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# Academy Charter School

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February 25, 2015

Dear Representative Jim Colver,  
Chair Representative Lynn Gattis,  
Members of the House Education Committee,

Each year large numbers of teachers receive notices to report for jury duty. Quite a few are selected to participate on a jury. I support this process and believe teachers make great jurors. I agree this is an important service to our community and our nation. This year I have had 9 of the 22 certified staff serve on jury duty, with two of those serving on grand jury. One teacher was told by the judge that she never excuses teachers, even when the trial is expected to last 5 – 6 weeks! As a principal I am very concerned about the following facts:

1. Substitute teachers do not provide the same quality or level of instruction as the classroom teacher.
2. Student learning suffers when a teacher is out of the classroom.
3. Student progress/student growth data is one of the components of the teacher evaluation.
4. The cost of hiring substitute teachers negatively impacts the school district's budget.

Students pay the price when their teacher is absent and a substitute is the teacher in the classroom. Soon teachers will be held accountable for student learning data on their professional evaluations. Students lose. Teachers lose. Our budgets suffer.

Katie Gardner, Mat-Su School District HR Director, provided the following information:

*In FY 14 we provided for 1,412 Hours of Jury Duty Leave. So far in FY 15 we have provided 976 Hours of Jury Duty Leave and two employees were gone for 10 days or more.*

Thank you so much for your help in keeping our teachers in our classrooms! Thank you in advance for your support of HB 98!

Sincerely,

Barbara Gerard, Principal  
Academy Charter School