

# Payne, Greene to lead Youth Leg

By **JOANNA BELLAN**  
*The Bear Facts*

Two St. Joseph Catholic School students – juniors Benjamin Payne and Noah Greene – will lead Youth Legislature next year as governor and lieutenant governor.



**BEN  
PAYNE**

Payne was unopposed in his race for governor, while Greene defeated another candidate for the No. 2 post. They will preside over the Junior youth Assembly next spring and the Youth Legislature next fall.



**NOAH  
GREENE**

“This is a great opportunity to showcase St. Joe’s strong leadership,” Greene said. “With Ben as governor and me as lieutenant govertnor, Youth Legislature will never be the same. We bring a vibrancy to the offices this program has rarely seen.”

St. Joe Principal Keith Barnes agreed.

“This is a great and notable achievement for two outstanding students,” Mr. Barnes said. “To win the top two elected positions – one unopposed – says a lot about Ben’s and Noah’s leadership skills and their ability to get things done. It also says a lot about the quality of students we have here at St. Joe.”

The 2014 session of the Youth Legislature took place last month in downtown Jackson. The three-day conference is a mock legislature in which high school students craft, debate and vote on bills.

Payne and Greene led a 27-member delegation from St. Joe to the annual conference. Youth Legislature is a program for ninth through 12th grade students.

The Junior Youth Assembly, which will meet in the spring, is a similar program on a smaller scale and designed for sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth

See **YOUTH LEG**, Page 3

grade students. Like Youth Legislature, Junior Youth Assembly delegates craft, debate and vote on proposed legislation.

Youth Legislature, which took place Nov. 19-21, held sessions at the Marriott, the Old Capitol and the War Memorial building in downtown Jackson. Students met there in legislative committees and then in mock House and Senate sessions.

If student legislators approved bills, they went to the Youth Legislature governor for his signature or veto.

The leadership for the program comes directly from the students, and each year's session elects a full cabinet of officers that serve over the next year's Youth Legislature.

The governor, the highest ranking official in the Youth Legislature, presents legislative proposals, signs or vetoes bills, makes appointments, holds press conferences, and acts as spokesman.

The lieutenant governor, the second highest position, presides over Senate meetings and all joint meetings of both Houses. He also fulfills the duties of the governor in his absence.

Payne and Greene had to meet multiple prerequisites in order to run for office, including having at least one year of previous experience in Youth Legislature, the ability to speak in public,

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*— Zach Smith*

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knowledge of parliamentary procedure, knowledge of present day issues and problems and a strong demeanor.

Both Payne and Greene have participated in Youth Legislature since the 10th grade; they have also participated on the Bruin Speech and Debate Team since ninth grade.

Zach Smith, a senior who has attended the Youth Leg since 10th grade, plans to use the experiences he has had at Youth Legislature to help him on his path to a career in politics.

“It’s useful to experience first hand how the legislative process is carried out in Mississippi and how proposed bills become laws, especially for people like me interested in politics as a career,” Smith said.

“I can tell how much I have improved and learned over the past three years,” he said. “I also look forward to seeing everyone’s neat ties.”