

February 4, 2020

TO: Senate Education Committee

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RE: Senate Bill 62, Relating to Standards for School-Administered Vision Screenings

My name is Graecinda Tedder. I am a registered nurse and the Early Childhood Special Education School Nurse for Olathe Public Schools. I am proud to continue serving school nurses and students of Kansas as a contributing Kansas School Nurses Organization state committee and past board member for over 20 years. I am also representing Cindy Galemore, a registered nurse, retired Director of Health Services for Olathe Public Schools, along with the other credentials presented above. Both Cindy and I served as contributing authors to the 6th edition of the *Kansas Vision Screening Requirements and Guidelines* and are members of the Kansas Vision Coalition.

Revision to the current 72-5204 and 72-5205 vision screening statutes are necessary to:

- Provide evidence-based guidance for the conducting of vision screening for Kansas students (by deleting the reference to a “Snellen test,” and instead, referring to the ‘most recent edition of the Kansas vision screening requirements and guidelines’),
- Emphasize the importance of “referrals for eye examinations and necessary follow-ups”,
- Specify the grade levels being screened lessening the chance of missing a student with a history of transient attendance in the screening process,
- Acknowledge the important role of the school nurse, along with the importance of training when conducting vision screening and referral,
- Require screening annually for children participating in early childhood IDEA part B programs, along with requiring more frequent screening in lower grade levels during the critical period when students are learning to read,
- Align state required frequency of vision screening with that of hearing screening for students new to the school and for those in middle and high school, and
- Establish a commission to periodically revise the guidelines, to ensure guideline implementation, ongoing identification of state vision related resources, and monitor progress in improving outcomes such as referral completion rate.

We ask for your support in passing SB 62.

Supporting Information.

A survey was conducted among Kansas School Nurses by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Bureau of Health Promotion and Bureau of Family Health during the 2017-2018 school year. Results of the survey were published in July 2019 and are available at this link: http://www.kdheks.gov/bhp/pan/download/2017-18_School_Nurse_Survey_Results.PDF

Survey results related to vision screening in Kansas schools support the need for these revisions:

- 1. 78.7% of school districts participated in the survey.**

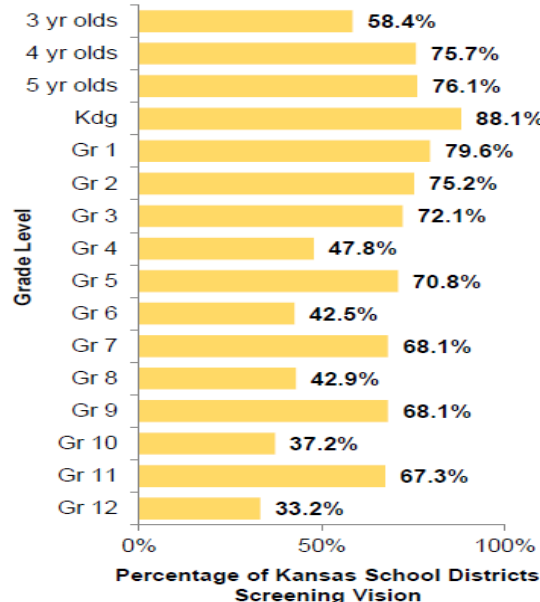
Table 2. Number and Percentage of Survey Participation by School District Category and County Represented for the 2017-18 School Year, N=226

	Number Participating	Total	Participation Rate
Public school districts	225	286	78.7%
State schools	1	5	20.0%
Counties*	98	105	93.3%

*Counties not represented by participating school districts include Chase, Clark, Comanche, Gove, Norton, Stanton, and Wichita.

