

WSCC 2015 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

PRINCIPLES

Parents—the first and most important educators—have a fundamental right to choose the education best suited to the needs of their children, including public, private, and religious schools. Government, through such means as tax credits and publicly funded scholarships, should help provide resources for parents, especially those of modest means, to exercise this basic right without discrimination. Students in all educational settings should have opportunities for moral and character formation. - Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB

K-12 SCHOOLS

BILLS THAT PASSED

Sudden Cardiac Arrest - Senate Bill 5083: Sudden cardiac death is the unexpected failure of proper heart function that may occur during or immediately after exercise. It is reported that roughly 2,000 people under the age of 25 die each year from cardiac arrest, making these incidents the leading cause of death in youth athletes. **SB 5083**, which WSCC supported, requires the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) to create, in collaboration with other organizations, an awareness campaign about sudden cardiac arrest. An on-line pamphlet will be posted on the OSPI website and parents and athletes are required to sign the pamphlet prior to the student participating in an athletic program. An on-line prevention program for coaches will be created. Private nonprofit organizations using school property must provide a statement of compliance with the policies for sudden cardiac awareness.

Washington Tribal History and Culture - Senate Bill 5433: In 2011, the Legislature required OSPI to establish the Office of Native Education to encourage and assist school districts in the identification of tribes near their districts and to collaborate on the development of curricula on State tribal history and culture. **SB 5433** changes State law to require school districts to identify Indian tribes within or near school districts and to incorporate curricula about tribal history, culture, and government. School districts must also collaborate with tribes and OSPI to develop curricula materials and programs for both local tribes and tribal materials and programs that are statewide. WSCC supported this legislation.

Expanding Computer Science Education - House Bill 1813: In Washington State, computer science and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) related jobs are in high demand. It is estimated that 50 percent of new jobs are computer science and technology related, with 20,000 current job openings. The State does not have computer science learning standards in place or educator endorsements for computer science. **HB 1813** requires OSPI to adopt computer science learning standards and requires the Professional Educators Standards Board to develop a K-12 computer science endorsement. The bill also changes the types of endorsements that K-12 and certain certificated elementary educators may pursue to qualify for the Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Sciences Conditional Scholarship Program, and renames it the Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship Program. It is assumed that computer science will be included as an endorsement to qualify for the program.

Student User Privacy in Education Rights Act – Senate Bill 5419: As schools increase their use of on-line services and technology, concerns about student information and privacy have increased. School service providers are those that provide a website, mobile application, or online service that is designed and marketed primarily for use in a K–12 school, is used at the direction of teachers or other employees of a K–12 school, and collects, maintains, or uses student personal information. Under **SB 5419**, school

service providers are required to safeguard student personal information by following directives relating to privacy policies, the collection, use, and sharing of student personal information, notification and obtaining consent, and security, privacy, confidentiality, and integrity of student personal information.

Dual Credit Opportunities – House Bill 1546: In Washington State, dual credit programs allow high school students to earn postsecondary course credit while also earning credit toward high school graduation. There are a variety of dual credit programs, including: Tech Prep; Advanced Placement (AP); College in the High School (CHS); Running Start (RS); International Baccalaureate (IB); Cambridge International; and Running Start for the Trades. **HB 1546** revises dual credit programs by explicitly defining the CHS program as one located on a high school campus or in a high school environment and adding career and technical classes. The Running Start program will no longer include RS classes on high school campuses. The bill also allows Guaranteed Education Tuition credits to be used for CHS and RS fees. By September 15, 2016, higher education coordinating boards, OSPI, the SAC, and the public baccalaureate institutions, must make recommendations to the Legislature for streamlining and improving dual credit programs. Particular attention will be paid to increasing participation of low-income students and students who are currently underrepresented in these programs.

Safe Routes to Schools – Senate Bill 5987: The State has established transportation policy goals used to consider project proposals, as well as the operation and performance of the system. The goals include safety, mobility, environmental protection, stewardship, preservation and economic vitality. Safe Routes to Schools, is a Complete Streets grant program that supports improvements to county roads and city streets to promote walking and bicycling by students. In Washington State, thirty percent of traffic-related deaths among children happen while walking or bicycling. Street improvements allow children to safely walk or bike a mile to school. Added benefits include meeting two-thirds of the daily amount of exercise that helps achieve a healthy weight and cardiovascular fitness, as well as improved academic performance. **SB 5987** provides funding for Safe Routes to Schools through the Complete Streets grants.

