



## Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 506**

*January Session, 2001*

Substitute Senate Bill No. 534

*Senate, April 30, 2001*

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. GAFFEY of the 13th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

### **AN ACT CONCERNING EYE EXAMINATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) Each local or regional board of education or  
2 similar body governing a nonpublic school shall require each child,  
3 except a child who is eligible for free or reduced price lunches  
4 pursuant to federal law and regulations, to have an eye examination  
5 before enrolling in an elementary school under its jurisdiction. If a  
6 child who is required to have an eye examination fails to obtain such  
7 an examination, the local or regional board of education may deny  
8 continued attendance in a public elementary school to such child. The  
9 examination shall include, but not be limited to, pupil evaluation,  
10 external assessment, extraocular motor evaluation, color vision  
11 evaluation, stereoacuity evaluation, refraction, binocular assessment  
12 and accommodative assessment, slit lamp evaluation, tonometry,  
13 ophthalmoscopy and visual acuity distance and near evaluation.

14 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 10-206 of the general statutes is  
15 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

16 (b) Each local or regional board of education shall require each child  
17 to have a health assessment prior to public school enrollment. The  
18 assessment shall include: (1) A physical examination which shall  
19 include hematocrit or hemoglobin tests, height, weight and blood  
20 pressure; (2) an updating of immunizations as required under section  
21 10-204a, provided a registered nurse may only update said  
22 immunizations pursuant to a written order by a physician or physician  
23 assistant, licensed pursuant to chapter 370, or an advanced practice  
24 registered nurse, licensed pursuant to chapter 378; (3) vision, except for  
25 a child who is required to have an eye examination pursuant to section  
26 1 of this act, hearing, speech and gross dental screenings; and (4) such  
27 other information, including health and developmental history, as the  
28 physician feels is necessary and appropriate. The assessment shall also  
29 include tests for tuberculosis, sickle cell anemia or Cooley's anemia  
30 and tests for lead levels in the blood where the local or regional board  
31 of education determines after consultation with the school medical  
32 advisor and the local health department, or in the case of a regional  
33 board of education, each local health department, that such tests are  
34 necessary, provided a registered nurse may only perform said tests  
35 pursuant to the written order of a physician or physician assistant,  
36 licensed pursuant to chapter 370, or an advanced practice registered  
37 nurse, licensed pursuant to chapter 378.

38 Sec. 3. Section 10-208 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
39 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

40 No provision of section 10-206, [or] 10-214 or section 1 of this act,  
41 shall be construed to require any pupil to undergo a physical or  
42 medical examination or treatment, or to be compelled to receive  
43 medical instruction, if the parent or legal guardian of such pupil or the  
44 pupil, if such pupil is an emancipated minor or is eighteen years of age

45 or older, in writing, notifies the teacher or principal or other person in  
46 charge of such pupil that such parent or guardian or pupil objects, on  
47 religious grounds, to such physical or medical examination or  
48 treatment or medical instruction.

49 Sec. 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2002.

**ED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Affected Agencies:** Department of Education

**Municipal Impact:** See Explanation Below

**Explanation**

**Municipal Impact:**

The bill's expansion of health assessments with regard to eye examinations will result in an increase in the workload of health personnel within local and regional school districts. It is not anticipated that this workload increase will result in the need for additional personnel but may result in a reprioritization or elimination of current non-mandated duties.

**OLR Bill Analysis**

sSB 534

***AN ACT CONCERNING EYE EXAMINATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires enhanced eye examinations for most students enrolling in public elementary schools and imposes the same exam requirement on most students enrolling in private elementary schools. The new requirements do not apply to (1) low-income students (those eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches), who must continue to have existing pre-enrollment vision screenings, or (2) students whose parents have religious objections to medical treatment. The bill specifies the minimum components of the required exams.

For covered students enrolling in public school, the bill's new requirement replaces the vision screenings that are currently required as part of the mandatory health assessment all students must have before enrolling in public school. Pre-enrollment health assessments are not currently required for private school students. As is the case for current health screenings, the bill allows local school boards to bar children from attending public school if they have not had the required eye exam.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2002

**REQUIRED EYE EXAM COMPONENTS**

The bill requires the new eye exam to include at least the following:

1. pupil evaluation;
2. external assessment;
3. extraocular motor (eye movement) evaluation;

4. color vision evaluation;
5. stereoacuity (depth perception) evaluation;
6. refraction (test of eye's power);
7. binocular (eye alignment) and accommodative (ability to focus on close objects) assessment;
8. slit lamp evaluation (detailed examination of the interior and exterior of the eye, including the conjunctiva, cornea, iris, lens, and eyelid);
9. tonometry (test of eye pressure);
10. ophthalmoscopy (examination of retina and structure behind the eye); and
11. visual acuity (ability to see) distance and near evaluation.

## BACKGROUND

### *Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price School Lunches*

Under federal law and regulations, students whose families have incomes at or below 130% of poverty level are eligible for free school lunches and those with incomes at or below 185% of poverty level are eligible for reduced priced lunches. For FY 2001-02, the annual income limits are:

Household Size	Reduced Price Lunch	Free Lunch
2	\$21,479	\$15,093
3	27,066	19,019
4	32,653	22,945
5	38,240	26,871
6	43,827	30,797
<b>For each additional family member,</b>	<b>+ 5,587</b>	<b>+ 3,926</b>

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**Student Health Assessments**

By law, before enrolling in a public school, each student must have a health assessment performed by a legally qualified medical practitioner, registered nurse or advanced practice registered nurse, licensed physician assistant, or the school medical advisor. The assessment must include:

1. a physical examination, including hematocrit or hemoglobin tests, height, weight, and blood pressure;
2. updating required immunizations;
3. vision, hearing, speech, and gross dental screenings; and
4. any other information, including health and developmental history, the physician thinks necessary and appropriate.

When the local school board thinks it necessary after consulting with the school medical advisor and the local health department, the screening must also include tests for tuberculosis, sickle cell anemia or Cooley’s anemia, and lead levels in the blood.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 32 Nay 0