

October 4, 2021

Ms. Marty Garrity,  
Bureau of Legislative Research  
Via Email Transmission

RE: 2020-2021 Vision Screening Report for Public School Students

Dear Ms. Garrity,

Enclosed please find the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2020-2021 Vision Screening Report, as required by A.C.A. §6-18-1803(b) to be submitted to the Arkansas Legislative Council.

If you require any additional information, please contact Erin Franks (501) 682-4397.

Sincerely,



Johnny Key  
Secretary of Education

Attachment  
JK/EF

# Annual Summary Report of Vision Screenings

In

Arkansas Public and Charter Schools

School Year 2020-2021

As required by A.C.A §6-18-1803

Prepared by Cheria McDonald, BSN, RN, NCSN  
State School Nurse Consultant

Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education



## Vision Summary Report for 2020-2021

The vision screening for school-age children in Arkansas public and charter schools includes Pre-K (4 year old), K, 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8 grades, any transfer student, or if a student is suspected of having a problem by a parent, teacher, or other school personnel. Only school nurses certified for conducting vision screenings in the school may perform the vision screening procedure mandated by A.C.A §6-18-1501. If an optometrist or ophthalmologist has evaluated a child in the last six months and documentation is provided to the district, a screening is not required. In the 2020-2021 school year, Arkansas school nurses screened 206,338 students of which 24,107 were referred for follow-up. Of those referred, 7,705 students received a follow-up exam and 6,791 (88%) were confirmed to have difficulty and received treatment. The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education released guidance at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year to assist school personnel with developing a plan for conducting mandated health screenings for all students, see [Commissioner's Memo LS-21-015](#) for more detail. While virtual students were offered the screening at their enrolled district, 17,688 virtual students did not receive a vision screening and 558 parents refused the vision screening for their child. *(Refer to Table 1: 2020-2021 Vision Screening Summary)*

Many children with vision disorders have unmet needs for care, leaving them vulnerable to learning and development delays. It is important to provide a system of services to contribute to a comprehensive approach in supporting the whole child. Better health makes better learners, and identifying gaps with school-age children will strengthen the actions necessary to convene stakeholders to promote vision and eye health. Access to care remains to be the key component for the low numbers of students receiving a comprehensive eye and vision exam follow-up.

The following are resources utilized by school districts to help assist parents with diagnostic eye exams and treatment:

- [VSP Sight for Students - National Association of School Nurses \(nasn.org\)](#)
- [Eyes of a Champion | Brandon Burlsworth Foundation](#)
- Rural Ophthalmology and Optometry Treatment & Screening (ROOTS) Inc.- services in central area on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- [A Lifetime of Healthy Vision - Prevent Blindness](#)
- [Local Lions Club International](#)
- [Eye Screening for Children - American Academy of Ophthalmology \(aao.org\)](#)
- List of local optometrists and ophthalmologists
- Referral to the school-based health center, if available [SBHC locations 2010-2020 \(arkansas.gov\)](#)
- [ADE My School Info - Search \(arkansas.gov\)](#) and access the Student Medical Vision Screening for Districts and Schools

*Note: Reported data by the districts and schools may reflect duplicated student data (meaning the same student receiving a screening at two different schools may be entered)*

Table1: 2020-2021 Vision Screening Summary

Grades	Total Screened	Use of an Auto-Refractor	Referred for F/U	Received Exam	Confirmed Abnormal/Needed Treatment and/or Lens	Confirmed Normal/No Treatment and/or Lens	Virtual Students-No Screening	Parent Refused Screening
Pre-Kindergarten	4477	2635	671	255	218	37	31	1
Kindergarten	28056	4778	3363	1217	988	229	1722	49
1st Grade	27613	5183	3697	1296	1109	187	2043	61
2nd Grade	29886	3236	3647	1223	1067	156	2312	51
3rd Grade	4612	973	860	330	305	25	154	19
4th Grade	29828	2653	3446	1081	971	110	2446	55
5th Grade	3864	786	733	251	221	30	103	6
6th Grade	32262	1146	3334	901	834	67	3357	130
7th Grade	3136	124	490	136	129	7	264	1
8th Grade	33690	1016	2859	751	702	49	4406	123
9th Grade	2463	32	338	95	86	9	123	22
10th Grade	3163	34	311	74	70	4	306	20
11th Grade	1942	26	225	60	60	0	229	10
12th Grade	1346	24	133	35	31	4	192	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>206338</b>	<b>22646</b>	<b>24107</b>	<b>7705</b>	<b>6791</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>17688</b>	<b>558</b>