BILLS THAT FAILED

Certification of Paraeducators - Senate Bill 5179: Many Catholic schools have paraeducators working under the supervision of a certificated staff member to support instructional services in the classroom. Paraeducators are vital in assisting with the success of students. Currently, there are no required standards on educational qualifications for paraeducators. **SB 5179** would have created minimum standards and required certification for paraeducators working in programs such as special education, learning assistance and English language learners. It would have also established a career pathway that encouraged paraeducators to pursue advanced education. Finally, the bill would have created a Paraeducators Oversight Board to administer preparation and certification. The WSCC monitored **SB 5179** to ensure that any new criteria proposed would be reasonable to produce safe and excellent learning environments.

Routes to Alternative Certification - House Bill 1770: In current law there are four different types of routes to alternative certification. Two are for classified staff, one for persons with subject matter expertise in high need subject areas, and one for individuals currently teaching with a conditional certificate. At the request of the Professional Educator Standards Board, **HB 1770** would have repealed each of the alternative route programs and required the PESB to replace the programs with policies that establish nontraditional preparation programs. The programs would have included innovative approaches, evidence-based practices, expanding access, and giving preference to veterans or National Guard members. The WSCC monitored this legislation to evaluate its impact on the process of teacher certification.

Breakfast After the Bell – House Bill 1295: In Washington State, many families and children are homeless, hungry, and struggling to meet daily needs. Research has shown that hungry students do poorly in school as the lack of proper nutrition negatively impacts brain functioning, physical and emotional health. Washington ranks forty-third in the nation for the number of low-income children who participate in school breakfast. There are dramatic increases in participation in states that have adopted the Breakfast After the Bell (BAB) program. **HB 1295**, which WSCC supported, would have required high-needs schools, those with an enrollment of 70 percent or more students eligible for free and reduced price meals, to offer school breakfast after the beginning of the school day. The period of time students spend eating after the bell would count toward minimum instructional hours, as long as educational activities are provided concurrently with breakfast. Grants would have been provided to these schools for start-up costs.

Apple-A-Day Equipment Grants – House Bill 1164: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that approximately 17 percent of children and youth in the U.S. are obese. The rates are higher for children living in communities with high poverty rates. An initiative to reduce and prevent childhood obesity focuses on the quality of meals provided at schools. **HB 1164** would have established a grant program to enhance student nutrition in public schools by improving the quality of meals, reduce consumption of processed foods and increase consumption of whole foods. Grants awards would have prioritized schools with a high number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, project applications with a 50-50 match of non-State funds, and schools that are engaged in farm-to-school efforts. Though **HB 1164** failed, funding was provided in the Healthy Kids – Healthy Schools capital budget grant program.

School Safety and Security Centers – Senate Bill 5252: Washington State schools have experienced a handful of shooting incidents, which has heightened the need for effective safety and security strategies in all schools. The Yakima-based Educational Service District (ESD 105) has developed a highly regarded school safety and security center that offers support to districts and buildings in the development of safety plans. **SB 5252** would have required three additional ESDs to implement pilots like the Yakima program. The pilot programs would include the establishment of a network of school safety coordinators focused on prevention planning, intervention, mitigation, crisis response, and community recovery. The WSCC monitored this legislation to insure private schools could choose to be included in the planning, if they were in the mapping projects.

Child Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention in Schools - Senate Joint Memorial 8006: In January 2014, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report entitled "Federal Agencies Can Better Support State Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Abuse by School Personnel." The report found the system of reporting, investigating, and preventing child sexual abuse cases is complicated by too many agencies duplicating work, lack of coordination of resources limiting assistance to State and local programs, not enough reliable data that allows for tracking and analysis, limited understanding of federal funding requirements. The report recommends that the federal Department of Education collaborate with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Justice to compile and disseminate information to the states that: (1) outline steps that can be taken to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse by school personnel; (2) identifies a way to track the prevalence of sexual abuse; and (3) clarifies and disseminates information on how Title IX applies to personnel-to-student sexual abuse in the K–12 setting. **SJM 8006** would have asked the federal government to implement the recommendations from GAO.

Pesticide Application in School Facilities – Senate Bill 6002: In Washington State, childcare programs and public schools are required to notify parents or guardians and employees of the school's pest control policies and methods. Schools must establish a system that provides notification at least 48 hours before

a pesticide application. Some schools choose to use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. IPM is a safe and usually less costly option for effective pest control in a school environment. **SB 6002** would have required the School Directors Association (WSSDA) to develop a model IPM policy that emphasizes the use of non-chemical pest control measures.

School Facilities Licensing for Before and After School Programs – House Bill 2100: While the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is responsible for establishing the minimum childcare licensing requirements related to the safety of childcare premises, the Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for establishing the minimum environmental standards for educational facilities. Before and after-school programs that serve school-age children in educational facilities must meet the licensing requirements established by the DEL. The WSCC wrote **HB 2100** to prohibit DEL from adopting health and safety requirements for school-age programs operated in buildings that contain public or private schools that are more restrictive than those standards established by DOH. In 2007 the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 1256 requiring DEL to adopt licensing standards that prohibit the use of window blinds with cords capable of forming a loop and posing a risk of strangulation to young children in licensed child care facilities. These standards also cover school-age programs. **HB 2100** would have provided an exemption to these rules for programs serving school-age children and operating in buildings that contain public or private schools. Though **HB 2100** failed, language providing these exemptions was included in the Early Start Act (**HB 1491**).

