

Jan 2015

The Advocate

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Clarification on Calamity Days

There has been a lot of confusion about a new law changing the days that we work with students into hours. The law was passed a little over a year ago but the legislators have made several adjustments to muddy the clarity of it. If you read it carefully, Gahanna is under a contract at this time so we are under the original law about calamity days. We will be allowed to take 5 days without any make up time, in which we have already used two of those days. If we go over 5 days for calamity reasons, we will make up any additional days at the end of the school year just as we have in the past.

As you may know, we are using 4 of our student days for more professional development (PD) for the next two years. GJEA members voted and we wrote a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the school board to cover these days without students in attendance because it is a change in contract. Due to the fact that we did this prior to the school year, these extra PD days will not count against us as any of the 5 calamity days.

Know Your Contract: Personal Days

There have been a lot of questions lately about the use of personal leave, so GJEA leadership decided to review what is in our contract for your information. Every teacher is entitled to 3 personal days with pay every year. Except for emergencies, each teacher shall request personal leave at least 3 school days prior to the absence. Right now, this is done through AESOP and you must wait for approval before you take the day. You may NOT take this leave “for seeking or engaging in other employment or engaging in other income generating activity.”

There are only 25 teachers allowed to take personal leave on a Monday or Friday. If AESOP blocks the day you request, this may be the reason. “In addition, personal leave may not be

taken the work day before or after a holiday or vacation period, except in situations approved in advance.” If either of the above happens to you, please email Matt Cygnor. He has been designated to approve these days with a good reason and he has been very good to work with on this issue.

“Employees will receive an incentive for not using personal days in a given school year: \$150 for one day not used, \$250 for two days not used, and \$350 for three days not used, payable in the second July pay.” You only get this pay for whole days not used, so any half days will not receive any compensation.



Mark Your Calendar:

1/19	M.L. King Day — No School
2/2	Ground Hog Day
2/12	Bd of Ed @ 6:30 PM
2/14	Valentine’s Day
2/13	Conference Comp –No School
2/16	Presidents’ Day--No School
2/23	Professional Development

GJEA Board of Directors Meetings

4:00 PM at the LHS Library

February 11

March 18

April 15

May 13

All members are welcome to attend!

ECOT—Charter Schools

The Columbus Dispatch reported that ECOT is under fire because of its poor performance. ECOT has over 14,000 students enrolled from K-12 and is spending over \$112 million dollars in which 90% is from the taxpayers. They spent \$17.4 million on curriculum from IQ Innovations. Side note: IQ Innovations is owned and operated by the same person who owns and operates ECOT. \$11 million has been spent on communications. You might remember them using Jack Hanna for TV Spots boasting about their style of education. A little over 50 percent of their budget is spent on employee salaries and benefits while traditional schools spend around 80%. Their owner continues to make large donations to lawmakers who mostly favor their system of education. William Phillis, the executive director of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding said, "These guys set up companies and pay themselves. It's pathetic from the standpoint of the taxpayers. This money is being laundered, wasted, going into

somebody's pocket. It's a crime, but, of course, it is all legal." ECOT's response is that neither the Ohio Department of Education nor state auditors have found fault.

Are we surprised with this statement? William Larger, founder of ECOT, has donated more than \$200,000 a year to politicians with the largest amount going to the Ohio Republican Party. There are others; David Brennan on behalf of the White Hat Schools Group has donated about \$820,000 to political campaigns. You may have just figured out that Charter School Legislation is bought and paid for by those running this poorly regulated educational system. What are the taxpayers getting in return? ECOT only graduates 1/3 of its seniors and some people have accused them of poorly educating their students. They have an F in all but one category on the State's Report Card and that one category is a D. Their explanation is that

they are educating the student that no one wants or does not fit into the traditional setting. They also claim that their students will eventually graduate. Which may be true, but most of these students return to their home public school. Here is what they are missing, when one of their student's returns, they return without the funding that the charter is already receiving. That's right, ECOT keeps those dollars and they have failed the student.

Please remember to share **Knowyourcharter.com** with others. It's going to take the public to become more

GRIN

Your generosity has been noticed and is fully appreciated. With your help, we were able to raise \$1500 for GRIN this past holiday season. Even though it was less than last year's total, we did well considering the lateness of the communication to the teachers. Once again, thank you because of your gifts Gahanna families were helped during the holiday season.

Reach Out and Read

Once again, Central OEA/NEA will be participating in Nationwide Children Hospital's "Reach Out and Read" Campaign in February. We very much want our school district to participate and are in need for a coordinator or co-coordinators to take charge of collecting new and gently used books for children, ages birth to middle school. The responsibilities are to communicate with staff and set up times and locations for the collection of books and/or monetary donations. Also, putting together a committee to help with collections, sorting and boxing books as well as have them delivered to Children's Hospital. If you are interested and/or need more information, please contact Jenny Palguta. This is a great way to give back to the children of our community.

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GJEF GALA

The Gahanna-Jefferson Education Foundation (GJEF) will hold its 2015 "A Night at the Derby" Gala Event on **Saturday, February 28** at the Easton Hilton. The purpose of GJEF is to promote educational excellence by funding innovative projects beyond the traditional expenditures of the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education.

Join in for an evening of fun and fundraising with over 500 silent and live auction items, along with a delicious buffet dinner. Attire is "dressy casual."

Be sure to visit www.gjef.org to purchase your tickets for GJEF's February 28 Gala and support excellence!

Snow Days

Please do not place celebratory posts on social media about snow days. It really sends the wrong message to the public and teachers are under enough scrutiny these days. Trust me, we know that many teachers are catching up on grading, planning and are still working with students online. Help us to show our community how hard you really work by not sending the wrong impression.



2014 Tax Info.



As an association member, you are permitted to deduct a portion of your 2014 dues when itemizing on your federal income tax return. Go to "miscellaneous deductions" on Schedule A of Form 1040, and follow the instructions for deducting association dues. The calculated amount has been provided by OEA, and is **\$799.59 for a full-time educator in Gahanna**. Please refer any dues-related questions to any of your GJEA officers and any tax-related questions to your personal tax advisor.

Retiring

educated on Charter Schools and force lawmakers to hold them just as accountable as they are holding public schools.

If you are retiring at the end of the school year, GJEA requests your presence at the Retirement Banquet to honor you and the years that you have dedicated to our children. The