

A Report of Vision Screenings
In
Arkansas Public and Charter Schools
School Year 2015-2016

As required by Act 1438 of 2005

Prepared by Paula Smith, MNSc, RNP
State School Nurse Consultant
Arkansas Department of Health/
Arkansas Department of Education

Act 1438 of 2005 requires that all Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten, first, second, fourth, sixth and eighth grade and all transfer students undergo a vision screening. School nurses who receive training from the Community Health Nurse Specialist (CHNS) housed in the educational cooperatives across the state conduct these screenings. In 2006, these CHNS received training from the Eye and Vision Commission members as well as other volunteer optometrists and ophthalmologists. In addition, Act 1438 requires that the Eye and Vision Commission and the Department of Education report its findings and updates to the Governor, the Legislative Council, and the House and Senate Interim Committees on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor. To meet this mandate, in 2006 school nurses in all 245 school districts as well as the charter schools completed the Vision Summary Form for their school/district. Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, school nurses were able to enter students' vision screening results into the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN). This data is compiled and reported to the State School Nurse Consultant.

School Year 2015-2016

Overall. Students receiving a vision screening in the required grades (pre-K, K, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and all transfers) numbered 220,410. Referrals to an eye doctor numbered 22,371 students (10%) of which 9,285 students (41%) actually reported to the school nurse they received an exam. Of these students receiving an exam, 8,157 (88%) were identified as having a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Pre-Kindergarten. There were 8,755 Pre-kindergarten students who received a vision screening at school. Of these, there were 565 students (7%) referred to an eye doctor. Two hundred forty-nine students (44%) actually reported to the school nurse they had received an eye exam and 190 students (76%) had a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Kindergarten. Thirty-five thousand three hundred sixty-three Kindergarten students received a vision screening. There were 3,045 students (9%) referred to an eye doctor for an exam. Of these referrals, 1,356 students (45%) actually reported to the school nurse they received an eye exam and 1,133 students (84%) had a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

First Grade. There were 36,536 first-grade students who received a vision screening. Of these, there were 3,757 students (10%) referred to an eye doctor for an exam. One thousand seven hundred nine students (46%) actually reported to the school nurse they received an eye exam and 1,438 students (84%) had a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Second Grade. There were 37,152 second-grade students who received a vision screening. Of those screened, 4,117 students (11%) were referred to an eye doctor for an exam. One thousand eight hundred seventy-seven students (46%) actually reported to the school nurse they received an exam and 1,630 students (87%) had a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Fourth Grade. Thirty-four thousand four hundred seventy-nine fourth-grade students received a vision screening. There were 3,836 students (11%) referred to an eye doctor for an exam. One thousand five hundred ninety students (41%) actually reported to the school nurse they received an exam and 1,430 students (90%) had a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Sixth Grade. There were 34,100 sixth-grade students who received a vision screening. Of these, 3,643 students (11%) were referred to an eye doctor for an exam. One thousand four hundred twenty-two students (39%) actually reported to the school nurse they received an exam and 1,323 students (93%) had a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Eighth Grade. Thirty-four thousand twenty-five eighth-grade students received a vision screening. There were 3,408 students (10%) who were referred to an eye doctor for an exam. One thousand eighty-two students (32%) actually reported to the school nurse they received an exam and 1,013 students (94%) had a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Transfer students. Transfer students were reported in their respective grades as opposed to reporting them separately.

Other. All students receiving a vision screening in grades Pre-Kindergarten through twelve were 249,675. That is an additional 29,265 students screened that were not previously reported in the above grades. As a result of these extra screenings, an additional 3,661 students (13%) were referred to an eye doctor. Of these referrals, 1,457 students (40%) reported to the school nurse they received an exam by an eye doctor. As a result, 1,308 students (90%) reported a vision difficulty confirmed by an eye doctor.

Ark. Code Ann. 6-18-1502. Eye exams.

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

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

(b) (1) If a child does not receive an appropriate examination, as evidenced by a certificate signed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist acknowledging the examination, then the public school or public charter school where the child is registered shall report the child to the Department of Education.

(2) The local school district shall take such action as necessary to encourage that the child receive an appropriate examination

Students who do not pass the vision screening at school are provided a letter with the vision screening results to be shared with an optometrist or ophthalmologist for a comprehensive eye and vision examination. Parents/Guardians are asked to return the letter to the school nurse following the exam.

Resources for vision exams, glasses and eye doctors can be found on the Arkansas Coordinated School Health website, <http://www.arkansascsh.org/support-the-program/screenings-in-schools.php>. These resources include:

- The parent notification letter in English and Spanish;
- Letter from the Arkansas Optometric Association with information regarding programs to provide students with an eye exam/glasses at low or no cost, i.e Vision USA, Sight for Students, National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and Arkansas Medicaid;
- FAQ about importance of follow-up vision exams (for parents/guardians);
- A list of Optometrists and Ophthalmologists in Arkansas;
- Brandon Burlsworth Foundation information; and
- Local chapters of Lions Clubs International.

Vision Screenings, 2015-2016

Grade	Screened	Referred	Received Exam	Confirmed Difficulty	Confirmed Normal
Pre-kindergarten	8,755	565	249	190	59
Kindergarten	35,363	3,045	1,356	1,133	223
First	36,536	3,757	1,709	1,438	271
Second	37,152	4,117	1,877	1,630	247
Fourth	34,479	3,836	1,590	1,430	160
Sixth	34,100	3,643	1,422	1,323	99
Eighth	34,025	3,408	1,082	1,013	69
TOTALS	220,410	22,371	9,285	8,157	1,128

Vision Screenings, 2014-2015

Grade	Screened	Referred	Received Exam	Confirmed Difficulty	Confirmed Normal
Pre-kindergarten	7,575	450	222	162	60
Kindergarten	36,492	3,289	1,599	1,302	297
First	37,247	3,803	1,638	1,368	270
Second	36,607	3,769	1,622	1,408	214
Fourth	34,032	3,938	1,607	1,446	161
Sixth	33,484	4,038	1,439	1,322	117
Eighth	33,481	3,449	1,180	1,055	125
TOTALS	218,918	22,736	9,307	8,063	1,244

Vision Screenings: A 5 Year Comparison

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Referred	19,719	20,311	21,063	22,736	22,371
Received Exam	9,598	9,497	9,589	9,307	9,285
Confirmed Difficulty	8,345	8,254	8,310	8,063	8,157

