

Feb. 16, 2010

Good morning!

As I write this, I am reminded of how many friends told me how different from Cleveland the weather would be in Columbus. I think Lake Erie and its notorious impact on the amount of snow that descends upon northeast Ohio has made its way to the center of our great state. YIKES!

The snowfall these past couple of weeks has resulted in several unscheduled days off for many of you. We have received several inquiries about the number of calamity days available this school year. A school district whose calendar contains the minimum number of days continues to have five calamity days available to it this school year, the same as in previous years. However, during the 2010-'11 school year, the number of calamity days available to a district with the minimum school calendar will be reduced to three. Community schools do not have calamity days available to them and must make up all hours missed, regardless of the cause.

As you know, you have many options for making up days should your district miss more than the five calamity days. Each school district calendar should have five contingency days built into it to make up these days. If your district exceeds both the calamity and contingency days (misses more than 10 days), you can choose to extend your regularly scheduled school day to make up these days. Days can be extended in 30 minute increments. Once a school adds to their schedule the minimum number of hours for a school day (five hours for elementary and middle schools and 5.5 hours for high schools), it is considered to have made up one day. For example, an elementary school that used 11 calamity days could extend the school day by 30 minutes for 10 days to make one day.

I know that the safety of your students is of paramount concern when you make the decision to cancel school. I am also aware that many of your parents will be asking about makeup days and I want to be certain you are aware of all of the rules and options surrounding calamity days.

Throughout the past year, when House Bill (HB) 1 shifted funding for Ohio's schools from a per-pupil foundation formula program to the Evidenced Based Model (EBM), a decision was made to have FY 2010-'11 as a transition period as we begin to phase in the EBM over time.

During the past several weeks, we have received information from district personnel regarding changes being made at the local level to gifted programs. We have learned that in some instances, districts are reassigning gifted teachers and coordinators, reducing their hours, or eliminating their positions. ODE understands that the legislative intent for the gifted funding methodology in HB 1 for FY 2010-'11 is to protect gifted services through this transition period at the same funding level that the state supported gifted education in FY 2009, and that these funds are to be used for certified gifted staff. The intent was to give districts time during this transition period to plan for future EBM funding levels. Once fully phased in, the EBM will provide higher levels of funding to most districts for services to identified gifted students. I urge you to consider this as you determine your district's gifted staffing and service levels for the next school year.

In the coming months, ODE will be working to establish gifted spending and reporting requirements as provided in HB 1. In addition, HB 1 requires that a performance indicator be established reflecting the level of services provided to, and the performance of, gifted students. Please continue to work with your district gifted personnel to ensure a smooth transition for your gifted program as we all transition to the EBM. A successful transition during FY 2010-'11 is

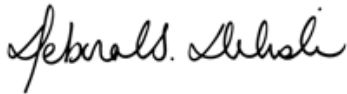
critical to ensuring that your district will be prepared to meet the expectations set forth in HB 1 for gifted education in Ohio.

On March 2, Governor Ted Strickland will be hosting the 2010 Statewide STEM Conference at COSI in Columbus. Several national education leaders, including Michael Lach, senior policy advisor to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, are scheduled to speak. I will be participating in a panel discussion on Ohio's STEM initiatives. This will be an exciting opportunity to hear about the progress we have made with STEM education in Ohio and learn about the direction we will be pursuing. For more information about the conference and to register visit the [Etech Web site](#). Registration closes Feb. 24.

It was wonderful to reconnect with so many superintendents at the recent American Association of School Administrators education leadership conference. There were many solid sessions along with several thought-provoking keynote speakers. I was particularly touched by the message of Geoffrey Canada, founder of the Harlem Children's Zone. His work combines educational, social and medical services that start at birth and follow children to college. Canada shared powerful insights and a vision that with hard work, dedication and a prioritizing of our resources, we can create opportunities for success for all of our children. With one inspirational story after another, I thought so much about the work so many of you do. I was particularly moved when Canada reminded the audience that no one is coming to any of our states to save our children. It is up to each one of us to save Ohio's children – a powerful message that defines our critical roles. I know that together we can create a brighter future for all of Ohio's children.

Have a great week!

Sincerely,



Here are additional items that may be of interest:

- Registration deadline is Feb. 22 for *Momentum 2010: Ohio Young Women's Summit*
- Follow-up Q&A on family and civic engagement offered Feb. 19
- Representative from Spain to explain Visiting Teacher Program
- Student name-SSID crosswalk entry closed; student names available in EVAAS
- Spotlight on Elida Local Schools, Horizon Science Academy and Nordon Hill City Schools

Registration deadline is Feb. 22 for Momentum 2010: Ohio Young Women's Summit

Due to school snow days and inclement weather, the deadline to register for the statewide [Momentum 2010: Young Women's Summit](#) has been extended until Monday, **Feb. 22**. The summit, set for Sunday, March 7, at the Columbus School for Girls in Columbus, is designed to bring together young women (ages 12-18) of diverse backgrounds from across the state to celebrate their potential. Participants will learn about issues including entrepreneurship, financial literacy, health, leadership, self-esteem and accessing higher education in Ohio. In addition, speakers will describe nontraditional career areas for women, e.g., science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM fields). The diverse array of speakers will include Gov. Ted Strickland, NASA Engineer Kim de Groh, WBNS 10TV central Ohio News Anchor Andrea Cambern, and many business and STEMM professionals.

