



**WALK  
ACROSS TEXAS!**

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

# ***Walk Across Texas! Youth Program School Starter Kit***



Program Supplement to the Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! Curriculum

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

## ***Walk Across Texas! Youth Program Starter Kit Guide for School Implementation***

### ***WAT! Youth Program Overview***

The Walk Across Texas! (WAT!) Youth program is designed to establish or maintain the habit of regular physical activity in youth audiences. All it takes is a school or classroom willing to be active using a fun and motivating approach to get moving. The goal for each WAT! Youth team is to virtually walk 832 miles across Texas in eight weeks by logging in various types of activities that can be converted into 'miles walked'.

Established in 1996, the WAT! Youth program was developed by a collaboration of AgriLife Extension staff and community partners wanting to improve the health and physical activity of Texans. In 2005, it was recognized as a 'Best Practice Physical Activity Program' by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The WAT! Youth program is an outcome program with proven results! Research shows that there is an increase in mileage for youth participants from start to finish. Also, adding in more frequent and vigorous activities during school has been shown to improve student performance, fitness and weight status.

#### Tell me more about the WAT! Youth program:

- Students are registered on teams based on teacher, classroom, grade level or school
- Teams combine their mileage to see which team walks across Texas first or the furthest
- Teams can compete with each other or school staff and parents
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to help their student's team by doing activities at home!
- Additional school resources are available for free on the WAT! program resources website, examples include teacher lesson plans and fun games
- You can track and monitor program progress on the Howdy Health website

## ***Walk Across Texas! Youth Program Starter Kit Guide for School Implementation***

### ***Steps for Implementing Walk Across Texas! Youth***

1. Identify how many WAT! Youth teams will participate in the program
2. Set WAT! Youth program dates and activities
3. Complete WAT! Youth Team Registration Form(s)
4. Establish a Howdy Health Account
  - a. Visit: <https://howdyhealth.tamu.edu>
  - b. Click Login / Register and create an account
5. Enter WAT! Youth Team Registration Forms on Howdy Health website
  - a. Log into Howdy Health Account
  - b. Select WAT! Youth Dashboard
  - c. Create Youth League (if applicable)
  - d. Create Youth Team(s)
  - e. Enter WAT! Youth team(s) weekly mileage walked
6. Print / Share Program Resources
  - a. WAT! Youth Program Registration Forms
  - b. Bonus Miles Form
  - c. WAT! Guide for Mapping Progress
  - d. WAT! Bingo Card
  - e. Teacher Lesson Plans
  - f. Program Newsletters
7. Determine Events / Door Prizes / Incentives
8. Print WAT! Youth Recognition Certificate

For more information or assistance with the implementation of the WAT! Youth program,  
please reach out to your local County Extension Office:

<https://counties.agrilife.org>

## ***Walk Across Texas! Youth Program Starter Kit Guide for School Implementation***

### ***Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! (LGEG) Curriculum Supplement***

LGEG grows good kids through an interdisciplinary program combining academic achievement, gardening, nutrient-dense food experiences, physical activity and school & family engagement.

Learn more about the LGEG program here: <https://jmgkids.us/lgeg/>

As part of the LGEG program, it is recommended that schools enroll teams within the WAT! Youth program or take part in a similar activity program in your state!

The WAT! Youth program includes materials for teachers and school support staff to extend the curriculum and introduce activity breaks into the classroom. More than 250 teacher lesson plans emphasize Math, Language Arts, Reading, Writing, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education / Exercise. All of the lessons correlate to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards.

This focus on TEKS alignment and the learning objectives most critical to assess, students are best prepared for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) assessment that is administered each year in the state of Texas.

As the TEKS and STAAR correlation process was implemented, specific attention was given to the eligible content from the TEKS Readiness and Supporting Standards Assessment Blueprint in Third Grade Lessons.



## **Walk Across Texas! Youth Program Starter Kit Guide for School Implementation**

### **Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! (LGEG) Curriculum Supplement**

The WAT! Youth program Teacher Lesson Plans, as a supplement to a district's existing curricula, offers the following to a school's instructional program to affect and improve learning outcomes:

- Aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards in Math, Language Arts, Reading, Writing, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education / Exercise
- Offered to grades K - 10 to support current and future grade levels and prepare for college and career readiness
- Fun ways to engage students in being more physically active

#### Benefits of the WAT! Youth program Teacher Lesson Plans:

- Quick activity breaks that can be implemented with minimal materials
- Settles or re-energizes youth to focus on other lesson plans
- Contributes to bone development, improves psychological health and may help control or prevent chronic disease conditions
- Increased activity promotes creativity and improves performance on student assessments

#### WAT! Youth program testimonials:

"I really liked the Walk Across Texas! Math activities. Easy to incorporate to get kids up and active again. Already have WAT! Math lessons incorporated into next year's lessons"