Truancy of Students - House Bill 1243: Under current law, schools are required to notify parents and request a conference, when a student's absences become a problem. There are a number of steps that can be used to eliminate or reduce unexcused absences, including truancy petitions filed against the student, the parent, or both. **HB 1243** would have limited notification requirements, scheduled conferences, and other steps when a student has one or two unexcused absences in a month to students in the sixth grade or above, but left the option available for students in the fifth grade or below. The bill would have made discretionary rather than mandatory the duties of a school district in responding to a student who has five or more unexcused absences in a month or 10 unexcused absences in a year.

Traffic Cameras in School Speed Zones - House Bill 1087: A school zone for public and private schools is the area extending 300 feet in either direction from a school crosswalk or 300 feet from the border of any school. Standard school limit signs mark the zone as 20 miles per hour. Fines are doubled if a violation occurs. A local jurisdiction may also allow automatic traffic safety cameras. **HB 1087** would have required a school speed zone controlled by an automated traffic safety camera to have a sign reading "camera active when flashing" posted and have a yellow beacon that must flash only when the camera is in use.

Creating the Youth Substance Abuse and Education Program – House Bill 1642: Every two years the Office of the Superintendent of Instruction (OSPI) conducts the statewide Healthy Youth Survey. A portion surveys self-reporting of current substance use. In 2014, approximately 27 percent of high school students had used alcohol and 23 percent had used marijuana in the previous 30 days. With passage of the initiative legalizing marijuana and the survey results, there is growing concern that not enough prevention and education programs are available. **HB 1642** would have created the Youth Substance Abuse Prevention and Education Grant Program to provide funding for community-based and statewide substance education programs.

Academic Innovation & Mentoring – Senate Bill 5303: In 2014 the Legislature defined expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) as school-based programs or community-based programs provided in partnership with schools, that provide extended learning and enrichment for students beyond the traditional school day. **SB 5303** would have created an academic innovation and mentoring (AIM) office

at the Department of Commerce to administer AIM extended learning programs provided by nonprofit organizations for youth who are six to eighteen years of age. AIM would require activity areas that include science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, homework support and high-yield learning opportunities, and career exploration. Sixty percent or more of the participants must qualify for free and reduced-priced lunch.

Student Mental Health and Well-Being – Senate Bill 5688: Research has shown that the development of social emotional skills has a significant impact on student achievement, outcomes, and success in life. Social emotional learning teaches children how to interact, communicate, and problem solve. **SB 5688** would have required OSPI to convene a workgroup to recommend comprehensive social emotional learning benchmarks for kindergarten through high school. The benchmarks would include self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making at each grade level.

Preventing Harassment and Bullying – Senate Bill 5526: Since 2010 school districts have been required to adopt policies and procedures prohibiting the harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. Such policies are to be provided to parents, students, volunteers, and school employees. **SB 5526** would have extended the mandate to require each school district to adopt a transgender student policy created by the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA).

School-Community Learning Assistance – Senate Bill 5690: The State's Learning Assistance Program (LAP) provides support for students who are below grade level in reading, writing, and math and supports efforts to reduce disruptive behaviors in classrooms. Five percent of LAP funding is available for partnerships with community-based organizations to deliver academic and nonacademic supports to students who are at risk of not being successful in school. **SB 5690** would have removed the need for OSPI to approve organizational partners and added the requirement for school districts to develop annual school-community LAP actions plans.

EARLY LEARNING

BILLS THAT PASSED

Early Start Act – House Bill 1491: The short and long-term benefits of high quality early learning and care programs are well documented by researchers. These programs are having a positive impact on achievement in schools. **HB 1491** will make comprehensive changes to Early Achievers (EA), Washington State's quality rating and improvement system for early care and education programs, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), preschool for eligible three to four-year-old children and the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program, the State's subsidized childcare for qualified families. WCCC worked diligently on this bill, and suggested amendments, many of which were adopted. Key provisions include:

- ECEAP, licensed child care centers and homes serving non-school age children and receiving State payments are required to participate in the Early Achievers program by the established deadline. Other programs may volunteer for EA.
- School age providers are exempt from the EA requirement, but a plan will be developed for a school age quality improvement system. DEL and OSPI are responsible for developing a plan and implementing a pilot program.
- DEL is required to streamline and eliminate duplication between EA standards and childcare rules.
- DEL is required to create a professional development pathway and provide professional development and coaching for EA participants.

