

Vision Screener grant request

Please consider this request to pursue grant money to purchase a Vision Screening machine for use within RSU 24.

The Department of Education requires us to perform scheduled vision screens for all students in grades pre-k, K, 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. A vision screening machine uses instrument based technology that is quick and easy to administer, and it requires minimal cooperation from the student. This is especially useful, in the younger grades, that require focused attention to follow directions for the typical eye-chart type screening that we have always used. Screenings could be completed quickly and more efficiently. Screening that typically takes 5 minutes or more per student to complete will take seconds with this machine. The machine is small and easy to transport between schools so easily shared with all schools to assist in vision screens. We are looking at the Welch Allyn Spot Vision Screener. This is what the company says about their product:

“Spot accurately* detects the potential indication of these common vision problems:

- Myopia (nearsightedness)
- Hyperopia (farsightedness)
- Astigmatism (blurred vision)
- Anisometropia (unequal refractive power)
- Strabismus (eye misalignment)
- Anisocoria (unequal pupil size)
- *Accuracy refers to the sensitivity and specificity of the screening referral recommendation.

Evidence shows that using the Spot Vision Screener can help to dramatically reduce the time required to test vision over traditional screening tools. In one study, the Spot Vision Screener was used to test the vision of 537 elementary school students. Previous testing using a traditional screening tool took three days. With Spot, the entire population was screened in less than five hours. In addition, Spot captured definitive results on 100% of the students and 93 of them were referred for follow-up care with an eye care specialist.”

The cost of the Welch Allyn Spot Vision Screener is approximately \$8000. It does not require annual calibration, so after the initial purchase, there should not be further expense related to its use. Welch Allyn also provides schools with a 5 year warranty for all parts and service if something breaks or malfunctions.

Welch Allyn states this machine is to be used for people who are 6 months and older. Under current DOE guidelines, it can only be used for students up to 5 years old and for those children who can't participate in the traditional chart screenings (those with disabilities). We are still waiting for published research to support use for all students. We believe this is coming in the future. We are aware of other area schools already using this for all of their student vision screening assessments.