

DATE: August 13, 2018

MEMO NO: 220-18

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2019 Vision Screening Grants

Good vision is a critical component to students' learning success in school. House Bill 1408 (2017) amended Section 22.1-273, *Code of Virginia*, regarding annual vision screenings of students. This legislation requires school principals to ensure the vision testing of students in kindergarten, grades two or three, and grades seven and ten, and establishes quality standards for implementing a "comprehensive vision program." The text of House Bill 1408 is at [2018-2019 Vision Screening](#).

Given the prevalence of student vision problems, particularly among high-needs students, the 2018 Special Session I General Assembly funded a two-year pilot intended to offer technology-based, comprehensive vision programs in select school divisions to help assess the impact of uncorrected vision in schools, and consider solutions for improved access to vision services and care as a means to improve educational outcomes for students. Item 135 EE. of the *2018 Appropriation Act* (Chapter 2) provides state funding in fiscal year 2019 for the state share of vision screening costs incurred by eligible school divisions in fiscal year 2019:

"Out of this appropriation, \$391,000 the first year and \$391,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to school divisions to pay for a portion of the vision screening of students in kindergarten, grade two or three and grades seven and ten, pursuant to Chapter 312, 2017 Session Acts of Assembly. Eligible school divisions may receive the state's share of \$7.00 for each student reported in average daily membership and enrolled in kindergarten, grades three, seven and ten and who has received such vision screening test. The Department of Education shall administrator and distribute reimbursements to school divisions and the funding shall be prorated if needed, such that the appropriation is not exceeded. Prioritization shall be given the schools that would most benefit from state assistance in order to provide such vision screening service to students that are eligible for free lunch."

The Virginia Department of Education will pilot the grant program in fiscal year 2019 in 27 eligible divisions meeting two pilot criteria: 1) the percentage of students in the division eligible for free or reduced lunch program (over 40 percent); and 2) the division's grades K-3 retention rate as reported for the 2016-2017 school year (if more than twice the 2016-2017 state average of 1.50 percent). The projected state payments to these divisions are shown in [Attachment A](#) to this memorandum. School divisions will be reimbursed from the awarded grant funds through the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) system.

Pursuant to Section 22.1-273 subsection F., and following state and local procurement requirements, school boards may enter into contracts with qualified nonprofit vision health organizations for the purpose of conducting screenings to meet the annual screening

requirements in subsections D. and E. of Section 22.1-273, as well as to implement the pilot program.

If you have any questions related to the vision screening grant state payments, please contact Kent C. Dickey, Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Operations, or budget office staff at (804) 225-2025 or by email at doebudgetoffice@doe.virginia.gov. Programmatic questions may be directed to Ms. Tracy White, School Nurse Consultant, at (804) 786-8671 or Tracy.White@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/eml

Attachment

A: [Fiscal Year 2019 Vision Screening Grants \(XLS\)](#)