



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

To: Superintendents, Principals, and School Nurses

From: Steve Balko, Director of School Building Security

Date: October 15, 2021

Subject: Vision Screening Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year

Student vision screening requirements remain in effect for all students in kindergarten and the first, third, fifth, and eighth grades for the 2021-2022 school year, including both in-person and virtual learners per Indiana law. Schools must obtain a visual acuity reading for each student in the required grades, as well as students suspected of having a visual deficit.

Although it is best practice to complete vision screenings in the fall, Indiana law does not stipulate a specific date by which these annual screenings must be completed. Schools have until the end of the school year to complete the screening process. With safety procedures in place to conduct screenings during the COVID-19 pandemic, schools may begin to screen students at any time during the school year.

If students will be virtual learners for the entire school year, schools will need to work with parents to develop a time when students can come to school to obtain their vision screening. It is the responsibility of the school to conduct these screenings, during the school day, and schools should not require students to see an optometrist to meet this screening requirement. However, if written objection by the parent/guardian is submitted to the proper school authority, a student is not required to participate in the vision screening.

If a student is enrolled at one school, but attends another (due to programming), it is the responsibility of the enrolling school to ensure the mandated screenings are completed and the results are reported to the Indiana Department of Education via the School Health Report at the end of the school year.

Guidance for modifying vision screening procedures during COVID-19 can be found on the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health webpage by clicking [here](#).

This site also has a FAQ document which can be found [here](#).

These guidelines are generally applicable to Indiana, with the exception that near vision is not optional as it is a state requirement. Also, please remember that instrument-based screening tools do not meet the state requirements for students in grades K-12. Additionally, as mitigation strategies and requirements are subject to change, screeners should follow the mitigation strategies that are currently in place at a school when the screening is conducted.



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Per state law, vision screening in Indiana consists of two specific tests: a near and distance visual acuity screening by the school and a Modified Clinical Technique (MCT) screening done by a licensed eye professional.

Near and Distant Visual Acuity Screening

- All mandatory screenings should be completed in the required grade levels. Schools are encouraged to send requests to teachers and families asking them to refer students in the non-mandatory grade levels for a screening if they are suspected of having a visual defect.
- Schools are required to complete both the near and distant visual acuity screening in the required grade levels this school year.
- If a student was not screened for near vision last school year, but was screened for distance, there is not a need to screen the student this year unless the student is referred by a parent or teacher.
- If a student was a virtual student last year and declined to come in when a screening was offered, there is not a need to screen the student this year unless the student is referred by a parent or teacher.

MCT Screening

- For students in kindergarten or first grade, an additional MCT vision screening by a licensed eye professional is required.
- Indiana state law does provide a waiver for the MCT portion of the vision screening for students in kindergarten or first grade. If schools are unable to obtain the services of a licensed eye professional by the end of this school year, a waiver can be requested by completing this [form](#). The waiver form will be open until June 15 and does not apply to the visual acuity screening requirement for students in kindergarten or first grade.
- Any second grade student who has not previously received a MCT screening should be added to the list for MCT screening this year.

There is a list of local optometrists, who serve as regional liaisons, to assist schools with locating eye doctors in their area. If schools are unable to locate an optometrist willing to perform the MCT screening at the school, schools are encouraged to contact their regional liaison. A list of the regional liaisons can be found [here](#). A map to know which regional liaison is in your area can be found [here](#).

Please contact Cheryl Coffey at ccoffey@doe.in.gov with any questions.