The Governor's Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach and First Lady of Ohio Frances Strickland are coordinating the event. Space is limited so act quickly to ensure that young women students represent your school at this program honoring International Women's Day on March 8, when a related program is offered for adult women.

To access the full conference schedule, visit www.ohiowomen2010.org. To register, click [here](#). A \$5 registration fee includes a boxed lunch. Direct questions to Melissa Marshall at mmarshall@regents.state.oh.us or Earnika Pitts at (614) 644-2103.

Follow-up Q&A on family and civic engagement offered Feb. 19

District teams concerned with developing family and civic engagement plans can now view a recorded webinar and submit related questions via e-mail. Presenters will answer viewers' questions in a live, interactive, question-and-answer session from 1:30-2:30 p.m. on Feb. 19.

The webinar explains district and community data sources that provide insight on grades, discipline, school climate, and family and community conditions that affect student engagement and learning. The session also describes how to meet House Bill 1 requirements for family and civic engagement plans.

To view the 60-minute webinar in advance and join the live Q&A on Feb. 19, click [here](#) or visit education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *data FCE*. For additional information contact Jennifer Vargo at (614) 995-0231 or jennifer.vargo@ode.state.oh.us.

Representative from Spain to explain Visiting Teacher Program

On Feb. 26, ODE will hold an information session in Columbus detailing Ohio's Memorandum of Understanding with Spain, which makes two programs available to our state's public and private schools. ODE staff and a representative from the Ministry of Education of Spain will explain how the memorandum facilitates the placement of visiting Spanish language teachers and Spanish language assistants in Ohio schools and promotes cultural exchange. Superintendents, principals, human resource directors, foreign language coordinators and curriculum coordinators will find the program of interest.

The meeting will be held from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Worthington Board of Education building. Participants must pre-register by Feb. 24 using the STARS system. Access STARS through your SAFE account by clicking the SAFE link at the top of any page at education.ohio.gov. Within STARS, search for the event by title: *Spanish Visiting Teacher Program Information Meeting*. For assistance, please contact Teresa Cole at (614) 387-2215 or teresa.cole@ode.state.oh.us.

Student name-SSID crosswalk entry closed; student names available in EVAAS

The opportunity for districts to send their student name-SSID (statewide student identifier) crosswalks to SAS for the Ohio Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) reports has closed. More than 90 percent of all traditional districts (553 out of 612) and 34 percent of all community schools that have value-added data (74 out of 220) submitted their crosswalk data. Special thanks go to the Information Technology Centers for their diligence in organizing, preparing and submitting data on behalf of most local education agencies (LEAs).

LEAs that have their data uploaded can now view their student names in the EVAAS reports. The data will make these reports much more useful as diagnostic tools. ODE developed this mechanism to address district needs while still meeting FERPA and state law requirements.

Districts again will have the voluntary opportunity to upload the student name/SSID crosswalks for the 2010 school year test results as soon as the summer EMIS data submission closes. Detailed information will be sent out in the next few weeks. In the meantime, please direct any questions or concerns to vainformation@ode.state.oh.us.

Spotlight on Elida Local Schools, Horizon Science Academy and Nordonia Hill City Schools

Elida Elementary School (Elida Local Schools)

Elida Elementary School in Lima is one of many schools that have contacted ODE about their fundraising efforts to support the people of Haiti. Elida students and staff have raised \$1,879 for a Haitian orphanage, which is managed by former Elida residents Hal and Chris Nungester. Students are learning first-hand about the needs of the earthquake-stricken island as they become acquainted with the Nungester's three adopted Haitian children. Berline, 11, Michael, 7, and Filenta, 5, recently settled in the Elida school community with one of the Nungester's grown daughters. Hal and Chris have managed the HIS Home for Children orphanage in Port-au-Prince for 13 years. Proceeds from the Elida fundraising efforts will be used to buy mattresses for children still at the orphanage.

Horizon Science Academy, Cleveland

Cleveland's FOX 8 TV News and MedWish International sought assistance in gathering, loading and sorting donations for Haitian earthquake victims last month – and students at Horizon Science Academy, which is next door to the station, responded to the call. Despite the timing of the station's relief efforts during their exam week, more than 100 Horizon students and staff took turns during free periods and after school to help with the 12-hour effort. As part of the station's volunteer corps, they retrieved donations from cars that lined up for a mile. They also repacked the items and filled 28 trucks with more than 160,000 pounds of water, diapers, flashlights and medical supplies. MedWish coordinated the delivery of goods to Haiti.

Lee Eaton Elementary, Nordonia Hills City Schools

A collection at Lee Eaton Elementary in Northfield resulted in a \$1,513 donation to the American Red Cross – and a colorful outdoor display. For every \$5 collected for the effort, one ribbon was tied to a long piece of twine. The ribbons were displayed while hanging from a tree on the school's front lawn.

Congratulations to all three schools for encouraging learning through giving!

If you would like to share news about a service project involving a group of your students who are helping the community, please send an e-mail with "Spotlight" and your school name in the subject line to superintendent@ode.state.oh.us. We also are pleased to learn about any curricular connections to projects and to receive digital images of these activities.

Note: You also may find this document online at education.ohio.gov by searching keyword: *EdConnection*. If you have questions, comments or suggestions about this weekly e-mail or would like to be added to the mailing list, please feel free to contact me at superintendent@ode.state.oh.us.

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