Washington State Board of Health

Rulemaking Petition, Visual Screening Standards in Schools, Chapter 246-760 WAC

January 10, 2024

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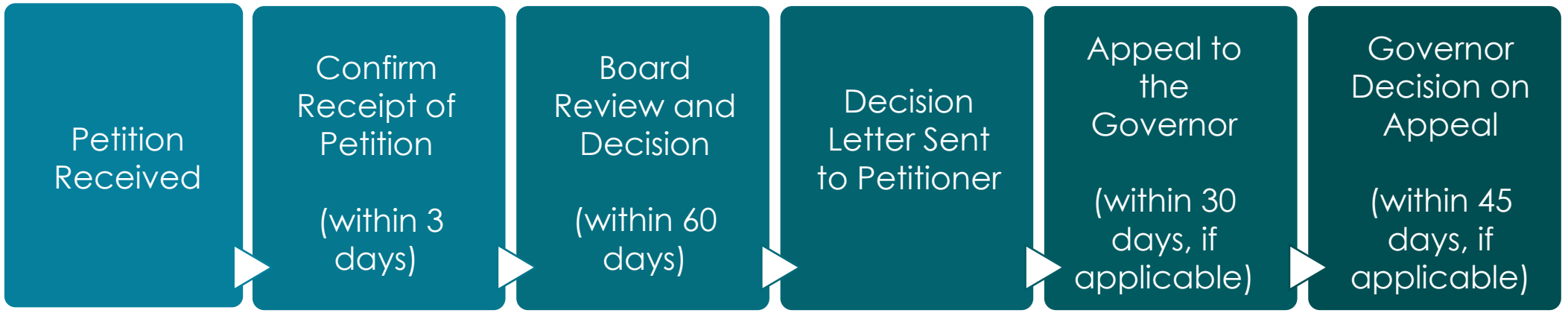
Background

Under the Administrative Procedures Act (RCW 34.05.330), any person may petition a state agency to adopt, repeal, or amend any rule within its authority.

Overview of the Board's Petition Process:

