

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2804

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 6, 2018

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 2804 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill directs the State Board of Education to require each child age 6 and under who is entering a public preschool, public school, or a Head Start Program for the first time to have a comprehensive eye examination completed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist by January 1 of the child's initial year of enrollment in the school or program. The Department of Health will maintain a list of resources from which a parent or guardian may obtain a free or reduced price comprehensive eye examination. The list will be posted on the Department of Health's website and will be provided to each public preschool, public school, and Head Start Program.

A principal, director or other person in charge of a public preschool, public school, or Head Start Program must collect from the child's parent or guardian evidence of the child's comprehensive eye examination, as provided by regulation of the State board. A comprehensive eye examination that was performed no more than one year prior to a child's initial enrollment in a public preschool, public school, or Head Start Program will satisfy the requirements under the bill.

The committee amended the bill to:

- Require the Department of Health to maintain a list of resources from which a parent or guardian may obtain a free or reduced price comprehensive eye examination. The list will be updated annually and posted on the department's website;
- Require the Department of Health to provide the list annually to each public preschool, public school, and Head Start Program;
- Require the list to be made available by the public preschool, public school, and Head Start Program to the parents or guardians of all enrolled children;
- Require the Department of Education to establish a fund consisting of appropriated or donated monies that may be used to cover the costs of comprehensive eye examinations for any

uninsured children and children without applicable healthcare coverage;

- Require that the comprehensive eye examination must have been conducted no more than one year prior to the child's enrollment in order to meet the bill's requirements; and
- Require that in the case of a child who has not received a comprehensive eye examination, the principal, director, or other person in charge of the public preschool, public school, or Head Start Program will notify the child's parent or guardian every three months after the child's initial enrollment of the requirement under the bill.