

Catholic School Legislative Bulletin – 2016, No. 5

March 14, 2016

Regular Session of 2016 Legislature Ends

The regular session of the 2016 Legislature ended at 9:14 pm on Mar. 10 without the passage of a supplemental operating budget. At a 10:30 pm press conference, the Governor called a special session that began immediately. The Governor also announced he was vetoing 27 of the 37 bills passed during the regular session that were on his desk. None of the bills WSCC has been following were vetoed.

During the special session, all bills introduced during the 2015-2016 legislative session remain technically alive, though most of them will never be acted upon. Bills primarily related to the budget will be considered. Much of the legislative work will focus on reaching an agreement on the supplemental operating budget. Legislators will consider whether to override the Governor's veto of the 27 bills. A two-thirds majority of each chamber is required to override a veto. Even though the special session is called for 30 days by law, the legislators will adjourn as soon as their work is completed.

Early Learning Exemption- [SB 6371](#) modifies 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** deletes the requirement that school-age programs cannot accept custody of children. The Senate unanimously passed **SB 6371**. The House passed the bill by a 92-5 margin. **SB 6371** was a priority bill for WSCC. The bill is awaiting the Governor's signature.

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 unanimously passed both the House and the Senate. **HB 2476** has been delivered to the Governor.

Basic Education Obligations

[SB 6195](#) creates 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 must be submitted by January 9, 2017. The recommendations need to determine (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;
- how to improve or expand existing educator recruitment and retention programs;
- district dependency on local levies for implementation of the state's program of basic education
- 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. The House passed the bill by a 66-31 margin. It was signed by the Governor.

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

[**HB 2597**](#) requires school districts to include sexual abuse as a topic in plans addressing students' emotional or behavioral distress. The bill modifies provisions governing school district plans for recognizing and responding to emotional or behavioral distress in students. The House passed the bill 97-0. The Senate unanimously passed the bill and it has been delivered to the Governor.

Charter Schools

[**SB 6194**](#) addresses the Washington Supreme Court's concerns about charter schools by designating them as schools which are not common schools. The bill passed the Senate, but stalled in the House Education Committee. The bill was debated at length on the floor of the House, during which about two dozen amendments were considered. The House passed the amended bill by a vote of 58-39. The Senate concurred with the latest version of the bill and passed it by a 26-23 margin. The bill has been delivered to the Governor.

Bill related to the Supplemental Budget

Breakfast After the Bell

[**HB 1295**](#) would require each high-needs school to offer breakfast after the bell to qualified students. **HB 1295** passed the House by a 69-28 margin. The bill was heard by the Senate Ways & Means Committee, but it did not come up for a vote. However, the bill is referenced in the House supplemental budget, and therefore the bill is technically still "alive."

Bills Effectively "Dead"

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

[**HB 2573**](#) would have addressed the shortage of teachers and substitutes by offering various incentives to recruit teachers and attract substitutes. **HB 2573** passed the House by a 92-6 margin. The bill was heard in the Senate, but it did not pass.

[**SB 6408**](#) would have specified 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. **SB 6408** passed the Senate by a 43-5 margin. The bill was heard in the House, but it did not pass.

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