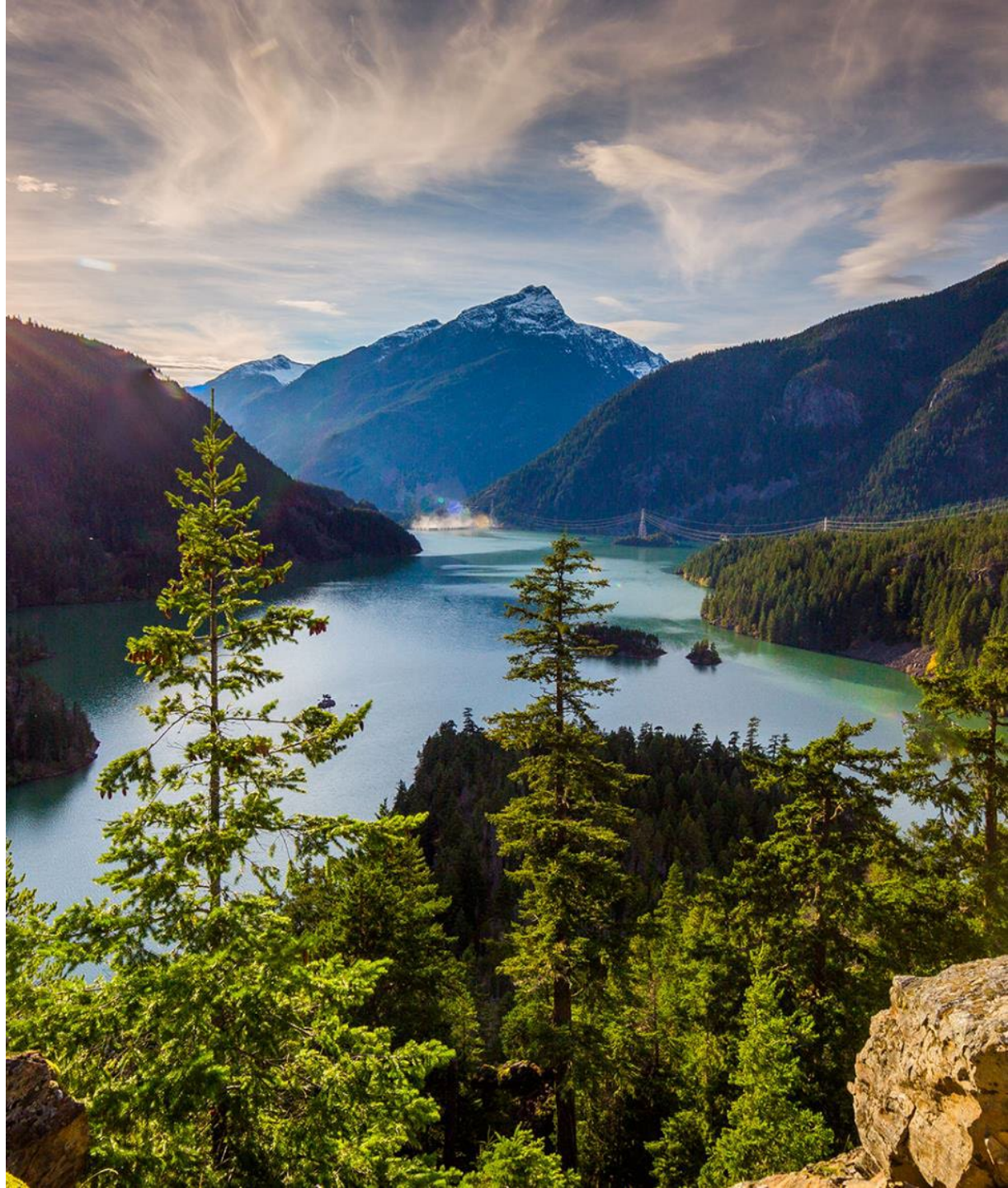


Petition Request

- On November 8, 2024, the Board received a petition for rulemaking to amend its school vision screening standards (chapter 246-760 WAC).

- The request:
    - Amend WAC 246-760-070 (2) to include screening for color vision deficiency (CVD).

- Petitioner rationale:
    - About 1 in 12 boys and 1 in 200 girls have CVD.
    - Often, children do not learn they have the condition until later in life.
    - The screening test is inexpensive and can be done quickly.
    - 11 other states currently test for CVD.



Board Authority

- RCW 28A.210.020 requires the Board to define and adopt rules for vision and hearing screenings of children attending schools in Washington.
- Chapter 246-760 WAC outlines the standards for these screenings.
- In 2016, Senate Bill 6245 (Chapter 219, Laws of 2016) amended RCW 28A.210 to require near vision screenings in addition to distance screenings.
- The Board updated the vision screening sections of chapter 246-760 WAC in 2017 to include this new requirement.

