Important Dates

- 2/16/2015 - No School
- 2/24/2015 - 2:30pm Dismissal
- 2/28/2015 - Sadies Dance 6-9pm
- 3/3/2015 - ACT Testing
  Only juniors in attendance
- 3/6/2015 - End of 3rd Quarter
- 3/25-7/2015 - Fine Arts Festival
- 3/27/2015 - 2:30pm Dismissal
- 3/30 - 4/6/2015 - No School
  Spring Break

From the desk of principal Mike Cushing

Current OTHS Families,

Please contact OTHS if you have changed your address or your phone number. It is important that we have your up-to-date information in the event that your son or daughter becomes ill, if important information needs to be sent home via the telephone (i.e. weather related cancellation of school), or if we need to contact you during the school day. Please call the school (815-433-1323 ext. 2433) if you have not received any automated calls throughout the first semester of the school year.

Calendar highlights for the second semester of the 2014-15 school year are included for your review. Please let us know if you have any questions about the following information:

- Monday, February 16, 2015: No School – Presidents’ Day
- Tuesday, March 3, 2015: ACT (Only Juniors in Attendance to 12:30)
- Monday, March 30, 2015: Spring Break Begins (March 30 – April 6)
- Tuesday, April 7, 2015: Staff/Students Return from Spring Break
- *May 22, 26, and 27, 2015: Final Exams
- Monday, May 25, 2015: Memorial Day – No School (If we are in session.)
- Friday, May 29, 2015: Teacher Institute
- Friday, May 29, 2015: Graduation

Notes:
*Final Exam Days are subject to change based on the use of emergency days during the 2014-15 school year.

Grading Periods:
- 3rd Nine Weeks: January 6 – March 6, 2015
- 4th Nine Weeks: March 9 – May 27, 2015

12:00 Dismissals: Tuesday, March 3, 2015
2:30 Dismissals:
  - Tuesday, February 24, 2015
  - Tuesday, April 21, 2015
  - Thursday, May 21, 2015 (tentative)

Have an educationally productive second semester of the 2014-15 school year.

Sincerely,
Michael Cushing, Principal
Ottawa Township High School
Guidance Center News

2015-2016 Registration
Counselors will be meeting with individual classes starting Jan 20 to give them instructions for registering for classes next year. Materials will be coming home that week, so parents will have the opportunity to choose classes with their students. We encourage you to spend time looking at the curriculum guide, which is available online, to choose classes that are relevant to students’ future interests. Your student’s counselor is available to answer questions about registration. We encourage you to fill out the form as best you can, and we can adjust if needed. All registration forms are due to your student’s homeroom teacher by Friday, January 30th.

FAFSA-Financial Aid Completion Night
There will be a FAFSA (Free Application For Federal Student Aid) Completion night on January 21st at 6 PM in the OTHS library. A representative from ISAC, Illinois Student Assistance Commission will be here to aid parents in completing the FAFSA form, which was introduced at the Financial Aid Information meeting in December. To reserve a computer, please call the counseling center at 815-433-1323 x 2494 before the 21st to let us know you will be attending.

Testing for the Junior Class
The ACT will be administered on March 3 to all juniors during the school day at OTHS. This is the college entrance test which is used by colleges and universities in the admission formula.

Scholarships
The majority of scholarship applications for seniors become available this semester. Students should check the scholarship drawer in the Guidance Office weekly for the newest scholarship postings. See Mrs. Rios if you have any questions.

IVCC
Seniors planning to attend IVCC in the fall must attend a meeting during 3rd hour on Thursday, January 22nd in the auditorium. Representatives from IVCC admissions will discuss the application and placement test procedures for fall 2015 enrollment.

Music Department
The OHS band and choir students are beginning preparations for the upcoming IHSA Solo & Ensemble contest. Most of the students will participate as a soloist or member of an ensemble in this IHSA sponsored contest. This is the first of two steps the OHS music department takes in trying to defend their IHSA State Music title. The contest is Saturday, March 7 and the music students will travel to Plano High School for the competition. The second half of the competition is on Saturday, April 18 where students compete as members of concert bands and choirs.

