



Geneseo High School



February 2014

With the recent cold and snowy weather, we have missed a number of days of school. Because of the possibility of losing numerous days prior to high stakes tests such as ISAT, PSAT, and the AP exams, the Administrative team has proposed a number of calendar revisions that will allow more instructional days before graduation and more professional development days after graduation. A summary of those calendar moves is included below.



The calendar changes may alter some family plans, and some students may even miss school because of family plans. A common question is how will students' absences be coded because of the change in calendar. There is no change in how the school codes student absences, regardless of a change in calendar circumstances. The school always codes a student's absence as excused, unexcused, or truant. The only time a student's absence is coded as excused is when there is a death in the family, the student is sick, for a church event, or for a family emergency. The difference between an excused absence and

an unexcused absence for students is in the amount of time provided to do makeup work. An excused absence allows a student to have two days to make up work for every excused day absent. An unexcused absence allows for only one day to make up work for every unexcused day absent.

School attendance is very important for student success. Statistics show that students who have the best attendance also have the most academic success. This year, 13% of our Seniors had perfect attendance in the first semester, as well as 17% of the Juniors, 19% of the Sophomores, and 25% of the Freshmen. As you can see, as students get older, there are more things that sometimes pull them away from school. Sometimes families need to pull their children from school for their own personal family business, or sometimes a family wants their child to take part in an activity that conflicts with school. All families need to make their own decisions based upon what is best for their children. Just because the school codes the absence as "unexcused" does not mean we have placed a value judgment upon that family decision. It just means that we are following the school code definition of excused, unexcused, and truant.

Because the District has utilized all five (5)

Emergency Days in January as allowed by School Code in the 2013-14 Calendar, the following changes are necessary:

1. Cancel February 12, 2014 One Hour Early Release and attend full day of school.
2. Postpone February 17, 2014 In-service Day and attend full day of school on February 17th. Move In-service Day to May 29, 2014.
3. Continue with March 20, 2014 Hour Early Dismissal to allow for second night of High School Parent-Teacher Conferences.
4. Postpone March 28, 2014 In-service Day and attend full day of school on March 28th. Move In-service Day to May 30, 2014.
5. Continue with April 11, 2014 Hour Early Dismissal prior to Easter Break.
6. Attend school on Monday, April 21, 2014. Previously this was a Not In Attendance Day.
7. Postpone the May 5, 2014 Half-day School Improvement afternoon and attend full day of school on May 5, 2014. Move Half-day School Improvement Day to May 28, 2014.
8. As this calendar stands, the last full day of student attendance = Tuesday, May 27, 2014. The last half-day of student attendance = Wednesday, May 28, 2014.

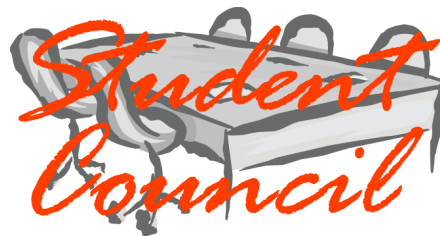
Now with an additional snow day on February 5th, that will bring more changes. With a snow day on 2/5, that puts us over the 5 snow days the District had built into the calendar. So stay tuned to the District office for more information as it becomes available

I want to close by promoting Project Leaf. Superintendent Scott Kuffel is looking for a large, diverse group of people to give the District feedback on the future direction of our School District. With the opportunity presented by the passing of the one-cent sales

tax, we have discovered that we have not done a lot of long range planning and needs assessing for our District. The District is looking for people willing to commit to a process to help to determine and prioritize where to spend our money, time, and resources. The Superintendent and School Board members will be involved in the process, as well, however, they are seeking public stakeholders' ideas and opinions before moving forward and making definite plans.

The four Project Leaf meeting dates are: February 10, February 24, March 10, and April 14. The meetings take place at St. Malachy's church between 6:30 – 8:30 pm. All school stakeholders and community members are invited.

