

**Catholic School Legislative Bulletin – 2016, No. 3**  
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*Less than a month remains of the 2016 legislative session which is scheduled to end on Mar. 10. This past week, the focus of action in Olympia has shifted from committee hearing rooms to the floor of each chamber. “The floor” is the main gathering space of the House or the Senate where all the members of a chamber gather to debate and vote on legislation. After a bill is voted out of a policy or fiscal committee, it goes to the rules committee. This committee controls which bills are placed on the “floor calendar.” Only bills on the floor calendar will be debated and voted upon by the full membership of a chamber.*

*A major hurdle for each surviving piece of legislation is to pass its house of origin by Feb. 17. Once a bill passes its house of origin, it will be assigned to a committee in the opposite chamber. For an overview of the legislative process, visit the [Legislature’s website](#). Several new bills have been added to this Legislative Bulletin. You will also find an update of bills mentioned in previous bulletins.*

**Update on Bills Still Being Considered**

**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](#), which WSCC supports, would modify this definition of "school-age child" to include children through 12 years of age for the purposes of school-age child care. The House Early Learning & Human Services Committee passed **HB 2389** last month and the bill remains in the House Rules Committee.
- B) Early Learning Exemption-** [SB 6371](#) 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), if they do not accept subsidies for children. **SB 6371** would delete the requirement that school-age programs cannot accept custody of children. The bill was heard and passed by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education. On Feb. 10, the Senate unanimously passed **SB 6371**. The bill is scheduled to be heard on Feb. 19 by the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee. This same committee voted the identical house bill, [HB 2671](#), out of committee on Jan. 29 and it is on the House floor calendar. If both bills pass their chamber of origin, legislators will decide which bill will continue in the process, and hopefully to the Governor’s desk. **SB 6371/HB 2671** are priority bills for WSCC.

### **Standards for Paraeducators**

[SB 6408](#) would specify the minimum employment standards for paraeducators who work in special education programs, basic education programs, learning assistance programs, federal disadvantaged programs, 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 Feb. 2, the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee voted **SB 6408** out of committee. The bill was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee which heard it on Feb. 4. This committee voted it out of committee on Feb. 9. The bill passed the Senate by a 43-5 margin on Feb. 15. The bill now goes to the House.

### **Teacher & Substitute Shortage**

Requested by Superintendent of Public Instruction, [HB 2573](#) would 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 truer for private schools. The current shortage is expected to continue into the future. On Feb. 4, the House Education Committee amended **HB 2573** and voted it out of committee. The bill was next heard by the House Appropriations Committee on Feb. 8 and voted out of committee on Feb. 9. The bill is now on the House floor calendar. As amended, **HB 2573** would include requirements for public schools to:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide initiative to increase the number of qualified individuals who apply for teaching positions in Washington.
- Create a grant program to fund recruitment specialists in teacher preparation programs.
- Provide that certain retired teachers may work as substitute teachers, mentors, or advisers to student teachers without a suspension of their pension benefits.
- Develop mentor training program goals for teacher preparation program curricula.

The Senate version of the bill, [SB 6332](#), died in committee.

### **Basic Education Obligations**

[HB 2366](#) would create the Education Funding Task Force (EFTF) to continue the work of the Governor's informal work group and make recommendations to the Legislature on implementing the program of basic education. The recommendations would need to be submitted by January 9, 2017. The recommendations would need to include (among other requirements):

- whether additional state legislation is needed to help school districts to support state funded all-day kindergarten and class size reduction in kindergarten through third grade;
- improving or expanding existing educator recruitment and retention programs;
- local M&O levies and local effort assistance; and
- sources of state revenue to support the state's statutory program of basic education.

**HB 2366** passed the House 64-34 last month. The bill will be heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Feb. 18.

### **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. The House Education Committee heard **HB 2597** on Feb. 1 and voted it out of committee on Feb. 4. The House passed the bill 97-0 on Feb. 10. It has been referred to the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee.

### **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** last month and the bill is in the 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 it was 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. Last month, **SB 6194** passed the Senate, 27-20. The bill will be heard by the House Education Committee on Feb. 19.

### **New Bills of Interest**

#### **Racially Offensive School Names**

[\*\*HB 2306\*\*](#) would prohibit a public school from using the term "redskins" for a school club, organization, or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname. The bill was heard by the House Education Committee on Feb. 11. However, since this bill was heard after the Feb. 5 cutoff, **HB 2306** may be procedurally "dead" for the 2016 session.

#### **Toll Exemption for School Buses**

[\*\*SB 6643\*\*](#) would require the Transportation Commission to provide an exemption from all tolled facilities for school buses, regardless of whether the school bus is traveling on a regularly scheduled route. The bill would also mandate that the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) develop a process for school buses to use tolled facilities without requiring the use of transponders and a "Good to Go!" account. The bill was heard by the Senate Transportation Committee on Feb. 8. However, since this bill was heard after the Feb. 5 cutoff, **SB 6643** may be procedurally "dead" for the 2016 session.

### **Bills Effectively "Dead"**

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

The bill was heard by the House Education Committee, but no vote was taken and it is considered “dead.”

[\*\*HB 2183\*\*](#) would have 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 House Education Committee heard **HB 2183** on Feb. 1 and voted it out of committee Feb. 4. The bill was referred to the House Appropriations Committee. Because this committee did not pass it before the Feb. 9 fiscal committee cutoff, the bill is considered “dead.”

[\*\*SB 6163\*\*](#) concerns charter schools and would have authorized 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 since no vote was taken, the bill is effectively “dead.”

[\*\*SB 6298\*\*](#) passed the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee last month. **SB 6298** would have created 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. However, because the Senate Ways & Means Committee did not pass the bill prior to the Feb. 9 cutoff, it is effectively “dead.”

### **Bills that Failed**

In late 2015, the Washington Human Rights Commission adopted a rule that allows individuals the use of gender-segregated facilities “consistent with their gender expression.” [\*\*SB 6443\*\*](#) would require the Commission to repeal its recent rule on gender-segregated facilities. Last month, the Senate Commerce & Labor Committee heard and passed **SB 6443** out of committee. On Feb. 10, the bill failed in a close vote by the full Senate, 24-25.

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