Board Vision Screening Standards

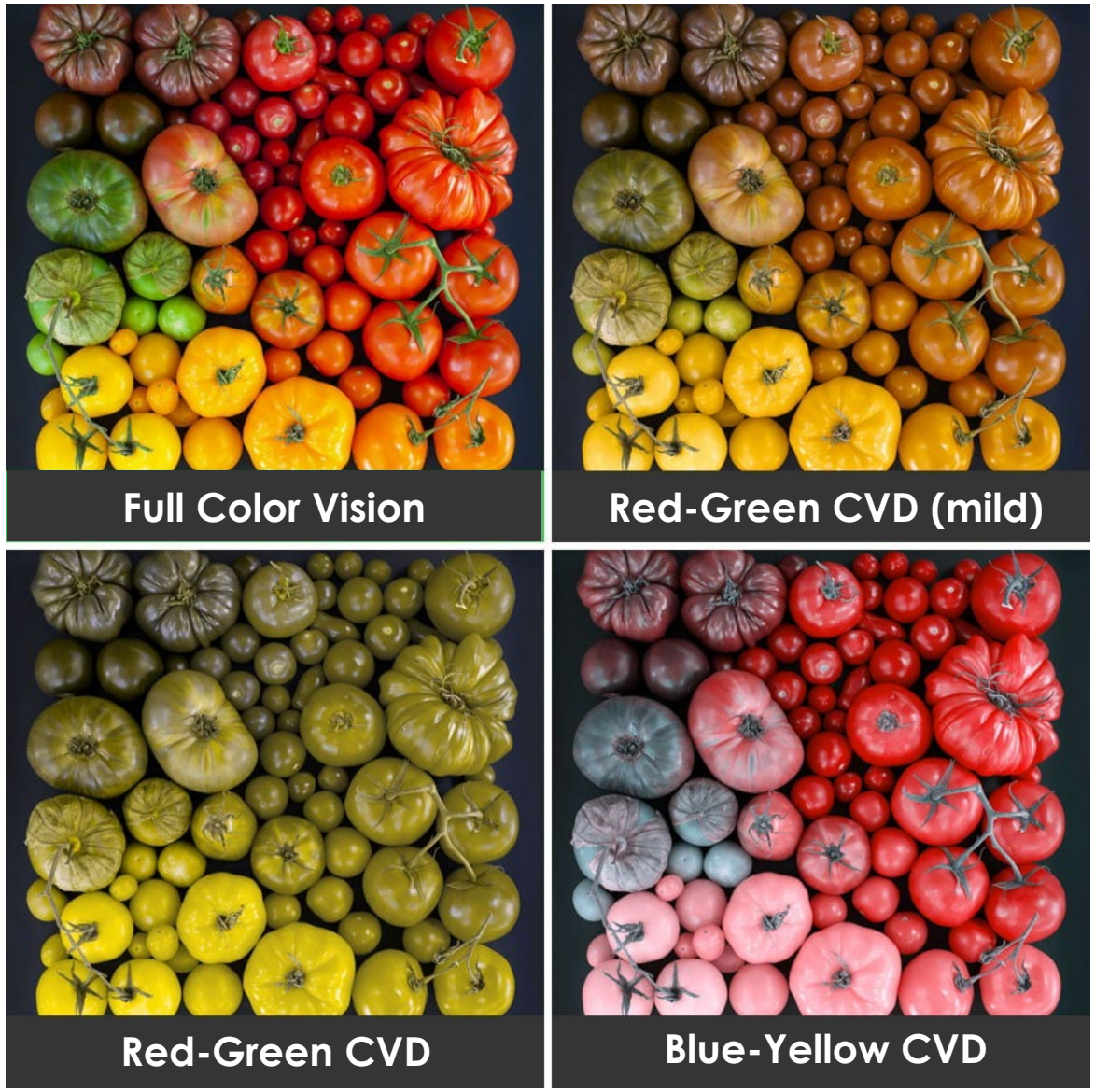
- Screenings occur once per academic year for students in kindergarten through 3 grade and grades 5 and 7.

- Schools are required to use screening tools and procedures that are linguistically, developmentally, and age-appropriate.

- If resources permit, schools may screen students in other grade levels and conduct optional vision screenings using evidence-based tools and techniques.

