



**VISION IMPACT  
INSTITUTE**

*Giving Vision a Voice®*

## **New Jersey Senate Education Committee Passes Bill Requiring Eye Exams for All Children Before Kindergarten**

*Bill Introduced by Kids See: Success, a Vision Impact Institute and Optometry Giving Sight Partnership*

**Trenton, N.J. – December 11, 2018** – The New Jersey Legislature’s Senate Education Committee has officially passed [SB 2804](#), a bill directing the State Board of Education to require children aged 6 and under who are entering public schools or Head Start Programs for the first time to have a comprehensive eye examination completed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist by January 1 of their initial year of enrollment. The bill was sponsored by Senators Teresa Ruiz and Shirley Turner, and co-sponsored by Senators Patrick Diegnan and Troy Singleton.

“According to experts, up to 80 percent of all learning occurs visually, meaning that children with poor vision are likely to have a major disadvantage when starting school. We’re grateful that the Senate Education Committee is committed to the future of our students by advocating for their vision right from the start,” said [Kristan Gross](#), Global Executive Director of the Vision Impact Institute. “Ensuring that children have the vision services they need from the beginning is key, and the Committee’s vote to pass this bill is a vote for the future of these young people.”

By 2050, the number of people with myopia (shortsightedness) is expected to reach almost [5 billion](#), spanning races and cultures. For children, increased screen time and minimal outdoor time are resulting in more children with myopia – and at a much younger age than in the past. While vision screenings can detect some problems, more serious vision issues may go undetected, including binocular vision problems and amblyopia (lazy eye), which can cause vision loss in children. A comprehensive eye exam can help to detect and treat all of these conditions before they become greater issues.

“The decision to pass this legislation is the work of so many partners. When we started the Kids See: Success initiative, in partnership with [Optometry Giving Sight](#) and others, we knew it would be the power of partnership that could bring this issue to the forefront,” added Gross. “Now, the additional collaboration of new legislative advocates, teachers, school administration professionals and parents will be the catalyst that can turn this legislation into action. Children have a fundamental right to see clearly and achieve full academic success in the classroom. SB 2804 ensures that New Jersey children will have that opportunity.”

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**About the Vision Impact Institute**

The Vision Impact Institute's mission is to raise awareness of the importance of vision correction and protection to make good vision a global priority. Its Advisory Board is comprised of five independent international experts: Pr. Kevin Frick (United States), Pr. Clare Gilbert (United Kingdom), Pr. Kovin Naidoo (South Africa), Mr. Arun Bharat Ram (India), and Dr. Wang Wei (China).

The Vision Impact Institute is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which receives support from the Vision for Life Fund from Essilor, the world leader in ophthalmic optics. The Vision Impact Institute hosts an interactive web platform, a unique database of research, available at [visionimpactinstitute.org](http://visionimpactinstitute.org).

**About Kids See: Success**

Kids See: Success was initially founded by Optometry Giving Sight, Vision Impact Institute and VSP Global to encourage cities and states across the U.S. to require a comprehensive eye exam for children entering kindergarten.

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