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# The Advocate *(December 2013)*

## A LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS

### Advocacy : Making Change

The need was clear. A middle school graduate was dreaming of becoming an actress. She knew she needed a flexible high school schedule to make auditions and a typical school was not going to be flexible enough. More than anything though, she wanted to graduate high school from the school she loved, Renton Christian School.

Renton Christian School did not have a high school program. However, the Principal had a solution: an online program designed to align with its curricular and religious studies. There was one problem: OSPI had not yet updated its regulations to include an approval of private schools with online programs.

Erik Konsmo, the Principal of Renton Christian, solicited some help from Jami Lund, Freedom Foundation, Suzie Hanson, WFIS and Representative Mark Hargrove from the 47th District. They put their heads together and wrote legislation, talked to legislators and, with the help of the actress/student and her dad, as well as Liv Finne from the Washington Policy Center, testified at hearings.

Senator John Braun from the 20th District got on board and championed the Bill in the Senate. This Bill eventually passed both houses and Washington now has an Online Private School Bill, SB 5496!

WFIS worked together with a student, a parent, a Principal, legislators and other nonprofit organizations to pass this bill. As a result, a high schooler can work on her art while attending her high school of choice. This is an example of how WFIS works to open doors for all of Washington's students.

### Professional Educator Standards Board

Please apply if you, or one of your teachers, is interested in joining this Board:



## QUICK LINKS

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### Calendar at a Glance

January 13 - March 13  
2014 Regular  
Legislative Session

**March 13, 2014**  
WFIS Board  
Meeting

<http://www.governor.wa.gov/boards/application/default.aspx>

PESB meets once a month in Olympia.  
There is currently no private school representation on this board.

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## E-RATE

Increasing school technology means the need for more capacity.

E-RATE can help you manage costs.

There are professionals in private companies and at ESD's who can help with the paperwork.

WFIS approves Certified Technology Plan. [Contact us](#) for information on E-RATE or for approval of your technology plan.

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### Private School Advisory Committee Legislative Report

A **Thank You** to all of the schools that participated in PSAC's **Online Education Survey**.

**WFIS** worked with **Laura Moore**, the Private Education Program Coordinator for OSPI, and **Dr. Duane Schafer**, Superintendent of Schools for the Catholic Diocese of Spokane in a subcommittee of the Private School Advisory Committee to complete a Legislative Report due in January on Private Schools with Online Programs.

### Survey Results:

Of the schools surveyed:

- 30% are considering BLENDED LEARNING options for their students.
- 10% are considering opening an ONLINE SCHOOL.
- Almost 45% indicated they will not have students online.
- 83% of the schools interested in opening an online school will do so for their current grades.

WFIS is the umbrella organization for private education in Washington State.

WFIS is the only statewide vehicle for regular communication and strategic development between the many different constituencies.

#### WFIS affiliates:

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Catholic Schools

Christian Schools International (CSI)

Hutterian Brethren Schools

Islamic Schools

Jewish Schools

Lutheran Schools (NSLA)

Montessori Schools (AMI, AMS, PNMA)

Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS)

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (SDA)

Waldorf Schools (AWSNA)

The WFIS Board of Directors consists of eighteen school heads representing the major constituencies, chosen regionally by their respective bodies.

- 10% said they would start an online program to expand their grades.
- The **perceived obstacles** to adding an online program for most schools are the start-up costs and the lack of technological assistance.
- The **perceived benefits** are the ability to diversify the courses offered and the ability to differentiate learning for students.

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#### Charter Schools = **Public** Schools

Parents get confused about what makes a Charter School and a Private School different.

Private, independent schools will need to articulate for parents the differences between the two types of schools.

According to a report called ***More than Scores: An analysis of Why and How Parents Choose Private Schools***, there are many reasons parents choose private. These include:

- Having a track record of success
- Greater sense of community
- Smaller class sizes
- Better learning environment
- Faith-based education
- Better student discipline

To see the study go to:

<http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/1031/More-Than-Scores.pdf>

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#### Early Learning

**Results are beginning to come in from schools participating in Early Achievers, the Department of Early Learning's Quality Rating Improvement System.**

WFIS is networked with similar organizations in other states through the Council for American Private Education (CAPE).

**Please contact WFIS if your early learning program participated in the QRIS.**

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## **The Common Core**

Private schools across the state are using Common Core as a **tool** to affirm current curriculum, inform decisions about changes, and assure parents that within the context of this tool, private schools are measuring up to or surpassing the standards.

Smarter Balance Assessments, standardized tests that reflect the Common Core curriculum, are being field tested this year with 20% of public school students participating. WFIS is working with OSPI to assure that private schools will have access to the test as desired.

There are two components to the SmarterBalance Test: A computer adaptive part and a written performance part that includes a writing sample.

More information will be available after the Field Tests.

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## **Universal Preschool: Seattle Makes a Move**

**There are a lot of questions to answer about how universal preschool will be funded and regulated.**

**The City of Seattle has made universal preschool a top priority.**

**Union personnel from SEIU and AFT are reaching out to schools in an effort to gain support for unionizing early learning staff. WFIS has made the private schools' perspective on this issue clear with the city and State representatives.**

**Contact the Executive Director of WFIS, [Suzie Hanson](#), for more information.**

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