

Geneseo Middle School

[GMS Live Feed](#)



TEACH

LEARN

CARE



Principal's Message

Does your child have a consistent and decent bedtime, limits on their video games, and time away from Snapchat and TikTok? During car rides, at a doctors office, or at the dinner table, do you all pause, take time to be bored, or take part in a healthy debate, or is everyone head down, staring at a screen? A huge challenge for parents of Gen's Z and Alpha is the incredible distractions that are everywhere. This leads to significant struggles listening and engaging others, arguments and quick tempers, challenges paying attention, learning deficits in school, even higher levels of anxiety and unhealthy stress. The following linked article is one that hits home on electronic device time, and the dangers it brings to the young brain. Read the article and work to set some family expectations from the 'Train Their Brain' pointers at the end. [Why are kids so impatient?](#)

Also, if you didn't see the podcast from last month's newsletter on "[The Anxious Generation](#)," please make time to watch this today. What you see will shock you, challenge your mindset on your teen's use of, and limits on, social media and smartphones, and help you bring about more free play and independence as a family. Learn more at [LetGrow.org](#).

Nathan O'Dell
Principal, Geneseo Middle School

Severe and Winter Weather Tips

- Prepare your middle schooler by making them dress warm and bring a coat. Recess is outdoors if it feels like 10 degrees or warmer, and it's COLD out!
- If school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, all GMS after school activities and programs are also cancelled.

The rest of the story...

Pgs 2 & 3 Life at GMS, Student Spotlight, and Important Parent Info
Pg 4 Do you know what your child is reading? Trending #BookTok

Important Dates

View our online school calendar [here](#).



February 2nd-6th

- School Counselor Appreciation Week

February 6th

- Rehears-A-Thon 3:30 - 9 pm

February 9th

- HS/MS PTA Meeting 4 pm

February 13th

- School Improvement Day - 11:40 am dismissal

February 21st

- Recital at GHS

February 27th & 28th

- State Chess Tournament, Peoria, IL

February 28th

- Wrestling Regionals

March 2nd-6th

- School Social Worker Appreciation Week

March 6th

- No School-Teacher Institute

March 7th

- Wrestling Sectionals

March 12th & 13th

- Jazz Band/Swing Choir Fine Arts Day

March 14th

- Wrestling State

March 16th-20th

- Spring Break

March 24th-27th

- GMS IAR Assessment

Geneseo Middle School News



GMS Student Spotlight

This year's Eric Dietrich Memorial Basketball Shootout was a huge success. The Dietrich family said, "We are so excited with the turnout that we had and the money we are able to donate to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. With donations and raffle money, we raised \$5500! The teams that attended were very courteous and the kids asked many questions about Eric and his story, Thank You!"

From your GMS Team

- **#Trending@GMS** - Do you have an 8th grader? Then it may be hard to believe, but it's time for **Freshman Course Scheduling**. Please note that 2026-27 GHS Course Selection is open in Skyward Family Access from February 2nd through 9th. Access to schedule will open through your 8th grade student Skyward login.
- **Congratulations** to all of our GMS Spelling Bee participants, and to our top spellers (see picture below). Jack Sullivan will soon represent GMS at the regional Spelling Bee in Moline, IL at the Bartlett Performing Arts Center. Go get em Jack!
- The 2026 **On the Same Page (OSP)** community-wide book read is *Final Season*, by Tim Green. This is a powerful story about a teen quarterback named Ben, who's father, a former NFL athlete, is diagnosed with ALS in the middle of his team's drive towards a championship. Take a moment and watch this year's [OSP Video](#), pick up a free book at any OSP location in town, and get "[On the Same Page](#)."
- Take the **American Heart Association Kids Heart Challenge**. Your child, and your Principal Mr. O'Dell, have committed to take the challenge by: being prepared to save a life learning hands-only CPR, learning to take care of their own heart and brain, and raising funds to help kids born with heart defects. Join us by completing Finn's Mission, and donating to support heart research, by [clicking here today](#). Our goal for 2026 is \$5,000 by February 27th, let's do this!
- Check out our **Geneseo Schools website** for [Upcoming Athletic and Extracurricular special events](#).
- [Click here](#) for our **School Nurse website** and info regarding your child's health.





Dear Families,

As teachers have noticed an uptick in students bringing from home free-reading books targeted at older audiences, I was asked to share a little about changes in publishing vocabulary and where to get advice as you consider the reading material your child is requesting. Many students who use TikTok are familiar with #BookTok. While this hashtag has done a tremendous job of encouraging reading and exposing people to books and authors, not all of the books shared on #BookTok are intended for a middle grade audience. The great majority of #BookTok contributors are women ages 14-30.

Decisions on what free-reading books are most appropriate for your family are always between you and your child; however, sometimes it can be challenging to help guide your middle grade reader when they are asking for books that are popular in their social media feeds or are brought to school by other students. Most students are good at self-regulating and will abandon a book that is too mature for them in some way, but sometimes you may want to intervene. Talking to your child about what they are reading is a great first step. Asking what the book is about or what they like about it allows you to listen for anything concerning that you could talk about together. This also helps you find common ground if you want to steer your child toward a more age relevant book with a similar topic.

Unfortunately, you cannot judge a book by its cover. Books like Hannah Grace's *Icebreaker* may look like a sweet YA romance with cartoon like covers, but they may contain very explicit, unhealthy relationships. If you are looking for what others have said about a book, answers are a quick search away. On the Amazon website you can read the book summary, which almost always gives you an age for the main characters/protagonists. Amazon also usually lists the publisher's target age for the book's audience. There are terms for these general age categories. Middle Grade means the target audience is grades 4-7. Young Adult means the protagonists are high school aged, but when a book says YA, try to find the publisher's age recommendation, too. Some YA are intended for grade 7 and up and others are very solidly for mature high schoolers and will be listed as grades 9-12 or 10-12. New Adult protagonists are likely in the 18-30 years old range. New Adult authors are very popular on #BookTok (i.e. Casey McQuiston, Ana Huang, Hannah Grace, Rebecca Yarros) and usually have more explicitly mature content than even a book considered Adult. To put this in perspective, Adult romances from Nicholas Sparks and Danielle Steele are tame compared to the steamy New Adult romances published today.

Another resource that is helpful when determining what is in a book is [Common Sense Media](#). On this website, you can search for reader-provided reviews that not only challenge or reinforce the publisher's targeted age, but they will break down content into categories highlighting both the strengths and concerns about each book. If it's a Young Adult title you are concerned about, you might also find a professional review for it on the School Library Journal's website.

As a librarian, I'm excited any time kids want to read for their own enjoyment; however, I always want to keep their development in mind. If they are asking for authors like Colleen Hoover that they are seeing on #BookTok and you don't think they are ready for them, you might try suggesting a milder YA romance alternative from authors like Kasie West or Jenny Han. All kids develop at their own pace and all families have different expectations, but we can work together to help them make informed choices about the media they consume. As I am an avid reader of middle grade, young adult, and adult novels, please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Jeanne Brucher, GMS and GHS Librarian, jbrucher@geneseoschools.org