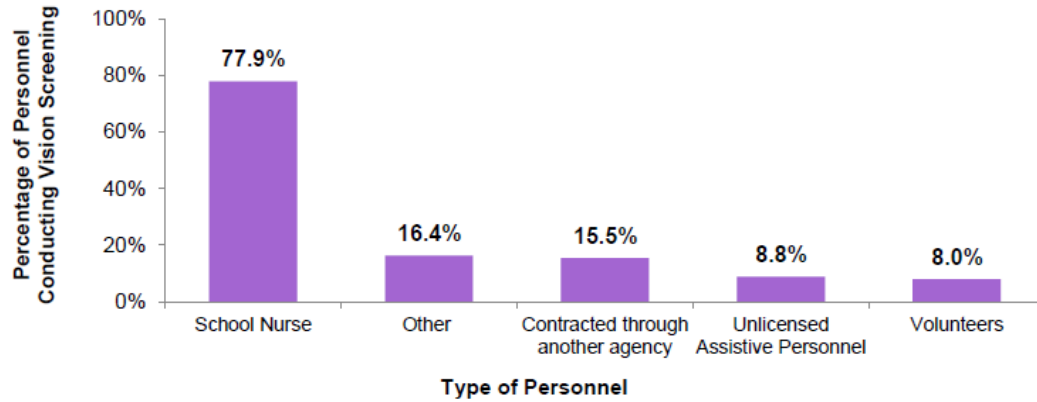
- 2. Grade levels screened by percentage of responding school districts, including 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old students enrolled in public schools as part of *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B statewide programs* show inconsistencies in grade levels being screened across our state, but also show most schools screening preschool age students.**

Figure 8. Percentage of Kansas School Districts Screening Vision by Grade Level, 2017-18 School Year, N=226



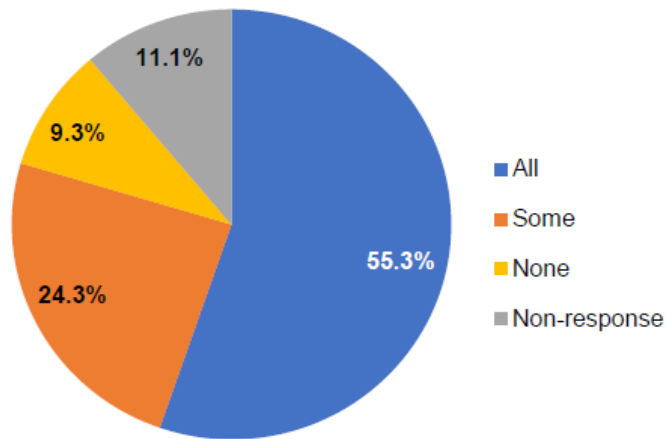
- The school nurse is the most common job category conducting vision screenings in Kansas schools, though 22% of screenings are being done by other types of personnel including volunteers.

Figure 9. Personnel Conducting Vision Screening in Kansas School Districts, 2017-18 School Year, N=226



- Only 55% of Kansas Schools state all their vision screeners have completed training.

Figure 10. Percentage of Vision Screeners Trained in Kansas School Districts, 2017-18 School Year, N=226



5. Schools were asked to report 2016-2017 data, as the 2017-2018 data might not have been completed at the time of the survey. Table 7 shows the number of students screened, and number and percentage referred and seen by a health care provider (completed referrals). It is concerning that only 19.6% of students referred had a completed referral.

Table 7. *Vision Screening – Number of Kansas Students Referred and Referred Students Seen by Health Care Provider, 2016-17 School Year, N=99*

Kansas School Districts	Vision Screening	Percentage
Number referred	11,557	7.1%
Referred students seen by health care provider	2,262	19.6%

Notes: 162,285 students were screened. One district reported not regularly performing vision screenings at any grade level; 27 districts reported screening all students with IEP's annually; 23 districts reported screening all new-to-district students; 16 districts reported Lions Club volunteers assist with vision screenings; eight school districts reported using instrument-based screening with all or with lower grade level students (instrument-based screening is not a recommended tool for use in vision screening of individuals aged six years and older unless they are unable to participate in optotype-based screening); six school districts reported conducting vision screening annually on all students.