



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: September 1, 2017
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Changes to Vision Screening in Accordance with the *Code of Virginia* [§22.1-273](#)**

The purpose of this memo is to inform and clarify the amended changes to vision screening requirements as indicated:

- School Nurses Role
- Non-profit qualified vision screening organizations
- Change in grade level screening and scheduling

School Nurses continue to be the main provider of vision screening services. The coordination of the vision screening process, parent notification, follow-up, and data collection is the responsibility of the school nurse. The school nurse is the primary point of conduct for overseeing health related issues including the oversight of community vision screening organizations that partner with a school division to provide this service.

Current legislation expands the opportunity for school divisions to use qualified non-profit organizations to conduct student vision screenings. The qualifications for non-profit vision screeners are detailed in this legislation. If a non-profit organization is used to provide vision screening services it is incumbent upon a school division to review the health status, child abuse and criminal background checks for all providers. It is prudent for school divisions to develop an agreement with such services regarding the scope of work to be completed, which should include but not be limited to data ownership, exchange, or release of any privileged information or data and staff qualifications.

The legislation continues vision screening at kindergarten, seventh and tenth grades, but expands the option for vision testing in grades two or three. School divisions may choose which grade they prefer to complete the screening cycle. Historically, school divisions have completed the screening process within 60 administrative working days from the start of school. The *Code* now states that the “*scheduling of such screening shall be completed no later than the sixtieth administrative working day of the school year.*”

If you have questions concerning these changes please contact Tracy White, School Health Specialist at (804) 786-8671, or by email at Tracy.White@doe.virginia.gov.

SRS/TW/rt