

Catholic School Legislative Bulletin – 2016, No. 4
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There is a little more than a week remaining before the scheduled adjournment of the 2016 legislative session on March 10. Some bills that passed the Feb. 26 policy committee cutoff will also need to pass a fiscal committee by the Feb. 29 cutoff. The next step is the Rules Committee in each chamber. If bills pass the Rules Committee, they are placed on the floor calendar of that chamber, and are ready to be voted upon. This coming Friday, March 4, is the deadline for all bills to pass the opposite chamber. For example, if a bill originated in the House, it will need to pass the Senate before it adjourns for the day on March 4.

In addition to the bills still being considered by each chamber, key legislators will be busy with negotiating the details for the supplemental budgets (operations, capital, and transportation).

The final week will be devoted to resolving any differences in bills that passed both the House and the Senate. This includes the budget bills. The differences need to be resolved and accepted by both chambers before they are sent to the Governor.

Update on Bills Still Being Considered

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. On Feb. 10, the Senate unanimously passed **SB 6371**. The bill was heard on Feb. 19 by the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee. The bill was voted out of committee on Feb. 23 and is in the House Rules Committee. **SB 6371** is priority bill for WSCC.

180-Day School Year Waiver

[HB 2476](#) concerns a pilot program authorizing the State Board of Education (SBE) to grant waivers from the minimum 180-day school year requirement to enable small school districts to operate on a flexible school calendar. The bill removes SBE's authorization to grant such waivers, ending the pilot program. The bill passed House unanimously on Feb. 17. The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee heard the bill on Feb. 23 and voted it out of committee on Feb. 25. It is now in the Senate Rules Committee.

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. **SB 6408** passed

the Senate by a 43-5 margin on Feb. 15. The bill was heard by the House Education Committee on Feb. 22 which voted it out of committee on Feb. 25. The House Appropriations Committee heard the bill on Feb. 27 and has scheduled a vote for Feb. 29.

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. 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.

On Feb. 17, **HB 2573** passed the House by a 92-6 margin. The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee heard **HB 2573** on Feb. 23 and voted it out of committee two days later. The bill was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee which plans to hear it on Feb. 29.

Basic Education Obligations

[SB 6195](#) 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.

SB 6195, passed the Senate by a vote of 26-23 on Feb. 16. Two days later, the House passed the bill by a 66-31 margin. The bill was delivered to the Governor on Feb. 24.

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 was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Feb. 22. The bill was voted out of committee on Feb. 25 and is now before the entire Senate awaiting 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** last month. On Feb. 23, the bill was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee which voted it out of committee two days later. The bill was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee which plans to hear it on Feb. 29.

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 was heard by the House Education Committee on Feb. 19. The bill passed the Senate last month, and was heard by the House Education Committee on Feb. 19, but was not voted upon. Even though the bill did not get out of committee before the cutoff, it is referenced in the budget and therefore still "alive".

Bills Effectively "Dead"

Earlier Legislative Bulletins reported on bills that did not survive previous cutoffs.

[HB 1855](#) would have required 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. The bill was not heard before the Feb. 26 cutoff.

[HB 2306](#) would have prohibited 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 but no further action was taken.

School-age child care currently serves children beginning at age 5 until they reach their twelfth birthday. [HB 2389](#) would have modified the 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 but the bill died in the House Rules Committee.

As first introduced, [SB 6429](#) would have required all public schools start one hour later is removed. But this requirement was stripped from the bill and a provision was added that would have studied student achievement outcomes and other related outcomes when schools have later school day start times. The bill died on the Senate floor calendar.

[SB 6643](#) would have required 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 was heard by the Senate Transportation Committee on Feb. 8 but no further action was taken.

Bill 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.