- DEL must accept national accreditation standards that meet EA requirements and have been approved by DEL.
- DEL is required to implement a single set of licensing standards, based on EA standards, for childcare and ECEAP.
- Private schools that operate early learning programs and do not receive State subsidy payments are only subject to licensing requirements necessary to assure the health and safety of all students in the State and to assure a sufficient early childhood education to meet the usual requirements needed for transition into elementary school. *The State cannot restrict or dictate any specific educational programs operated by private schools not accepting State subsidy payments.*
- Licensing requirements relating to the physical facility, including playgrounds, do not apply to before- and after-school programs that serve only school-age children and operate in the same facilities used by public or private schools. Effective July 1, 2016.
- DEL is required to implement protocols that reduce barriers for low-income providers and programs to maximize participation in EA.
- The WCCC program shall be focused on supporting school readiness. The subsidy authorization shall be effective for twelve months, beginning July 1, 2016.
- Eligibility requirements for ECEAP and other providers to receive State subsidies have been established.
- *The application requirement that public or private organizations be nonsectarian in order to apply for ECEAP State funding is removed.*
- The Office of Financial Management (OFM) Education Research and Data Center will collect identified information on early learning programs, including daily attendance, quality level ratings and program hours.
- DEL may employ a combination of vouchers and contracted slots for the WCCC program. Eligibility requirements are defined.
- Goals for integration with local government programs are identified.
- The Early Learning Advisory Council will convene an Early Achievers Review Committee.
- An Early Start account is created in the State treasury.
- An annual progress report is required from DEL every December 15th.
- A legislative joint select committee on the Early Achievers program is established.

Fatality Reviews in Early Learning/Child Care - House Bill 1126: In current law, child fatality reviews are convened to investigate fatal and near fatal accidents of children in the child welfare system when the cause is suspected to involve child abuse or neglect of a minor. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Office of the Family and Children Ombuds (OFCO) collaborate on the reviews. The team evaluates the case and reports to the Legislature with recommendations on improvements to promote the health and safety of children in the child welfare system. **HB 1126** creates a similar process in the Department of Early Learning (DEL), requiring a review to evaluate fatalities and near fatalities in early learning and licensed childcare programs in homes and centers. The WSCC supported this bill to ensure review recommendations focused on reasonable requirements schools and programs can use for safe and healthy environments for children.

Child Care/Early Learning Information Exemptions – House Bill 1554: Current law exempts DEL records with the personal information of children enrolled in licensed childcare from disclosure as allowed under the Public Records Act (PRA). This exemption also applies to children enrolled in public or nonprofit youth programs, such as early learning or child care services, parks and recreation programs, youth development programs, and after- school programs. **HB 1554** would extend this exemption to the records with personal information of family members or guardians of children if it results in the disclosure of the child's personal information. The exemption applies if the family member or guardian has the same last name of the child or if they reside at the same address as the child.

BILLS THAT FAILED

Native Early Childcare and Education – Senate Bill 5160: **SB 5160** would have created an office of native early childcare and education within DEL to increase support, access, and advocacy for American Indian and Alaska Native students. DEL would assist families in meeting the needs of native children, facilitating the development and implementation of curricula and instructional materials in native languages with native language practitioners and tribal elders, and assist in funding and establishing a State public-private partnership account.

Increasing Efficiency in Child Care Reporting – Senate Bill 5098: In the State's Working Connections Child Care program, subsidies are provided to programs that serve families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The parent must be employed or meet requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or WorkFirst programs. **SB 5098** would have changed the subsidy authorization and reporting requirements. Authorization for subsidies would have been effective for twelve months, eliminating the need for reauthorization if circumstances change sooner. The requirement to report changes in childcare hours needed, cost sharing, or eligibility to DSHS within 10 days would have also been eliminated. The WSCC supported this legislation in recognition of the benefits to children and family when childcare is stable. It would have also decreased the burden of administering subsidies for Catholic Charities and Catholic schools. *Though the bill was not adopted, the policy in the underlying bill was included in the Early Start Act, HB 1491 and funding was provided in the operating budget to implement the twelve month eligibility in fiscal year 2017.*

Expanding Dual Language and Bilingual Instruction – House Bill 1783: A dual language model provides instruction to students in two languages and is designed to make these students proficient and literate in both. Currently, programs run through elementary school or elementary through middle and high school. **HB 1783** would have created a grant program to expand dual language instruction in grades K-12 and early learning, prioritizing programs with dual language programs for English language learners and migrant students. A dual language scholarship program for teachers would be created to build capacity in both K-12 and early learning programs. OSPI would administer the programs and DEL would have been required to develop a plan to increase bilingual education among providers enrolled in the early achievers quality rating and improvement system.