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MEMORANDUM

To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Office of Revisor of Statutes
Date: February 4, 2021
Subject: SB 62—School Administered Vision Screenings

Senate Bill 62 would amend the current requirements for school administered vision screenings and would establish the Kansas children's vision health and school readiness commission.

Current law provides that the governing body of any school must provide each student with a basic vision screening at least once every two years. The school is required to provide the results of the screening to the student's parents and may recommend a vision examination by a qualified health professional based on the results of such examination. Current law also provides that students who are not achieving mastery of basic reading, writing and mathematics skills shall be encouraged to obtain a vision examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

SB 62 would remove the basic vision screening every two years requirement and would instead require that basic vision screenings be provided in the following manner:

- Annually for children with disabilities aged three through five who are receiving special education and related services;
- At least once each school year for students in kindergarten, first, second, third, fifth, seventh and 10th grades; and
- Within the first year of admission for any student who enrolls in a school district or accredited nonpublic school.

SB 62 would subject both public schools and accredited private schools to the student vision screening requirements. Each accredited nonpublic school would be required to provide basic vision screenings unless a parent requests such vision screening be provided by the school

district in which the student resides. If such request is made, the appropriate school district would be required to provide the vision screening.

SB 62 would require that any school administered vision screenings be performed by a vision screener, such as a school nurse, nurse's designee or other person trained to administer vision screening tests to students in this state. Vision screeners would be required to follow the most recent state vision screening guidelines for performing vision screenings.

SB 62 would also establish the Kansas children's vision health and school readiness commission to ensure the implementation of the requirements of the statute. Members of the commission would be appointed by the state board of education as follows:

1. One optometrist;
2. One ophthalmologist;
3. One representative of a health organization dedicated to preventing blindness;
4. One representative from the department of education;
5. One representative from the department of health and environment;
6. One school nurse
7. One public health nurse; and
8. One school administrator.

The commission's duties would be to oversee the revision of state vision screening requirements and guidelines at least once every seven years; provide standardized vision screening referral letters and eye professional examination reports; identify state resources to offer free or low-cost eye exams for students who are unable to afford such exams; and establish a system to collect data concerning vision screening results and outcomes of referrals and issue an annual report to the secretary of KDHE and the commissioner of education.