

First Grade News

First graders recently practiced their spelling words using Play-Doh and paper clips!



Yearbooks for Sale & Preordering



We are still selling our new 2024-2025 yearbooks (\$50 per book). Stop by either office to pick one up today!

Preordering is also underway for the 2026 book on www.jostens.com. Please preorder your book today to ensure that you secure a copy before books are sold out

Thank you for your support!

February 2026 Newsletter

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Homecoming King & Queen are Crowned!

High school students voted on their 2026 Homecoming King and Queen. Seniors Nick Brandeberry and Brynn Horstman are shown being crowned by last year's Senior Attendant Brandon Calvelage (stand-in for 2025 King Jayden Saxton) and Queen Morgan Hoersten. This year's homecoming attendants also included freshmen Kendall Hohlbein and Drew Heitmeyer, sophomores Livia Grothause and Jonah Buss, juniors Cassidy Hill and Joseph Leis, Seniors Matthew Horstman, Carli Schnipke, Alexa Thomas, and Zach Hohlbein, and miniatures George Schmersal and Evelyn Wannemacher.

After the crowning of the King and Queen, both JV and Varsity Boys teams battled against Kalida, but could not walk away with a win. The students enjoyed a Homecoming Dance the next night, hosted by the Sophomore Class and Advisor, Mr. Castronova.



Fourth Grade News

Fourth graders are shown enjoying their time in the library, as well as making dotted art using cotton swabs and paint.



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Voice of Democracy



Three Ottoville Seniors (Anna Bendele, Mackenzie Deitering, and Rowan Clay) recently received cash prizes for their Voice of Democracy speeches, sponsored by our local Ottoville VFW Post 3740. Mackenzie Deitering came home with the first place prize for her speech, as well as \$100! Her winning speech is posted below.

Is your earliest memory of showing patriotism watching fireworks? Or supporting those who have served? My earliest memory of showing patriotism is on Memorial Day, when I was little. I would always ask my dad when he would lower the flag to half-mast. I wanted not only the current veterans but also the deceased ones to see how proud we were of them for serving for us. After we lower our flag to half-mast, we go to our local church and remember those who have fallen and served for us. This Memorial Day tradition has always been held close to my heart, and one that I hope to continue throughout my life.

But patriotism doesn't begin and end with a holiday. No, it is something we should be doing in our everyday lives. One way I continue to show patriotism is by standing for the flag, placing my hand over my heart, and saying the Pledge of Allegiance or singing the National Anthem. I do this not because I have to, but because I want to. It's a symbol of my respect for all those who have fought and served for our country's freedom. Sadly, today, it's becoming less common to see people doing the same. At sporting events or public gatherings, many stand there or just ignore the flag altogether. But placing your hand over your heart is such a simple act, and it speaks volumes. It says, "I stand with you. I see you. And I thank you for your service." We must not lose this tradition, because these small actions help keep patriotism alive.

Next, I show patriotism by respecting those who served and are serving in my family. My cousin is currently serving in the military, and he will not be home for at least another year, as he is in Kansas. When I do see him, I like to talk to him about what he did while he was away. I believe that when we talk to veterans about their stories, it gives them a sense of pride and comfort to talk about what they've done and what they've seen. Even just listening can be a form of honoring their service.

Another tradition I'm proud to be part of is Wreaths Across America. Every December, volunteers from the local community come out to place wreaths on veterans' graves. Every time that I lay a wreath, I take a few seconds to stand there and silently thank that veteran. Taking a short time out of our daily lives and going to a cemetery to show your respect and gratitude for those who have fallen is the definition of patriotism.

Finally, I like to show patriotism simply by saying, "Thank you for your service," to veterans I see in public. Some may think it's a small gesture, but I believe it goes a long way towards the veterans. A few words can remind someone that their sacrifice towards our country is remembered and appreciated. Flying the American flag, visiting veterans' graves, and thanking those in uniform are small actions that only take a sliver out of your day.

But patriotism is so much more than just supporting veterans. Supporting our country means being an active and responsible citizen. Respecting the law, registering to vote, staying informed, and even serving on a jury are all important ways to contribute to our great country. These civic duties ensure that our country continues to function and that the freedoms we enjoy remain protected.

Patriotism also means standing up for what's right, even when we find it hard. This is taking action to improve our country. True patriots recognize that America isn't perfect, but they love it enough to want to make change. Whether it's volunteering in your community, supporting education, protecting the environment, or fighting for justice, these are all easy patriotic acts that you could show in your local community. I show these patriotic acts in my community by volunteering with community events and coaching younger kids' sports. I help protect our environment by cleaning up trash on the side of the road when I go on walks. And finally, once I turn eighteen, I will register to vote to voice my opinion and fight for what I think will provide our country with the support it needs.

Right now, our country feels deeply divided politically, socially, and even culturally. But if we can come together with respect, with love for our country and for each other, we would not have the problems we have today in this country. Patriotism connects multiple things, such as generations, backgrounds, beliefs, and traditions. With these connections, we can become united as a whole once again.

In conclusion, I'd like to leave you with this thought: Are you showing patriotism and supporting your country enough? Not just on holidays or when you believe it is convenient, but in your everyday life? Because our country depends on all of us—not just the ones in uniform, not just the men and women who are on the front lines keeping us free, but also the citizens in this great country that we call home who are helping keep the morals of freedom alive. We need to come together and continue the work of this great country that our veterans and citizens have fought for many centuries to make it free.

February Events

Feb 12 → 3rd Quarter Midterms
Feb 13 → No School
Feb 16 → No School
(Teacher PD Day)
Feb 16 → No School
(Presidents Day)
Feb 24 → ACT (Juniors)

Board Meeting Minutes

Updated School Board meeting minutes and agenda can be found in the School Board tab on our website: www.ottovilleschools.org

Second Grade News

Second graders completed a project where they made musical instruments out of cardboard, string, and other materials. The instruments have been on display by the library for all students to see.



Behind

the **GREEN** Doors

Kindergarten News (100th Day Celebration)

Kindergartners celebrated the 100th day of school by working in a "construction zone" in the school gymnasium. They participated in activities involving math, and counting up to the number 100. We would like to thank all parent volunteers that helped on this day.



Pickleball Tournament

The annual pickleball tournament, which raises money for cancer walk, is under way. Junior High's Student Council started their own tournament bracket for the first time this year.

