

Catholic School Legislative Bulletin – 2017, No. 2

February 6, 2017

Update

Most of the legislative activity continues to be in the hearing rooms, but the Feb. 17 deadline for bills to pass out of the policy committees is beginning to be felt. If bills are not voted out of their assigned policy committees in the next two weeks, they will be considered dead for the 2017 regular session. One other development worth noting is the release of the Republican plan for funding basic education to comply with the McCleary decision. The Senate passed the Republican proposal (SB 5607) by a 25-24 margin on Feb. 1.

Actions Scheduled during the Fifth Week of the 2017 Legislative Session:

School Bus Safety - [HB 1246](#): The bill would require every school bus manufactured or assembled after September 1, 2018, be equipped with a shoulder harness-type safety belt assembly for each passenger position. In addition, HB 1246 would require that, beginning September 1, 2018, every school bus be equipped with an automated school bus safety camera for detecting vehicle infractions involving the overtaking or unlawful meeting of a school bus that has stopped on the roadway to load or unload school children. It would also establish new provisions for OSPI's school bus replacement incentive program. The House Education Committee heard HB 1246 on Jan. 30 and is scheduled to vote on the bill Feb. 9.

School Nutrition Programs - [HB 1508](#): The House Education Committee has scheduled a vote on HB 1508 for Feb. 9. The bill would require high-needs schools, beginning in the 2018-19 school year, to offer **breakfast after the bell** to each qualifying student and provide adequate time for students to eat. Each high-needs school may determine the breakfast after the bell service model that best suits its students. All public schools are encouraged to offer breakfast after the bell even if not required to do so. The bill would also direct districts with school lunch programs to begin eliminating lunch copays for qualifying students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 and to complete the copay phase out in the 2020-21 school year. HB 1508 would authorize the OSPI and school districts to coordinate with the state's Department of Agriculture to promote new and existing farm-to-school programs and small direct marketing farm programs in districts.

Credit Requirements for High School Graduation - [HB 1509](#): This bill would eliminate, for the graduating classes of 2019 onward, the twenty-four credit graduation requirement and establishes a twenty-one credit requirement for graduation with delineated credit requirements by course type. The House Education Committee will hold a hearing on HB 1509 on Feb. 6, at 1:30 pm, in House Hearing Rm A, John L. O'Brien Building.

Basic Education Funding - [HB 1843](#): This bill would address equitable and responsible investments in the state's basic education program and reductions to local effort contributions to fulfill the state's paramount duty for all children. The bill would require OSPI to convene a technical working group to provide recommendations for revising school district accounting practices. The House Appropriations Committee will hear the bill on Feb. 6 and plans to vote on it on Feb. 9.

Improving Quality Early Learning Opportunities - [SB 5107](#): This bill would encourage school districts and nonprofit organizations, in addition to local governments, to collaborate with the Department of Early Learning (DEL) when establishing and strengthening early learning programs. In addition, it would direct DEL to create a local pathway to high quality early learning to help local governments, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and early learning providers use additional local or private funds, or both, to expand access, increase quality, and extend hours for existing early care and education programs. SB 5107 would require the local pathway to include a needs assessment, funding tool, training, and technical assistance.

Safety Belts on School Buses – [SB 5503](#): The bill would require school buses that are purchased after the effective date of this act to provide safety belts for use by each person riding the bus. SB 5503 would also mandate the safety belts to be of a design to provide a lap belt for pelvic restraint and a shoulder belt to restrain upper torso movement. The Senate Transportation Committee will hold a hearing on Feb. 7, at 3:30 pm, in Senate Hearing Rm 1, J.A. Cherberg Building. A similar bill, [SB 5054](#), was heard by the same committee on Jan. 24.

Republican Education-Funding Proposal - [SB 5607](#): The 2012 Washington State Supreme Court *McCleary* decision has driven the legislative budget debate for five years now and the final deadline has arrived. *McCleary* requires the state to fully fund K-12 basic education by 2018 without reliance on local levy dollars. On Jan. 31, the Senate Ways & Means Committee held a public hearing on the Republican education-funding proposal. SB 5607 passed out of Ways & Means on Feb. 1, was sent to the Senate Rules Committee and pulled to the floor where it passed on a party-line vote (25-24). The bill is scheduled to be heard by the House Appropriations on Feb. 6.

Updates on Previously Heard Bills

Paraeducators – The House Education Committee has scheduled a vote on [HB 1115](#) for Feb. 9. The bill would provide 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. HB 1115 would also require school districts to begin implementing the paraeducator certification for paraeducators working in the programs. Other provisions in the proposed bill would cover standards for training paraeducators.

NO ACTION YET Elimination of Science Graduation Requirement – On Thursday, Jan. 26, the House Education Committee has scheduled a vote on [HB 1012](#) that proposes to eliminate the

use of the high school science assessment as a graduation prerequisite. If enacted, HB 1012 would discontinue the requirement that students meet standard on the statewide high school science assessment in order to earn the Certificate of Academic Achievement that is required for graduation from a public high school.



Catholic Advocacy Day – March 16

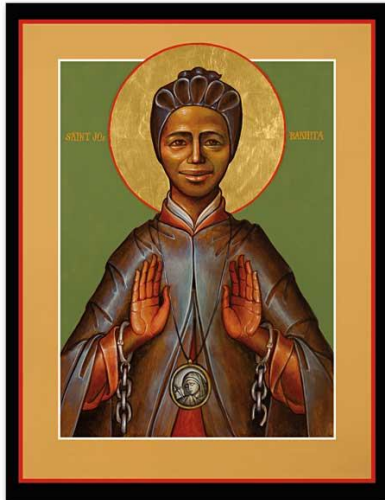
Please sign up for the 2017 Catholic Advocacy Day, Thursday, March 16. This year's theme, "Be a Neighbor and Advocate for All," is inspired by the new pastoral letter by the Bishops of Washington State, *Who Is My Neighbor?*. The day will begin at St. Michael parish with a briefing on the main legislative issues followed by Mass and district strategizing before meetings with legislators on the Capitol Campus. To register, visit <http://ipic.org>. You will also be able to download flyers in English and Spanish to help you recruit others from your school to join you in Olympia.



Help Promote Cornerstone Catholic Conference

As you probably know, the next Cornerstone Catholic Conference will be held this fall, October 20-21, at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center. Please help us in spreading the

word and encourage your family, friends and fellow educators to attend. You can download the save-the-date flyer from the [WSCC website](#).



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Pray and Act on Feb. 8 to End Human Trafficking

Feb. 8 has been designated by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General as an annual day of prayer and awareness against human trafficking. Feb. 8 is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. With the help of Canossian nuns, she realized that she was created in the image of God and possessed human dignity, refused to be enslaved, and became a Canossian sister who dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. The anti-trafficking toolkit contains [materials to assist you on Feb. 8](#).

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