

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: H2/24/05 H3/1/05 S3/10/05*

2 85th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2005

HOUSE BILL 1734

4

5 By: Representatives S. Prater, Berry, Borhauer, Bright, Elliott, L. Evans, Goss, Hardy, Key, McDaniel,
6 Pace, Ragland, Reep, Roebuck, Sumpter, Willis, Wood, *Medley*

7 By: Senators J. Bookout, Critcher, Faris, Horn, Steele, Womack

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For An Act To Be Entitled

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11

AN ACT TO MANDATE EYE AND VISION SCREENING

12

PROCEDURES AND TESTS FOR CHILDREN; TO CONTINUE

13

THE ARKANSAS COMMISSION ON EYE AND VISION CARE OF

14

SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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Subtitle

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AN ACT TO MANDATE EYE AND VISION

18

SCREENING PROCEDURES AND TESTS FOR

19

CHILDREN.

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22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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24 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18 is amended to add an
25 additional subchapter to read as follows:

26 6-18-1301. Vision screenings.

27 (a)(1) Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, all children in pre-

28 kindergarten (pre-K), kindergarten (k), grades one (1), two (2), four (4),

29 six (6), and eight (8), and all transfer students shall receive an eye and

30 vision screening. This requirement applies to public school and charter

31 schools. The school district shall be responsible for all costs associated

32 with the eye and vision screening. Nothing in this Act shall preclude

33 voluntary screening of any educational grade or preclude the referral of any

34 child regardless of grade whom the teacher or school nurse feels should be

35 screened or examined. (2) The responsibility for the enforcement of

36 this section rests equally with each school district or charter school and



1 the parent or guardian of the child.

2 (b) An eye and vision screening shall include the following tests,
3 procedures, equipment, and instruments approved by the Arkansas Commission on
4 Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children and the Department of Education:

5 (1) Observation and external inspection of the eye;

6 (2) Distance visual acuity test using a Snellen Eye Chart at twenty
7 feet (20') or an age or developmentally appropriate chart at ten feet (10')
8 outside a vision screening instrument;

9 (3) A plus lens visual acuity test using a Snellen Eye Chart at twenty
10 feet (20') or an age or developmentally appropriate chart at ten feet (10')
11 outside a vision screening instrument; and

12 (4) Visual screening instrument tests, which include:

13 (A) Lateral muscle balance test at far;

14 (B) Vertical muscle balance test at far;

15 (C) Fusion or binocularity at far;

16 (D) Lateral muscle balance test at near;

17 (E) Fusion or binocularity at near; and

18 (F) Color perception.

19 (c) A child who fails an eye and vision screening shall be rescreened
20 within one (1) month of the initial screening by the school nurse or a school
21 vision care consultant.

22 (d)(1) An eye and vision screening report shall be sent or given to
23 each parent or guardian of each child that has failed the vision screening
24 test.

25 (2) The report shall identify whether the child passed or failed the
26 screening and the need for a comprehensive eye and vision examination.

27 (3) The report shall be mailed or given directly to the parent or
28 guardian by the appropriate school personnel and shall comply with all
29 applicable privacy laws.

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31 6-18-1302. Eye exams.

32 (a)(1) A child who does not pass the eye and vision screening tests,
33 except for the color perception test, shall be required to have a
34 comprehensive eye and vision examination conducted by an optometrist or
35 ophthalmologist within sixty (60) days of receipt of the vision screening
36 report identifying the need for the examination.

1 (2) The parent or guardian of the child shall be responsible for
2 ensuring that the child receives the appropriate eye and vision examination.

3 (b) If a child does not receive an appropriate examination, as
4 evidenced by a certificate signed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist
5 acknowledging the examination, then the public school or charter school where
6 the child is registered shall report the child to the Department of
7 Education. The local school district shall take such action that is
8 necessary to encourage that the child receives an appropriate examination.

9 (c) A child who has had a comprehensive eye and vision examination
10 conducted by an optometrist or ophthalmologist within six (6) months of an
11 eye and vision screening is not required to have another examination if the
12 parent or guardian of the child presents evidence of a comprehensive eye and
13 vision examination in the form of a certificate signed by an optometrist or
14 ophthalmologist acknowledging the examination.

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16 6-18-1303. Forms.

