



# Arkansas Department of Education

*Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education*

**Johnny Key**  
*Commissioner*

October 17, 2018

**State Board  
of Education**

**Dr. Jay Barth**  
*Little Rock*  
**Chair**

Representative Jim Dotson  
Chair, Arkansas Legislative Council  
Room 315, State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, AR 72201

**Charisse Dean**  
*Little Rock*  
**Vice Chair**

Re: Arkansas Department of Education Report Pursuant to Arkansas Code  
Annotated § 6-18-1803

**Susan Chambers**  
*Bella Vista*

Dear Representative Dotson:

**Dr. Fitz Hill**  
*Little Rock*

Enclosed please find the Annual Summary Report of Vision Screenings in Arkansas  
Public and Charter Schools: School Year 2017-2018 as required by A.C.A. § 6-18-1803.

**Kathy McFetridge**  
*Springdale*

If you need any additional information, please contact Michelle Griffin at  
501-682-4265.

**Dr. Sarah Moore**  
*Stuttgart*

Sincerely,

**Ouida Newton**  
*Poyen*

**R. Brett Williamson**  
*El Dorado*

Johnny Key  
Commissioner of Education

**Diane Zook**  
*Melbourne*

Enclosures

Four Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR  
72201-1019  
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ArkansasEd.gov

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Employer*



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Dear Senator Sample:

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# Annual Summary Report of Vision Screenings

In

Arkansas Public and Charter Schools

School Year 2017-2018

As required by A.C.A §6-18-1803

Prepared by Cheria Lindsey, BSN, RN, NCSN  
State School Nurse Consultant  
Arkansas Department of Education  
Arkansas Department of Health

## Vision Summary Report for 2017-2018

The vision screening for school-age children in Arkansas public and charter schools includes Pre-K (4 year old), K, 1, 2, 4, 6, 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 vision screening in the schools may perform the vision screening procedure mandated by A.C.A §6-18-1501 (2005). If a child has been evaluated by an optometrist or ophthalmologist in the last six months and documentation is provided to the district, a screening is not required. In the 2017-2018 school year, Arkansas school nurses screened 217,959 students in the required grades of which 23,171 were referred for follow-up. Of those referred, 8,136 students received a follow-up exam and 6,627 (81%) were confirmed to have difficulty and received treatment.

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.

According to A.C.A §6-18-1501 (2005), the Arkansas Commission on Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children and the Department of Education implemented the tests, procedures, equipment, and instrument requirements used in screening school-age children. This protocol continues as best practice. The regional Community Health Nurse Specialists (CHNS) with the Arkansas Department of Health housed at the local education cooperatives train and assist school nurses on the protocol and procedure for vision screening in school districts. The CHNS provide school nurses with additional training and education using experts in specific areas for school nurses on vision issues affecting student behavior and perception development. In addition, the CHNS educate school nurses on improving documentation of services provided and follow-up to those services while enlisting administrative support to ensure children receive follow-up, when necessary.

In October 2017, the Arkansas Department of Education, in consultation with the Arkansas Commission on Eye and Vision Care, provided a formal recommendation outlining the criteria and protocol for the vision screener auto refractor instrument to be used as an additional resource to perform additional vision screening tests beyond state requirements in certain circumstances (Commissioner's Memo LS-18-027).

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

- VSP Global® for *Sight for Students*®, an Eyes of Hope® gift certificate program, school nurses that are members of the National Association of School Nurses receive 25 vouchers yearly for those who qualify
- Brandon Burlsworth Foundation, Eyes of Champion program (online certificate service)
- List of Optometrists and Ophthalmologists for Arkansas
- Local chapter of Lions Club International
- Parent educational materials on benefits and FAQs
- Referral to the school-based health center, if available
- Visit My School Info using the URL: <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov> and access the Student Medical Vision Screening for Districts and Schools

The following are current state level activities focused on preventing vision barriers from hindering student learning:

- Vision Arkansas and ROOTS (Rural Ophthalmology-Optometry Treatment and Screening) pursuing the implementation of Mobile Unit Eye Exams
- Five (5) of the thirty-one (31) School-Based Health Centers established in Arkansas schools are providing optometry services to students in addition to the provision of medical and mental health services

Of the 247,819 students receiving a vision screening during the 2017-2018 school year, 23,171 (11%) were referred to a physician and/or eye doctor, yet only 35% of those referred received a comprehensive eye exam. Arkansas public school nurses have consistently shown an 81% accuracy rate when referring student confirmed to need treatment. Given the 81% accuracy rate of referral, approximately 18,768 of the 23,171 students referred for a follow-up in the 2017-2018 school year are at potential risk for a vision deficit and need vision

treatment while only 8,136 actually received the follow-up exam. Access to care has been identified as the major gap between the school nurse screening and the follow-up exam with a doctor for a comprehensive approach to vision and eye health for Arkansas students (see the following tables for more detail).

