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## Education Committee

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### SB 6245

**Brief Description:** Concerning visual screening in schools.

**Sponsors:** Senators Litzow, Hill, Fain, Rolfes, McAuliffe and Mullet.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires every board of school directors to provide for screening for both distance and near visual acuity.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 2/22/16

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

**Background:**

Every board of school directors has the duty to provide for and require screening for the visual and auditory acuity of all children attending schools in their districts. The screening must be made in accordance with procedures and standards adopted by rule of the Board of Health (BOH). Prior to the adoption or revision of rules, the BOH must seek the recommendations of the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding administration of the screening and the qualifications of persons competent to administer the screening.

The BOH rules regarding visual screening are as follows:

- Schools must conduct screening in kindergarten, and in grades 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7. In addition, schools must conduct screening for any child showing symptoms of possible loss in visual acuity referred to the district by parents, guardians, or school staff. If resources permit, schools must annually screen children at other grade levels.
- Personnel conducting the screening must use a properly illuminated and glare free Snellen test chart, or an approved alternative, for screening for distance central vision acuity. Students having a visual acuity of 20/40 or less in either eye as determined by the Snellen test must be rescreened within two weeks or as soon as possible after the original

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screening. Schools must inform parents or guardians of students failing the second screening of the need and importance for the child to receive professional care.

- Schools must screen children with corrective lenses for distance viewing with their corrective lenses on.
- If school personnel observe a child with other signs or symptoms related to eye problems and if the signs or symptoms negatively influence the child in his or her studies, school personnel must refer the child to the parents or guardians for professional care.
- Screening must be performed by persons competent to administer screening procedures as a function of their professional training and background or special training and demonstrated competence under supervision. Technicians and nonprofessional volunteers must have adequate preparation and a thorough understanding of the tests as demonstrated by their performance under supervision. Supervision, training, reporting, and referral must be the responsibility of a professional person, designated by the school administration, who may be a school nurse, or public health nurse, a special educator, teacher, or administrator who possesses basic knowledge of the objectives and methods of visual acuity screening.

The rules do not require routine screening for near visual acuity.

**Summary of Bill:**

Every board of school directors has the duty to provide for and require screening for both distance and near visual acuity.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.