

Catholic School Legislative Bulletin – 2016, No. 2
February 1, 2016

Friday, Feb. 5, is the first major deadline of the 2016 legislative session. If a bill has not yet been voted out of its original committee, that bill is considered “dead”, yet believing in resurrection. In this issue of the biweekly Legislative Bulletin, you will find summaries of additional bills WSCC is tracking in 2016. There is also a status update of the bills mentioned in the last Bulletin.

Department of Early Learning Changes: The Department of Early Learning (DEL) oversees child care licensing for school-age child care, which includes before and after school programs.

- A) School-Age Child Care Definition-** School-age child care currently serves children beginning at age 5 until they reach their twelfth birthday. **HB 2389** modifies this definition of "school-age child" to include children through 12 years of age for the purposes of school-age child care. On Jan. 22, the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee passed **HB 2389** and the bill is now in the House Rules Committee.
- B) Early Learning Exemption-** [HB 2671](#) would modify the law that exempts school-age programs that operate in schools and meet specified requirements from licensing by the Department of Early Learning (DEL). Current law exempts school-age programs from DEL licensing if they: (1) are operated by schools...; (2) are engaged primarily in education; (3) operate on a definite school year schedule; (4) follow a stated academic curriculum, (5) accept only school-age children, and (6) do not accept custody of children. [HB 2671](#) would delete requirement (6), that these programs cannot accept custody of children. The House Early Learning & Human Services Committee voted **HB 2671** out of committee on Jan. 29.

Standards for Paraeducators

[SB 6408](#) would specify the minimum employment standards for a paraeducator who works in the special education program, the basic education program, the learning assistance program, the federal disadvantaged program, and English language learner programs. The bill would require the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to design and implement a training program for teachers and principals as it relates to their role working with paraeducators. On Jan. 28, the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee heard **SB 6408**.

Teacher & Substitute Shortage

Requested by Superintendent of Public Instruction, [HB 2573](#) and [SB 6332](#) address the shortage of teachers and substitutes. In a survey of public school principals last fall, more than 90 percent responded that they were “in crisis” or “struggling” to find qualified teachers and substitutes. This may be even more true for private schools. The current shortage is expected

to continue into the future. These identical bills (**HB 2573/SB 6332**) would require for public schools:

- Increase in the salary for beginning teachers;
- Development of a recruitment campaign for out-of-state teachers and prospective new teachers in Washington;
- Relaxation of requirements for hiring retired teachers or experienced out-of-state teachers; and
- Expansion of the Conditional Scholarship Program.

On Jan. 26, the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee heard **SB 6332**. The House Education Committee heard **HB 2573** on Jan. 25.

High School Student Assessments

[**HB 2214**](#) would increase academic rigor and streamline assessment requirements for high school students. The bill would authorize the Superintendent of Public Instruction to revise a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards. **HB 2214** would change the high school graduation assessment requirements in science, ELA, and mathematics. On Jan. 25, **HB 2214** passed the House by a vote of 87-10. The bill now moves to the Senate where it has been assigned to the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee.

Curriculum for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse for Grades K-12

[**HB 2183**](#) would established Erin's Law Task Force for the purpose of creating and implementing a prevention of sexual abuse curriculum for students in grades K-12. The curriculum would need to be evidenced based, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and include a professional training component for educators. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, school districts would be required to implement a prevention of sexual abuse curriculum for students in grades K-12. School districts would need to provide the parents or guardians of each student with written notice of the opportunity to opt out of the curriculum. The House Education Committee will hear **HB 2183** on Feb. 1 and has scheduled a vote for Feb. 4.

Inclusion of Sexual Abuse in Plans Addressing Students' Emotional or Behavioral Distress

[**HB 2597**](#) would require school districts to include sexual abuse as a topic in plans addressing students' emotional or behavioral distress. The bill would modify provisions governing school district plans for recognizing and responding to emotional or behavioral distress in students. In addition to recognizing, screening, and responding to emotional or behavioral distress in students for possible substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide, the plan must also include provisions for indicators of possible sexual abuse. The House Education Committee will hear **HB 2597** on Feb. 1 and has scheduled a vote for Feb. 4.

Update on Bills Covered in the Previous Bulletin

Certification for Paraeducators

[**HB 1293**](#) would establish new criteria and certification requirements for paraeducators.

Minimum Employment Standards would include:

- be at least age 18, hold a high school diploma or equivalent, and have received a passing grade on the Education Testing Service's Paraeducator Assessment;
- hold an associate of arts degree; or
- have earned a 72 quarter credits or 48 semester credits at an institution of higher education.

HB 1293 was heard by the House Education Committee, but has not been scheduled for a vote.

Breakfast After the Bell

[**HB 1295**](#) would require each high-needs school to offer breakfast after the bell to qualified students, and provide adequate time for students to eat. By a vote of 69- 28, the House passed **HB 1295** on Jan. 27 and the bill has been referred to Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee.

Graduation Requirements

[**HB 1855**](#) would require school districts to help facilitate high school graduation for homeless children, at-risk youth, and children in need of services in the same manner as for children who are dependent according to specific court-determined findings. On Jan. 27, **HB 1855** passed the House unanimously and the bill has been referred to the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee.

Charter Schools

[**SB 6194**](#) would authorize charter schools and address the Washington Supreme Court's concerns by designating charter schools as schools which are not common schools. On Jan. 20, **SB 6194** passed the Senate by a 27-20 margin. The bill has been assigned to the House Education Committee.

Another charter schools bill, [**SB 6163**](#), would authorize school districts to create district charter schools within the district. The bill was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Jan. 12, but no vote has been scheduled.

Homeless Students

On Jan. 28, the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee passed [**SB 6298**](#) that would create a competitive grant process to evaluate and award state-funded three-year grants to school districts to increase identification of homeless students and to assess the capacity of the districts to provide support. On Jan. 29, the bill was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

The Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC) is the public policy voice of the Catholic Bishops of Washington State.