



Rule Proposal for Chapter 246-760 WAC Auditory and Visual Standards – School Districts

Washington State Board of Health
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School-based Vision Screening Rules

Chapter 246-760 WAC

- Roles and responsibilities
- What this rule does
- Why update the rule
- History – timeline
- Impact of the proposed rule changes
- Current activities – timeline
- Questions



School-based Vision Screening – Chapter 246-760 WAC

Agency Roles & Responsibilities

- State Board of Health – Mandates what vision screening is required in schools (RCW 28A.210.020)
- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; provides guidance and technical assistance to enable school districts to screen students
- DOH – Assists in rule change process



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What does this rule do?

Supports the RCW 28A.210.020 requiring schools to perform vision and hearing screening. Specifically, the rule identifies the:

- schedule by grade for screening
- screening tools
- clinical criteria for referral
- process for referrals to community providers
- qualifications for screening personnel

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Reasons to update the screening rule

- Align with current practice standards
- Adopt nationally recognized standards for vision screening language
- Allow school nurses to make referrals without rescreening when a school nurse performed the initial screening
- Fix other “housekeeping” issues

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Timeline

- 2005 – Legislature enacted Substitute House Bill 1951
- 2005 – Expert Workgroup convened; vision care professionals, school nurses, community members and SBOH
- 2007 – Vision report submitted to the Legislature
- 2007 – SBOH accepted recommendations of Substitute House Bill 1951 vision report
- 2014 – Conducted vision screening survey of school nurses
- 2014 – Followed up with vision care professionals and school nurses

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Impact of the Proposed Rule Change

- Expands the list of screening instruments that may be used to include nationally recognized standards and tools without the need to seek board approval
- Streamlines referral process for students screened by the school nurse
- Provides students with the benefits of additional types of vision screening (if resources are available)



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Summary of Interpretive Statement

- Only Snellen test chart is an approved tool for distance screening - new tools require seeking Board approval.
- Statute (RCW 28A.210.020) does not prohibit schools from offering additional screening.
- The SBOH emphatically recommends that additional voluntary screening be evidence-based and in line with the expert committee vision recommendations accepted by the Board in 2007.

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Summary of Interpretive Statement

- Current SBOH rules only address mandatory screening and are silent on liability and informed consent when applied to additional voluntary screening.
- Schools need to consider training, scheduling, logistics and their ability to provide appropriate referrals and follow up. Schools should consider such issues carefully before approving proposals to offer additional screenings.

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2014 Vision Screening Survey of School Nurses

- 17 Question survey, created by OSPI, SBOH and DOH
- Distributed to school nurses via the SNOW listserv and OSPI School Nurse Corps Nurse Administration
- 519 nurses responded out of a potential 523 – 99%

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2014 Vision Screening Survey of School Nurses

School Nurse Recommendations

- Eliminate the requirement to rescreen before a referral if a registered RN conducted the first screening.
- Change the test used from Snellen to current best practices.
- Require the state to increase funding when it increases mandates.
- Provide more vouchers for glasses (not in scope).

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2014 Expert Opinion Additional Recommendations

- Cannot require proof of screening or exam as a condition of school entry.
- Include of a list of evidence based screening techniques.
- Continue to require distance vision acuity screening.
- Provide other screening if resources are available.
- Must provide volunteers training. Minors (students) should not be permitted to conduct vision screening in schools.

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- If school personnel observe a child with potential eye problems which negatively impact the child's academic success, school personnel should refer the child to a school nurse.
- If the school nurse does the screening and it shows problems, the child does not need to be rescreened prior to referral.
- If a volunteer does the screening and it shows problems, the child needs to be referred to a school nurse for a second screening.
- Technical correction on criteria for rescreening or referral.

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Timeline for 2015

- February 2015 – CR 101 filed
- April 2015 – Brief SBOH
- Spring 2015 - Conduct Literature review of evidence based vision screening practices
- March – April 2015 - Draft rule changes
- Anticipate June 2015 – CR 102 filed
- Anticipate August 2015 – Public hearing
- Anticipate September 2015 – CR 103 filed – Rule adoption
- Anticipate October 2015 – Effective date of revised rule



Questions?



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