Student Council: The Geneseo High School Student Council was a recent host for the



Blackhawk Association of Student Councils Hospitality Night. On Monday, Feb-

ruary 3, student leaders from Alleman, Kewanee, and Geneseo High Schools came together to work on team building skills. The theme was "Go for the Gold" and the featured the BASC Olympics. Students were put into teams and were engaged in activities promoting teamwork. The idea of working together to accomplish great tasks was rein-

forced while the students competed in several relays and games. The evening started with Opening Ceremonies and ended with Closing Ceremonies and awards. The students were also able to share dinner, eating pizza and desserts. Courtney Emerick, Darcie Dietrich, Molly DeBrock, and Maddy DeYoung, who serve as the Blackhawk Association of Student Councils Executive Board, helped to plan and facilitate the evening.

Student Council remains busy this winter as they are sponsoring a few Valentine's Day activities. Cans of CRUSH pop are being sold and will be delivered to secret crushes on Valentine's Day, as well as the traditional Singing Telegrams.

From the Guidance Office: The February Guidance Department Newsletter is now posted on the counseling web page. This month's edition includes information regarding next year's scheduling, college financial aid and scholarships, ACT for juniors, and much more. Here is the link to the counseling newsletter: http://gcsdstaff.org/hscounseling/?page_id=137

There are also new additions to the counseling web pages for helpful information for career exploration and college planning. A brochure titled "Success and Career Planning" is available for parents and students. It provides the steps for creating a career plan, the projected rates of increase in available jobs, and a listing of Illinois occupations with the most job openings and the amount of post-high school training required.

Here is the link to the web page: http://gcsdstaff.org/hscounseling/?page_id=2193

Classroom Happenings:

- Earth Science and Environmental Science students have been growing sunflowers! In Earth Science, students tested different types of soil (sand, clay, regular soil) to see which type of soil would grow the best plant. Students took data for ten days to observe which type of soil grew the tallest plant. Some of the students were shocked to find out that their plants did grow in plain sand and clay. In Environmental Science, students planted sunflowers in empty two-liter bottles. Students created a miniature Hydrologic (Water) Cycle and watched as the cycle progressed to produce water that infiltrated the soil and helped their plant to grow.
- This week the sophomore English class completed their reading of *Night*, by Elie Wiesel, a powerful memoir detailing his experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau. GHS was fortunate to have Mr. Ralph Troll visit our school and detail experiences in Nazi Germany during that turbulent time. The students were captivated not only by his incredible story of the war, but also by his remarkable determination to succeed and flourish in America after the war. By combining the narrative of

Wiesel with the presentation of Mr. Troll, students left with a clear understanding that history is more than merely something we read about in our textbooks. The students were extremely engaged and asked thoughtful questions at the end of the presentation.

The staff and students all left with a better understanding of this significant time in world history and an appreciation for the freedoms we all enjoy.

Student Spotlights:

- Andrea Beck has completed all twenty-five books on the 2013-2014 Illinois State Library Read for a Lifetime list. She has now read all twenty-five books all four years of high school. She is the fifth student in the state to accomplish this since the program's inception fifteen years ago.
- Varsity Scholastic Bowl hosted eight teams for the statewide IHSSBCA Turnabout on January 11th. Andrea Beck, Sarah Dellett, and Mitchell Lamb were named to the All-Tournament team based on the number of questions they answered individually. The team placed 2nd behind Rock Island. Junior Varsity Scholastic Bowl placed 6th at the Sterling Invitational, and Dylan Hodge was named to the All-Tournament team. Geneseo will be hosting nine teams for their tournament on February 1st.

Upcoming Dates of Importance:

- 2/4 AP/Dual credit informational meeting – 6:00 pm in GHS Auditorium
- 2/4 Incoming Freshman informational parent meeting – 7:00 pm GHS auditorium
- 2/4 Early Bird class sign up begins at 6:45 am
- 2/7 Senior Academic letter dispersal during lunch
- 2/10 Project Leaf meeting at St. Malachy's – 6:30 – 8:30 pm
- 2/13 School Board meeting – 7:00 pm District office
- 2/24 Project Leaf meeting #2 at St. Malachy's from 6:30 – 8:30 pm
- 2/28 Local scholarship informational meeting for seniors during ASAP
- 2/28 Open Campus lunch for PSAE levels 1 & 2

Leafprints Magazine: Subscriptions to Leafprints Magazine are now available via the District Web Store. A yearly subscription is \$12 (for 4 issues), and the magazine will be delivered right to subscribers' doors.
<http://geneseoschools.revtrak.net/tek9.asp>

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