- Teacher implementing WAT! Youth

"I believe that WAT! brought our family closer because we were exercising together and spending more time outdoors instead of watching TV or playing video games"

- Parent of WAT! Youth participant

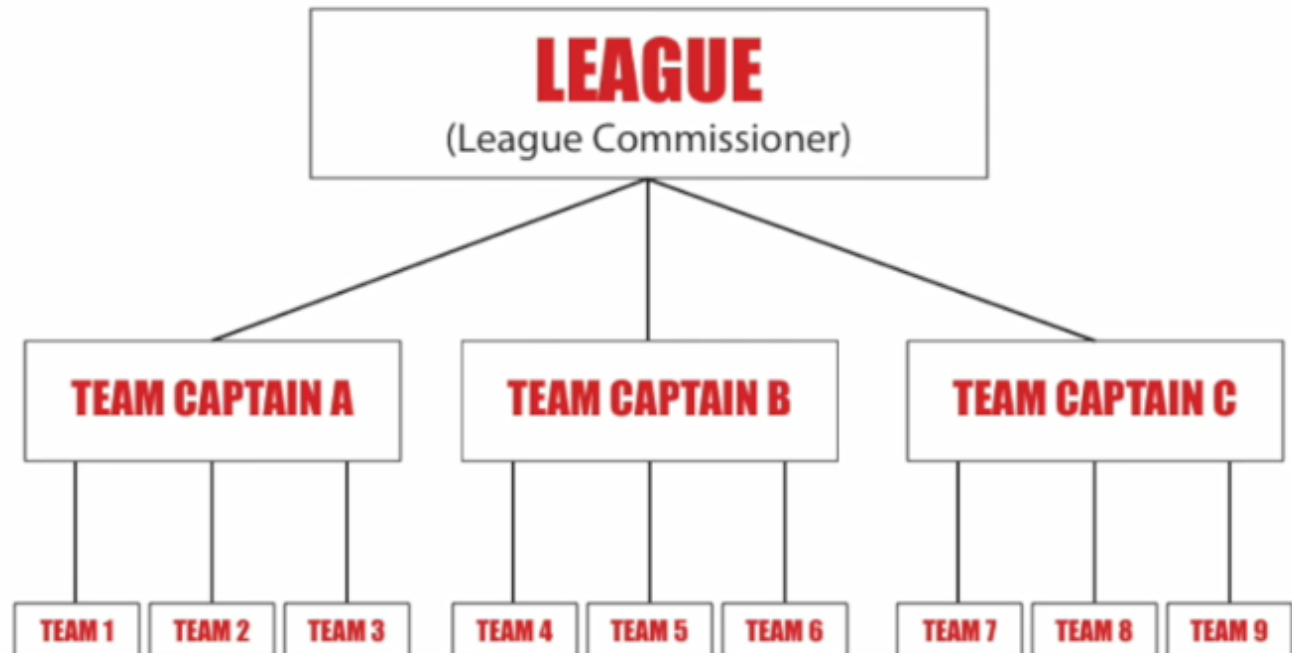


## WAT! Youth Program Design & Schematic

WAT! Youth Program Design:

- Eight-week program
- 832-mile goal for WAT! Youth teams
- Adult staff, parents and teachers may also create teams to participate. These teams follow the same registration process in the WAT! Youth program
- Mileage entry: team / weekly
- Unlimited number of participants per team

WAT! Youth Program Schematic:



## **WAT! Youth Registration Form - League Commissioner**

A League Commissioner oversees the league in the WAT! Youth program. Leagues are a collection of teams that participate together. You will need the following information to register a League in the WAT! Youth program:

League Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the below lines to capture potential Team Captain Emails.

During League Creation an automated email will be sent to all the Team Captain email addresses provided with team set up instructions and the respective 'League Code' they will need to associate their team to your WAT! Youth program league.

Team Captain Email(s):

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## **WAT! Youth Registration Form - Team Captain**

A Team Captain oversees the team in the WAT! Youth program. Teams can comprise of Youth only, Adults only, or a mixed team of Youth and Adults.

If you are joining a league, you will need the following information to register a Team in the WAT! Youth program league:

League Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note: you do not need to join a league to participate. If you are not joining a League, then you must select a program start date: \_\_\_\_\_

### WAT! Youth Team Registration Information

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Related:    No        Yes   

If yes, select School District and School Name from drop-down menu

### Youth Team Members:

Youth Team Members Gender Totals:    \_\_\_ Males                    \_\_\_ Females

Youth Team Members Race Totals:

___ African American	___ American Indian or Alaskan Native
___ Asian	___ Hispanic
___ Multiracial	___ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
___ Other	___ White (Non-Hispanic)

### Adult Team Members:

Adult Team Members Gender Totals:    \_\_\_ Males                    \_\_\_ Females

Adult Team Members Race Totals:

___ African American	___ American Indian or Alaskan Native
___ Asian	___ Hispanic
___ Multiracial	___ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
___ Other	___ White (Non-Hispanic)



## **WAT! Youth Team Mileage Log**

Use this mileage log for up to three (3) WAT! Youth program teams

At the end of each week, go to your WAT! Youth Dashboard and Enter / Edit Mileage Walked

If you have multiple WAT! Youth program teams, click the respective team name to Enter / Edit Mileage Walked for that team

Week Number	Team Name: _____	Team Name: _____	Team Name: _____
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			
Week 5			
Week 6			
Week 7			
Week 8			

## ***School Guide for Mapping WAT! Youth Team Progress***

The WAT! Youth program encourages teams to set a goal to log at least 832 miles to virtually walk across Texas. Printed maps can help to visualize the 'walk' across Texas and some groups like to create additional routes to motivate participants. Here are suggestions for mapping progress and how to track the progress of participants.

### How to use the WAT! Youth map:

1. Download the WAT! map from the Walk Across Texas! Program Website
2. Print the map at preferred size
3. Determine the Starting and Ending Points for your WAT! Youth program
  - a. Official starting point of WAT! Youth is the green dot in Orange, Texas
  - b. Ending point is the red dot in El Paso, Texas
  - c. Teams may wish to start somewhere different, especially if they have participated in the past
  - d. Hint: there is no limit on the amount of miles that teams can log! If teams reach the traditional goal of the WAT! Youth program quickly, they can attempt to go back by reversing the direction on the same route or choose a completely new route!
4. Make a unique symbol for each team that can be moved across the map as team mileage increases
  - a. Examples include post-its, different colored markers, feet stickers, etc.
5. Make a map 'key' so each team can be identified easily
6. Determine location and post map & key
  - a. Consider where most participants would see the progress of teams
  - b. Multiple maps may be necessary
7. Update maps for participants once a week
  - a. Find the total mileage for each team participating
  - b. Use the below example routes / stops to map team progress
  - c. Hint: you can also use Google Maps or similar program to measure the distance for a selected route(s)
8. Keep participants up to date
9. Optional: include additional information like: walker / team of the week, next stop / city on the route, upcoming events, motivational quote, team pictures, etc.

## ***School Guide for Mapping WAT! Youth Team Progress***

### Example Routes for WAT! Map:

Here are four example routes that your WAT! Youth teams can follow on the WAT! Map:

1. Interstate 10 Route (East to West): Route Distance - 855 miles \*most popular\*
2. Interstate 20 Route (East to West): Route Distance - 810 miles
3. U.S. 87 Route (North to South): Route Distance - 740 miles
4. Interstate 35 Route (North to South): Route Distance - 520 miles

### Example Ideas or Suggestions for the WAT! Map:

Here are some ideas or suggestions to enhance the WAT! Youth program's goal:

- Virtual Field Trips: mark spots on the map and when the WAT! Youth team reaches the destination, include a lesson with photos
- History: Identify United States historical routes of importance (i.e. Lewis and Clark) and create a route based on key reference points
- Map places through Texas like State Parks or Forts
- Map different areas / regions throughout Texas
- Walk Around Texas
- Walk Across the United States

### Example Stops for the Map:

Here are some approximate mileage distances highlighted on the WAT! Map:

- Orange to Houston = 100 miles
- Houston to San Antonio = 200 miles
- San Antonio to Fort Stockton = 315 miles
- Fort Stockton to El Paso = 240 miles
- DFW to Austin = 205 miles
- Austin to San Antonio = 80 miles
- San Antonio to Laredo = 160 miles
- DFW to Abilene = 170 miles
- Abilene to Midland = 150 miles
- Midland to El Paso = 305 miles
- Amarillo to San Angelo = 315 miles
- San Angelo to Corpus Christi = 360 miles

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### ***WAT! Youth Program Additional Resources***

WAT! Youth Program Websites:

- Learn, Grow, Eat & GO website: <https://jmgkids.us/lgeg/>
- Walk Across Texas! program resources website: <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>
- Howdy Health program implementation website: <https://howdyhealth.tamu.edu>

Walk Across Texas! Youth Program Resources Available:

#### Included Here:

- WAT! Youth Program Registration Forms
- WAT! Youth Team Mileage Log
- School Guide for Mapping Progress

#### WAT! Program Resources Website:

- Bonus Miles Form
- Teacher Lesson Plans
- Program Newsletters
- Bingo Card
- WAT! Youth Program Certificate Template
- WAT! Map
- WAT! Activity Equivalent
- WAT! Merchandise
- WAT! Youth Program Flyer

#### Howdy Health Program Implementation Website:

- Howdy Health Account Creation
- WAT! Youth Program Registration and Participation Tracking
- Howdy Health Help Desk
  - Frequently Asked Questions
  - Tutorial Videos
  - Support Ticket System