

GovWatch: Charter school audit, expensive doors and dueling studies

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More than \$4,300 in undocumented debit card purchases were called out as improper in a recent state audit of the General Chappie James Leadership Academy in Dayton.

“Every swipe of a debit card should produce a receipt at the end of the transaction,” State Auditor Dave Yost said. “The General Chappie James Leadership Academy needs a better paper trail to ensure accountability of the public’s money.”

School co-founder and director Kecia Williams said all of the debit card purchases were for legitimate purposes and were originally documented, but the records were in the possession of the school’s treasurer, Tracy Jarvis, who was terminated and did not turn them over to the state.

“We are definitely pursuing every legal avenue available to make sure the money is repaid,” Williams said.

A finding for recovery, or order that the money be repaid, was issued for \$4,335 against both Williams and Jarvis, both of whom are responsible for the school’s finances under state law.

The school is located at 120 Knox Avenue in Dayton.

“If you have followed General Chappie James Leadership Academy we have never had a finding for recovery ever in the 10 years we’ve been open,” Williams said.

Illinois buys doors for \$669K

The state of Illinois could have purchased a mansion for the amount of money it spent on new doors for its capitol building, the Chicago Sun-Times pointed out in a recent article.

The copper coated doors cost taxpayers of the Land of Lincoln \$669,608 as part of a \$50 million renovation of the state capitol in Springfield.

“To put the cost into perspective, three sets of doors to the state capitol cost the same as a 4,700-square-foot, five-bedroom, four-bathroom home that is now on the market in North Barrington (in suburban Chicago) with a four-car garage,” the newspaper noted.

“We must remember that these are custom doors with carvings that do not exist on a shelf at your typical home-improvement store,” Capitol Architect J. Richard Alsop III told the Sun-Times.

“Like many other materials in the building, it takes craftsmen to perform the work necessary to give us the desired and appropriate historic fabric.”

Study: Welfare pays more than work

Welfare recipients in many states including Ohio can earn more on public assistance than working a minimum wage job, according to a recent study by the conservative Cato Institute.

The study estimated that a single parent with two children could bring in \$28,723 in benefits for things such as cash assistance, food stamps, housing, Medicaid and utility assistance.

A minimum wage job, however, would earn that same person only \$26,200 a year, or \$28,722 after tax credits for low-income workers are factored in.

“The current welfare system provides such a high level of benefits that it acts as a disincentive for work,” the study concludes.

Study: Taxpayers subsidize CEOs

Nearly 40 percent of the nation’s highest-paid CEOs over the past two decades have led companies to taxpayer bailout, been fired or wound up paying significant fraud-related settlements, according to a recent analysis by the liberal Institute for Policy Studies.

The report found the CEOs of bailed-out firms and companies that depend heavily on government contracts make up 174 of the 500 top-paid CEOs analyzed — over one-third of the total.

It also noted that taxpayers subsidize all highly paid captains of industry through tax loopholes that encourage excessive executive pay, “because ordinary taxpayers wind up paying the bill.”

“This report should put an end to any remaining sense that we have ‘pay for performance’ in corporate America,” said study co-author Sarah Anderson.