

HB 718 -- Vision Exams for School Children

Sponsor: Pearce

Beginning July 1, 2008, this bill requires public school students enrolling in kindergarten or first grade to receive a vision examination from a state licensed optometrist or physician. The State Board of Education in conjunction with the Department of Health and Senior Services will maintain a list of sources to which children who may need vision exams or have been found to be in need of further examination or vision correction may be referred for free or reduced-cost treatment.

Beginning July 1, 2008, and continuing through the 2011-2012 school year, all public schools are required to conduct eye screening exams for each student prior to the completion of the first grade and again before the completion of the third grade. When a student fails an eye screening, the school district must notify the parent or guardian of the results and require the student to receive a complete eye exam from an optometrist or physician. A student will be excused from the eye screening examination if his or her parent or guardian submits an objection to the exam in writing to the appropriate school administrator.

The Children's Vision Commission is established to develop standardized screening tests, reporting forms, appropriate training programs, and a brochure specifying the benefits of ongoing eye care for children and to conduct a four-year pilot project tracking the results of eye screenings. The commission must submit a report to the General Assembly by October 1, 2012, on the results and findings of the study.

The provisions of the bill will expire on June 30, 2012.