The next performance for the OHS music students is Sunday, February 8. This is the Ottawa and Elementary Music Festival (OEHS Music Fest) held in Kingman Gymnasium. This 75 minute concert features all of the performing ensembles in the Ottawa School Districts. The Varsity Band, FCS Choir, Shepherd Band and Choir and OHS Choirs and Bands each perform two selections on this city-wide concert. Over 500 students will participate. The concert concludes with a combined performance of America the Beautiful. Admission is free and the concert begins at 3:00 pm.

Art Department
The annual high school exhibition art show at IVCC will be on display from Monday, February 9 to Friday, February 20, 2015 in IVCC Building D. The reception for participants and their families and friends will be Tuesday, February 10 from 6pm to 8pm. All area high schools are invited to display their best work. Please visit the exhibit and show your support for the talented artists of LaSalle county.
Math Department

The annual NIB 10 Conference Mathlete Competition took place in Kaneland on December 9th. Ottawa seniors came home with a 2nd place finish in Optimization and 4th place in Trig Applications. Sophomores earned 4th place in Coordinate Geometry and took 5th place in Areas. The freshmen also did well earning a 3rd place finish in Radicals and Radical Equations and 4th in Linear Equations. Both of our 8-person teams earned commendation, the junior/senior team earned 4th place and the freshmen/sophomore team finished 2nd. Great job OTHS mathletes!

Standards for Mathematical Practice

In the previous two newsletters, we introduced the Standards for Mathematical Practices and went into more detail on standards #1 and #6. This article will further explore standards #2 and #3.

To quote directly from the Common Core State Standards:

Standard #2: Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
Mathematically proficient students make sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations. They bring two complementary abilities to bear on problems involving quantitative relationships: the ability to decontextualize – to abstract a given situation and represent it symbolically and manipulate the representing symbols as if they have a life of their own, without necessarily attending to their referents – and the ability to contextualize, to pause as needed during the manipulation process in order to probe into the referents for the symbols involved. Quantitative reasoning entails habits of creating a coherent representation of the problem at hand; considering the units involved; attending to the meaning of quantities, not just how to compute them; and knowing and flexibly using different properties of operations and objects.

Standard #3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Mathematically proficient students understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments. They make conjectures and build a logical progression of statements to explore the truth of their conjectures. They are able to analyze situations by breaking them into cases, and can recognize and use counterexamples. They justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the arguments of others. They reason inductively about data, making plausible arguments that take into account the context from which the data arose. Mathematically proficient students are also able to compare the effectiveness of two plausible arguments, distinguish correct logic of reasoning from that which is flawed, and – if there is a flaw in an argument – explain what it is. Elementary students can construct arguments using concrete referents such as objects, drawings, diagrams, and actions. Such arguments can make sense and be correct, even though they are not generalized or made formal until later grades. Later, students learn to determine domains to which an argument applies. Students at all grades can listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense, and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments.
**Transition Program**

The Transition Program at Ottawa Township High School serves young adults with disabilities ages 18-21 that have completed their high school requirements and then return for further life skills, job skills, and functional skills training. The program has recently joined in with BeSafeNow and Trinity Services as a packaging partner. BeSafeNow has certified green cleaning products that are free of dyes and perfumes and endorsed by both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) and made in the USA. We have started with the hand soap and we are getting up and running with this portion of the business. The hand soap comes in 5 gallon containers and the students are responsible for bottling the liquid hand soap in 8oz containers, capping the bottles with a pump top, making sure lids are secure and any spillage is wiped off, then applying our personalized label to the bottles. We started selling this product to the school employees, parents/families of our students, and community members. We are now reaching out to places in our community where we would be able to sell our hand soaps. 100% of the money from the sale of this soap stays in the Transition Program and will be used to purchase more products, pay our students a wage, and fund projects as part of our curriculum. Soaps are for sale for $4.00 per bottle and can be purchased by calling Ms. Kate McIntyre at 815-431-3323 or emailing BeSafeNow@ottawahigh.com. Thank you!

In the next newsletter, we will address Standards for Mathematical Practices #4 and 5.

