student's overall health.

As with all student health information, any growth screening results will be kept strictly confidential. If anyone has any questions regarding BMI screenings, they should contact the school nurse.