#### **2017-2018 BREAKDOWN OF VISION SCREENING INFORMATION**

##### **Total Screened for all Grades Pre-K-12<sup>th</sup>**

##### **247,819 students**

- 26,768-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (11%)
- 9409-Received exam (35%)
- 7768-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (83%)
- 1641-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (17%)

##### **Total Screened for Required Mandated Grades Only (includes Pre-K, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8)**

##### **217,959 students**

- 23,171-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (11%)
- 8136-Received exam (35%)
- 6627-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (81%)
- 1509-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (19%)

##### **Pre-Kindergarten (8781 students screened)**

- 846-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (8%)
- 373-Received exam (45%)
- 274-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (71%)
- 99-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (29%)

##### **Kindergarten (34,767 students screened)**

- 3341-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (10%)
- 1396-Received exam (44%)
- 1034-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (72%)
- 362-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (28%)

##### **First Grade (34,900 students screened)**

- 3626-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (10%)
- 1409-Received exam (43%)
- 1121-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (75%)
- 288-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (25%)

**Second Grade (35,175 students screened)**

- 3685-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (11%)
- 1393-Received exam (42%)
- 1119-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (79%)
- 274-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (21%)

**Fourth Grade (36,234 students screened)**

- 4134-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (11%)
- 1482-Received exam (39%)
- 1246-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (84%)
- 236-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (16%)

**Sixth Grade (34,214 students screened)**

- 4073-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (11%)
- 1198-Received exam (35%)
- 1050-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (87%)
- 148-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (13%)

**Eighth Grade (33,888 students screened)**

- 3466-Referred to a physician/and or eye doctor (10%)
- 885-Received exam (25%)
- 783-Confirmed to have difficulty and treated (89%)
- 102-Confirmed normal, no treatment and/or lenses (11%)

*Note: This is unduplicated data at state level by grades.*

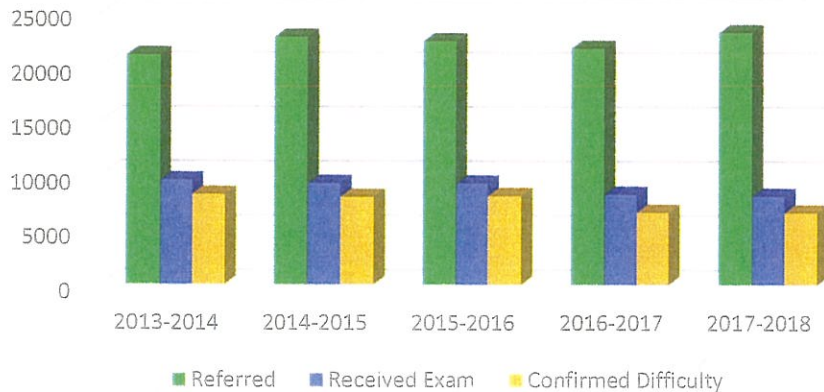
### Vision Screenings 2017-2018

Grade	Screened	Referred	Received Exam	Confirmed Difficulty	Confirmed Normal
Pre-Kindergarten	8781	846	373	274	99
Kindergarten	34767	3341	1396	1034	362
First	34900	3626	1409	1121	288
Second	35175	3685	1393	1119	274
Fourth	36234	4134	1482	1246	236
Sixth	34214	4073	1198	1050	148
Eighth	33888	3466	885	783	102
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>217959</b>	<b>23171</b>	<b>8136</b>	<b>6627</b>	<b>1509</b>

### 5 Year Comparison of Vision Screenings

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Referred	21063	22736	22371	21704	23171
Received Exam	9589	9307	9285	8314	8136
Confirmed Difficulty	8310	8063	8157	6646	6627

5 Year Comparison



*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)*