Color Vision Deficiency (CVD)

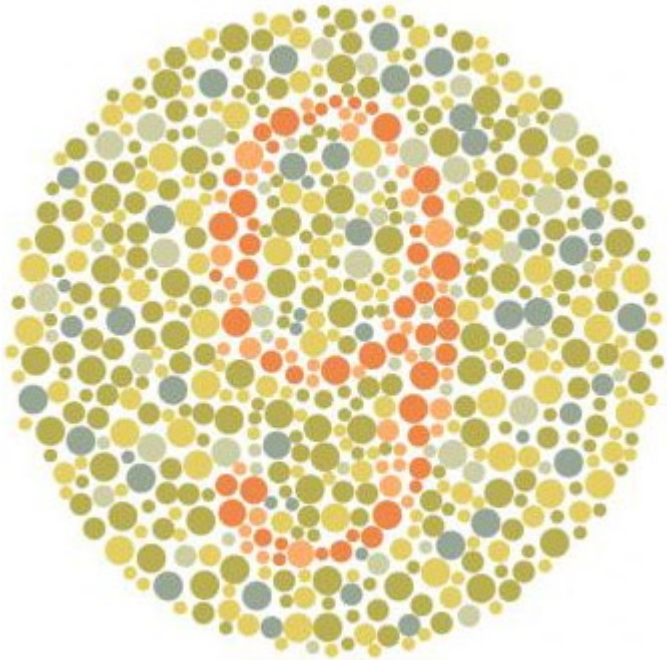
- There are several types of CVD. The most common type is red-green CVD.[1,2]
- CVD typically affects men more than women. People are also more likely to have CVD if they:
  - Have a family history of CVD
  - Have certain eye diseases
  - Have certain health conditions (diabetes, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, leukemia)
  - Take certain medications
- There is no treatment for CVD. Special glasses and contact lenses are available that may help people with certain CVDs.



Sources: Image adapted from ColorPsychology.org and Midtown Optometry

CVD Testing

- Color vision deficiency is usually tested and diagnosed through a comprehensive eye exam.[3,4]
- Color plate testing is the most common type of CVD screening. Different color plates can check for certain types of CVD.
- The most used color plate test is the Ishihara test, but similar tests are available.
- Testing involves showing a person a set of 8 to 38 plates, each with a different number or symbol.[4]



Source: National Institute of Health, National Eye Institute.

Screening for CVD in School-Aged Children

- Several national organizations have developed policies and guidelines for childhood vision screenings, including: [5,6]
  - American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO)
  - American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS)
  - American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
  - Prevent Blindness and the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health (NCCVEH)
  - United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)
- Currently, none of these organizations recommend mass screening for CVD in the community or school setting.

"Despite the limited evidence regarding the negative impact of [CVD]…lack of evidence of impact is not evidence of lack of impact. At this time, the gravity of the overall negative impact is unclear and difficult to translate into an effective argument supporting mass population screening of [CVD]."

- Prevent Blindness Position Statement, School-Aged Vision Screening & Eye Health Programs (2015)

Board Member Discussion

Would the Board consider accepting or denying the petition? Why or why not?

Note: Discussion and justification for the Board's decision will be included in the Board's determination letter to the petitioner.

Citations

1. National Eye Institute. Color Blindness. Accessed December 22, 2023. Last Updated November 15, 2023. https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/color-blindness
2. MedlinePlus Genetics. Color vision deficiency. Accessed December 22, 2023. Last Updated January 1, 2015. https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/color-vision-deficiency/#inheritance
3. National Eye Institute. Testing for Color Vision Deficiency. Accessed December 22, 2023. Last Updated August 7, 2023. https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/color-blindness/testing-color-vision-deficiency
4. Cleveland Clinic. What To Know About Color Blindness Tests. Accessed December 22, 2023. Last Updated March 17, 2023. https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diagnostics/24845-color-blindness-test
5. Ambrosino C, Dai X, Antonio Aguirre B, Collins ME. Pediatric and School-Age Vision Screening in the United States: Rationale, Components, and Future Directions. *Children*. 2023;10(3):490. doi:10.3390/children10030490
6. Wahl MD, Fishman D, Block SS, et al. A Comprehensive Review of State Vision Screening Mandates for Schoolchildren in the United States. *Optom Vis Sci Off Publ Am Acad Optom*. 2021;98(5):490-499. doi:10.1097/OPX.0000000000001686

THANK YOU

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