

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care

FROM: Daniel Henderson, Project Manager

DATE: January 31, 2024

RE: AB 1016 - Requiring public and private schools to offer a minimum amount of physical activity each week.

Thank you for your consideration. The Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS) opposes AB-1016.

As you may know, WCRIS represents over 600 private schools and over 100,000 students in K-12 schools across the state. Nationwide, Wisconsin is in the top 10 of states for private school enrollment. Wisconsin's private schools enroll about ten percent of our state's K4-12th grade population.

About two-thirds of those schools utilize the choice programs to carry out their mission of expanding access to the education they provide.

Physical activity is an important part of a child's health. All our schools offer time for physical activity during the normal course of the day. However, there are times during the week when schools must reduce the time for physical activity and focus on the all-important spiritual side of a child's development.

Because schools are required to meet a certain number of hours of instruction according to state law, schools must use non-instructional time to incorporate chapel, religious exercises, and spiritual development. This may be accomplished by reducing recess time or athletics.

The passing of AB-1016 would only create more restraints on a school leader's ability to balance a child's physical and spiritual well-being.

While some may argue that AB-1016 is just a minor bill for our schools to follow, WCRIS is here to remind you that it is another looming regulation.

Currently, our choice schools are in the process of revamping their reading curriculum because of the Right to Read Act. Many high schools are awaiting crime reporting rules because of 2023 Act 12.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Association of Christian
Schools International

Christian Schools
International

Diocese of Green Bay

Diocese of LaCrosse

Diocese of Madison

Diocese of Superior

Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
North Wisconsin District

Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
South Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Association
of Independent Schools

Wisconsin Conference
of Seventh Day Adventists

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
Northern Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
Western Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
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Furthermore, other well-intentioned current proposals will lead to more government regulation, bureaucracy and expense. Such as:

- AB 24 - Requiring the posting of child abuse and neglect hotline;
- AB 77 - Automatic choice application;
- AB 163 - Requiring anti-choking devices in school;
- AB 223 - Maintaining and supply of opioid antagonists in schools;
- AB 346 - Requiring a cold-water immersion tub at a youth athletic activity hosted by a private school;
- AB 347 - Requiring an automated external defibrillator at youth athletic activities operated by a private school;
- AB 898 - Required instruction in civics in elementary and high school grades;
- AB 937 - Incorporating cursive writing into state standards;
- AB 377 - Participating in sports according to sex; and,
- LRB-5484/ LRB-5637: relating to prohibiting grade promotion on the basis of absences from school.

Our schools are responsive to their community and parents. They want school safety for their children. Their wisdom has already instituted many measures that will help improve the education of their students. If any of the above measures are necessary, they will occur as a result of the free choices of the people in charge.

It is no secret that choice schools have received a sizable voucher increase this session. However much of the increase has been needed for costs to comply with the new reading and crime reporting requirements, rather than for closing the existing funding gap. This leaves our schools little additional funding to address any proposed new regulations.

We ask for the removal of private schools from the physical activity requirements. We urge you to join us in opposing *any* regulation of choice schools as a matter of principle, and support for the free market system, which is the very thing that has led to their exemplary quality and high parent satisfaction.

Allow our schools to strengthen the physical and spiritual well-being of a child according to their practices and policies.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office if we can be of assistance.