

WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: January 13, 2021

To: Washington State Board of Health Members

From: Dr. Thomas Pendergrass, MD, Board Vice Chair

Subject: Chapter 246-760 WAC, Auditory and Visual Standards – School Districts

Background and Summary:

The Washington State Board of Health sets standards in chapter 246-760 WAC for the auditory and visual screening of children attending schools in Washington under the authority provided in RCW 28A.210.020. The purpose of this requirement is to screen for and identify students in Washington who may be experiencing auditory or visual impairments and refer for care by an appropriate healthcare provider. These annual screenings are conducted once per academic year.

The 2020-2021 academic year has experienced changes due to the current public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 virus. On December 16, 2020 Governor Jay Inslee issued Proclamation 20-09.3 related to Phased Reopening of K-12 Schools that prohibits school districts from conducting in-person learning unless specific standards are met. In addition, the Department of Health issued guidance, *Tools to Prepare for Provision of In Person Learning among K-12 Students at Public and Private Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, that provides recommendations on COVID-19 health metric trends to determine modes of learning.

Following inquiries related to the Board's rules regarding auditory and visual screenings, staff worked with subject matter experts at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to draft guidance for complying with this rule during the 2020-2021 academic year. Recognizing the importance of keeping students, staff, and their families safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, the draft guidance provides information for school districts on how to prioritize and provide auditory and vision screenings at this time.

I have invited Samantha Pskowski, Board Staff, to provide background information and an overview of the draft guidance for the 2020-2021 school year.

Recommended Board Actions:

The Board may wish to consider the following motion:

The Board, based on today's discussion, approves the draft guidance for implementing chapter 246-760 WAC during the 2020-2021 academic year and directs staff to finalize and work with OSPI to distribute to school districts.

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Staff

Samantha Pskowski

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Kelie Kahler, Washington State Board of Health Communication Manager, at 360-236-4102 or by email at kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov. TTY users can dial 711.

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