
HOUSE BILL 1951

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2005 Regular Session

By Representatives Quall, Talcott, Haler, Morrell, Campbell, O'Brien, Hankins, Kagi and McDermott

Read first time 02/11/2005. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to vision exams for school-aged children; adding a
2 new section to chapter 28A.210 RCW; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) Vision is the primary sense used in the learning process, and
6 accounts for eighty percent of our early learning.

7 (2) One in twenty preschoolers and one in four school-age children
8 have vision problems.

9 (3) Economically disadvantaged children have a proportionally
10 greater likelihood of having vision problems that can affect their
11 ability to learn.

12 (4) Often, vision problems in young children can be misinterpreted
13 as learning disabilities. Inability to concentrate, difficulty
14 reading, and other manifestations of poor vision can be taken for
15 attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, and other learning
16 disabilities.

17 (5) Vision is a complex process and a fundamental factor in the
18 learning process. Visual function can be described by three
19 interrelated areas: (a) Visual pathway integrity including eye health,

1 visual acuity, and refractive status; (b) visual efficiency including
2 accommodation, binocular vision, and eye movements; and (c) visual
3 information processing including identification and discrimination,
4 spatial awareness, and integration with other senses. Current
5 screening for visual acuity at distance only addresses a subset of
6 abilities in the first of these areas and is inadequate to accomplish
7 the requirements of RCW 28A.210.020.

8 It is the intent of the legislature to ensure that no child
9 receives remedial instruction because of an undiagnosed vision problem.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.210
11 RCW to read as follows:

12 The superintendent shall require that any school-age child who has
13 been diagnosed with a learning disability, or is going to be placed in
14 an alternative learning environment because of a perceived reluctance
15 or inability to learn at a normal pace, have a complete vision exam.
16 At a minimum, the complete vision exam must include:

17 (1) Acuity and refraction testing to rule out a sight problem such
18 as amblyopia;

19 (2) Accommodative function testing to rule out accommodative
20 dysfunction including accommodative insufficiency and infacility;

21 (3) Motility testing to rule out strabismus, including significant
22 phoria;

23 (4) Vergence testing to rule out dysfunction and instability of eye
24 alignment;

25 (5) Eye movement accuracy testing to rule out a tracking problem;
26 and

27 (6) Ocular health exam including internal and external exam.

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