17 (a) Standardized forms for eye and vision screening reports shall be
18 developed by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Arkansas
19 Commission on Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children and adopted by the
20 Department of Education in regulations promulgated under the Arkansas
21 Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

22 (b) The standardized forms shall include:

23 (1) A screening form;

24 (2) A parent notification form;

25 (3) A doctor report form;

26 (4) A form to report the results of screening and examination;

27 and

28 (5) Any other forms deemed necessary by the commission.

29 (c) Every public school and charter school shall use the standardized
30 forms for eye and vision screening reports.

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32 6-18-1304. Training.

33 The Department of Education, in conjunction with the Arkansas
34 Commission on Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children, shall adopt
35 regulations that establish standards for training school nurses to perform
36 eye and vision screenings.

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6-18-1305. Reporting.

Each public school and charter school shall de-identify eye and vision screening results as necessary to comply with privacy laws and report the results by grade to the Department of Education and the Arkansas Commission on Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children. The reports shall include the following information:

- (1) The number of children screened;
- (2) The number of children rescreened;
- (3) The number of children who did not receive an eye and vision screening;
- (4) The number of children referred for a comprehensive eye examination;
- (5) The number of children who failed the eye and vision screening who did not receive a comprehensive eye examination; and
- (6) The results of comprehensive eye examinations.

6-18-1306. Consultant.

Each school district is encouraged to select one (1) or more optometrists or ophthalmologists to serve as nonpaid eye and vision care consultants to provide advice and assistance with eye and vision screenings and examinations.

SECTION 2. Uncodified Section 3 of Act 755 of 2003, concerning the Arkansas Commission on Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children, is amended to read as follows:

SECTION 3. Duties.

(a) ~~The commission~~ Arkansas Commission on Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children shall:

- (1) Study the eye and vision needs of the school age children of Arkansas;
- (2) Study and evaluate vision screening programs in the schools, and their effectiveness;
- (3) Study and evaluate whether children are receiving adequate eye and vision care, and correction of vision problems;
- (4) Study the effects of inadequate vision on the performance of

1 children in the classroom; and

2 (5) ~~Develop~~ Continue to develop a strategic statewide plan to
3 ensure adequate eye and vision care of school age children.

4 (b) ~~By November 1, 2004, the~~ The commission and the Department of
5 Education shall report its findings and updates ~~strategic plan for meeting~~
6 ~~the vision needs of school age children~~ to the Governor, the Legislative
7 Council, and the House and Senate Interim Committees on Public Health,
8 Welfare, and Labor two (2) times per year.

9 (c) The commission may accept any and all donations, grants of money,
10 instruments, equipment, supplies, materials, and services, conditional or
11 otherwise from private sources, from municipal and county governments, from
12 the state, and from the federal government. The commission may use any of
13 its resources to further the commission's purposes and functions.

14 (d) The commission shall develop criteria for the distribution of
15 commission resources to individuals and school districts in need of financial
16 or other assistance necessary to satisfy the requirements of Arkansas Code §§
17 6-18-1301 through 6-18-1306.

18 (e) In conjunction with the Department of Education, the commission
19 shall develop criteria for passage or failure of a vision screening and
20 criteria for referral for a comprehensive eye examination. The Department of
21 Education shall adopt the criteria as rules promulgated under the
22 Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

23 (f) In conjunction with the Department of Education, the commission
24 shall develop standardized forms to be used with regard to conducting and
25 reporting the results of eye and vision screenings.

26 (g) The commission and the Department of Education shall evaluate and
27 approve the vision screening instruments, equipment, and other testing items
28 that are used to conduct the eye and vision screenings.

29 (h) The commission shall conduct a pilot study to evaluate the pre-
30 and post-performance test scores of school children who have been screened
31 and referred for vision problems. The study shall encompass rural, urban,
32 and empowerment zone school systems.

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34 SECTION 4. Uncodified Section 5 of Act 755 of 2003 is amended to read
35 as follows:

36 SECTION 5. The commission shall expire on June 30, ~~2005~~ 2007.

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SECTION 6. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the Arkansas Commission on Eye and Vision Care of School Age Children expires at the end of the current state fiscal year; that the commission is called upon to undertake new responsibilities with regard to eye and vision screenings for school age children that cannot be completed within that time frame; that this act is immediately necessary because any delay in the effective date of this act would work irreparable harm on the ability of the commission to carry out its responsibilities that are designed to benefit Arkansas school children and enhance their learning opportunities. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

(1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

(2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or

(3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

/s/ S. Prater