

**WSR 23-22-004**  
**PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY**  
**STATE BOARD OF HEALTH**

[Filed October 18, 2023, 4:26 p.m.]

Subject of Possible Rule Making: Auditory screening of school-age children. The Washington state board of health (board) is considering amending the auditory screening sections of chapter 246-760 WAC, Auditory and visual standards—School districts, to align with current national evidence-based practices and assess potential options regarding whether to include otoacoustic emission (OAE) screening technology in the board's rules. The board may also consider other technical or editorial changes as needed.

Statutes Authorizing the Agency to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 28A.210.020.

Reasons Why Rules on this Subject may be Needed and What They Might Accomplish: The board sets standards in chapter 246-760 WAC for the auditory and visual screening of children attending schools in Washington under the authority provided in RCW 28A.210.020. The purpose of these standards is to screen and identify students in Washington who may be experiencing hearing or vision impairments and refer them for diagnostic evaluation and care by an appropriate health care provider. Hearing screenings provide the opportunity to help detect a student's hearing loss or previously unrecognized hearing loss and intervene to limit further loss or otherwise address the loss and improve learning.

In response to a petition for rule making, the board, in consultation with the office of superintendent of public instruction (OSPI), will consider revisions to the auditory screening sections of the chapter, specifically, regarding the potential inclusion of OAE screening technology. The auditory screening sections of the rule haven't been updated since 2002. As such, other possible revisions may include aligning Washington standards with national school childhood hearing screening guidelines; for example, the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) Clinical Practice Guidelines and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Childhood Hearing Screening Guidelines, and making other technical or editorial changes as needed.

Other Federal and State Agencies that Regulate this Subject and the Process Coordinating the Rule with These Agencies: Per RCW 28A.210.020, the board must seek the recommendations of OSPI regarding the administration of school auditory screening before revising the rules. The board will conduct this rule making in consultation with OSPI. In addition, the department of children, youth, and families (DCYF) has authority over screenings in early learning facilities. The board will invite DCYF to participate in this rule making to ensure coordination, as applicable.

Process for Developing New Rule: The board will use a collaborative rule-making approach in developing the proposed rules.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting Molly Dinardo, P.O. Box 47990, Olympia, WA 98504-7790, phone 564-669-3455, fax 360-236-4088, TTY 711, email [molly.dinardo@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:molly.dinardo@sboh.wa.gov), website [sboh.wa.gov](http://sboh.wa.gov).

Additional comments: The board will work with partner agencies and may convene listening sessions or an advisory group for additional input. The board will keep interested parties informed of the rule making through email, the board's listserv and rule-making website,

and notices in the Washington State Register. Interested parties, including those who implement chapter 246-760 WAC, will have opportunities to provide comments through the rule-making process, including informal review of the draft rule, formal review and comment on the proposed rule, and at the board's public hearing.

October 18, 2023  
Michelle A. Davis  
Executive Director