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Seattle Seahawks' Malcolm Smith sits on the field after the NFL Super Bowl XLVIII football game against the Denver Broncos Sunday, Feb. 2, 2014, in East Rutherford, N.J. The Seahawks won 43-8 and Smith was named MVP.

Lethal Injection Watchers

New rules allow witnesses to view death sentences

By Rachel La Corte
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington state will allow witnesses to executions to see the entire process, including the insertion of intravenous catheters during a lethal injection, state officials told The Associated Press.

The new witness protocol, currently a draft that is in its final stages of approval, includes the use of television monitors to show the inmate entering the death chamber and being strapped down, as well as the insertion of the IVs, which had both previously been shielded from public view. The new technology has already been installed, and officials say the protocol will be finalized within the next week.

Through public disclosure requests, the AP had sought information about any potential changes to execution protocols. State corrections officials spoke with the AP about the new procedures this week. The change is in response to a 2012 federal appeals court ruling that said all parts of an execution must be fully open to public witnesses. That ruling was sparked by a case brought by the AP and other news organizations who challenged Idaho's policy to shield the insertion of IV catheters from public view, in spite of a 2002 ruling from the same court that said every aspect of an execution should be open to witnesses.

"We have been working on this for many, many months," Dan Pacholke, assistant secretary of the prisons division at the state Department of Corrections, said Wednesday.

Pacholke said they have been researching the technology needed to make the change and followed the process currently used by Arizona, which provides an overhead view via TV monitor of the IV insertion during an execution.

"It really does provide greater viewing capacity to the witnesses," he said. "It's going to take an overhead view to provide

See CHARTERS page 3

See EXECUTION on page 3

Washington's First Charter Schools

Eight new schools qualify but hurdles remain -- including lawsuit

By Donna Gordon
Blankinship
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) Some of the work is finished: eight groups that want to open the first charter schools in Washington state have completed their applications and won approval.

But there's much left to be done: most still need a school building, they're fundraising, hiring teachers and other staff and they face a lawsuit that questions their right to exist.

State voters in 2012 approved a charter-school measure that allows up to 40 independent public schools to open over five years. The earliest the first school was expected to open was fall 2014, but only one of the approved schools is aiming for that date.

Seven of the approved schools are in Western Washington and one is in Spokane. Three will be run by out-of-state charter management organizations and one is being converted from a private school.

The charter law is being challenged in a lawsuit making its way through state courts, but proponents don't think the lower court ruling will affect implementation of the schools.

Here are brief descriptions of the eight schools:

Excel Public Charter School

This Kent school would start as a middle school and expand to include more than 500 kids in grades six through 12 after five years.

This is a science, engineering and math focused school with additional emphasis on literacy and college readiness. The school's founders hope to have a diverse student population, with expectations most of the students will come from poor families. They note that fewer than half of the students at a nearby middle school are meeting state academic standards in reading or math.

The school would focus on basic subjects, for example giv-

INDEX

News	2,3,6
Calendar	2
Opinion	4
A&E	5
Bids/Classifieds	7

Senate OKs Immigrant Financial Aid Bill

Washington's own 'Dream Act' finds success in divided legislature

By Rachel La Corte
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — The Washington state Senate on Friday approved a measure to expand college financial aid to include students who were brought to the state illegally as children.

Senate Bill 6523 passed on a 35-10 bipartisan vote and now heads to the House for

consideration. The measure requires students to have received a high school diploma or equivalent in Washington state and to have lived in the state for at least three years beforehand.

"The key to a good future is a good education," said Sen. Barbara Bailey, a Republican from Oak Harbor who is chairwoman of the Senate Higher Education Committee. "We want all who reside in Washington

state to have a good education and a good future."

Senate Minority Leader Sharon Nelson, D-Maury Island, said that the vote was a day that "children in the state have waited for."

"No one should have the doors closed to their dream university because they cannot

See IMMIGRANTS on page 3