**English Department**

The OTHS English department is beginning the second semester of the 2014-15 school year with common assessments. English I, English II, and English III students will take these assessments in the first weeks of January. Measuring reading skills, writing proficiencies, grammar, literary element knowledge and analysis, these common assessments will give the English teachers a benchmark regarding student knowledge for second semester. The common assessments will also give teachers better insight into the educational needs of each student. Students will retake these tests at the end of the semester so that a growth component can be calculated for each student. In addition, measuring overall growth components for each grade level will help teachers to realign course curriculums and to change teaching focus/methods as needed.

In addition, OTHS English IV courses will also be developing common assessments this semester to be in place for the 2015-16 school year. The senior year of English is divided into a myriad of mostly one semester elective courses: Advanced Composition (a dual credit course with IVCC), Advanced Speech (also dual credit with IVCC), AP English (where students can earn college credit through the AP test), Contemporary Literature, Creative Writing, Great Ideas, Journalism, Literature and Life, World Literature I, and World Literature II. Work has just begun to prepare a new set of common assessments for each of these courses.

Given the diverse curriculum choice at the senior level, students may have questions in regards to choosing an appropriate course for their fourth year of English. Students may also wonder about making a level change. For these reasons, the OTHS English department would like to offer our assistance for the upcoming OTHS course registration. All OTHS students receive general registration information. However, if any students and/or parents have specific questions in regards to English courses or levels, please feel free to contact any member of our department. We want your student to experience success and growth in the coming school year.

Finally, the OTHS Freshmen Academy will be hosting a Career Day with our freshmen on Feb. 12. Career Day will have over thirty professions represented by members of our community who will talk to the students about their professions, their training, and the importance of school in relation to their success. OTHS English department members that teach freshmen will help with this wonderful opportunity.

With that, the OTHS English department hopes that 2015 brings a renewed dedication to excellence for both staff and student. We are off to a great start.

Mathematical Practices #2 and #3 are about students’ reasoning skills. In mathematics, we want students to be able to be able to reason inductively — to take specific situations and generalize them. Students who are able to reason abstractly and quantitatively view mathematics as a way to make sense of the world around them. We also want students to be able to articulate their reasoning, forming solid arguments based on definitions and conceptual understanding. Additionally, we want students to be able to distinguish between well-thought out explanations and those that are flawed. When students are able to justify their strategies and critique those of others, they are making sense of mathematics in meaningful ways which will enable them to utilize the tools that they are learning in math class to become effective and successful problem solvers in both college and their careers.
Dear OTHS Parents,

Beginning January 12, teachers, parents, and students across Illinois will have an opportunity to participate in the third annual statewide Illinois 5Essentials Survey. This survey is designed to generate a detailed picture of the inner workings of your child’s school. As a parent, this opportunity will allow you to share your thoughts on the important elements of school effectiveness in a survey about your child’s school.

On behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois 5Essentials Survey will be administered online by UChicago Impact at the University of Chicago. The survey gathers data related to five indicators that can predict important student outcomes, including improved attendance and larger test score gains. These five indicators that affect and predict school success are:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environments
- Ambitious Instruction

Prior research in more than 400 schools has shown that schools that were strong on at least three of these “5Essential” indicators were 10 times more likely to improve student learning gains in math and reading than those that were weak on three or more Essentials.

All teachers and 6th through 12th grade students will be responding to this survey. 5Essentials Reports will be generated for schools if their teachers and/or students meet the response rate threshold of 50 percent. These reports will be sent to schools and districts in May 2015 and will also be included in the State School Report Card.

Additionally, your district has chosen to provide the optional 5Essentials parent survey. If at least 20 percent of OTHS parents complete this survey, a parent supplement will also be generated. The parent data will not be reported on the State Report Card.

Your participation in the parent portion of the survey will help us understand the conditions at your child’s school and guide improvement. Your identity and survey responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be connected to you or your child.

The Illinois 5Essentials Survey will be conducted January 12 through March 13, 2015. To take the survey please visit https://survey.5-essentials.org/Illinois/ and select the appropriate survey to begin.

For more information about the Illinois 5Essentials Survey, or to view 2014 Reports, please visit https://illinois.5-essentials.org. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact 5Essentials Client Services at 1-866-440-1874 or 5essentials@uchicago.edu.

Sincerely,

Michael Cushing, Principal
Ottawa Township High School