

SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
EIGHTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

S.F. No. 2239

(SENATE AUTHORS: NIENOW)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
03/05/2012	4106	Introduction and first reading Referred to Education

A bill for an act
relating to education; creating a vision therapy pilot project; appropriating money.
BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **VISION THERAPY PILOT PROJECT.**

Subdivision 1. Establishment. A grant is established to fund a vision therapy pilot project. The grant shall be administered by the commissioner of education as competitive three-year grants. An applicant for a grant must be a school district, charter school, consortium of school districts, or a tribal school.

Subd. 2. Pilot project. (a) In the first year of the project, all second and third graders in a pilot school and all fourth and fifth graders with an individualized education program shall have a comprehensive eye examination. In the second and third year of the project, all second graders in a pilot school and all fourth graders who transfer into a pilot school with an individualized education plan shall have a comprehensive eye examination. In all years of the pilot project, all second through fifth grade students, who have not had a comprehensive eye examination through the pilot project and are put on an individualized education program for the first time shall have a comprehensive eye examination. The results of the comprehensive eye examination must be shared with the student's individualized education program team to determine whether vision therapy alone may be appropriate for the student and adjust the individualized education program accordingly. The parent or guardian of a student who qualifies for a comprehensive eye examination under this paragraph may submit a written notification to the school opting the student out of the examination.

(b) In each year of the project, the school or district shall provide appropriate vision therapy to students as found necessary by the comprehensive eye examinations

under paragraph (a), and when appropriate, consistent with the interventions used in the Convergence Insufficiency Treatment Trial.

Subd. 3. **Application.** The applicant must submit a plan to the commissioner in the form and manner the commissioner determines. A school district or consortium of districts may limit their application to one or more schools within the district or consortium. The application must include:

- (1) the schools that will implement the pilot project;
- (2) who will provide the vision therapy;
- (3) how the vision and reading skills of students participating in the program will be evaluated before and after vision therapy;
- (4) how students will be monitored after receiving vision therapy; and
- (5) what additional reading interventions will be available to students after completion of the vision therapy program.

Subd. 4. **Application review; grant awards.** (a) Grant money must be paid to recipient schools or districts in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. A preference may be given to applicants with a percentage of students with individualized education programs that exceeds the state average.

(b) Grants are awarded for a three-year time period. The commissioner may award the grant to one or more applicants. The amount of the grant in each year of the project may vary, if consistent with the plan details of the application.

(c) The commissioner must determine the amount of each grant based upon the number of screened children the grantee expects to serve.

Subd. 5. **Evaluation.** The commissioner of education must provide for an evaluation of the pilot project and must report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education policy and finance by January 15, 2017. The report must include an assessment of how many students who had individualized education programs and received a comprehensive eye exam and vision therapy no longer needed an individualized education program.

Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Department of Education.** The sums indicated in this section are appropriated from the general fund to the Department of Education for the fiscal year designated.

Subd. 2. **Grants for vision therapy pilot project.** For grants to implement a vision screening and therapy pilot project in schools and school districts under section 1:

- 3.1 \$ 2013
- 3.2 This appropriation is available until expended.