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MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026 | PORT CLINTON, OHIO | PORTCLINTONNEWSHERALD.COM

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Spike in school supply costs hits parents



Major school supply brands have increased their prices in recent months, citing inflation, rising gas prices and tariffs.
TYLER ORSBURN/PANAMA CITY NEWS HERALD

Brands cite higher prices from gas, import duties

Christopher Cann, Clayton Park and Erick Trevino
USA TODAY NETWORK

Brandi McGrath usually buys quality, long-lasting school supplies for her 9-year-old son and his teachers. But sharp increases in the cost of folders, pencils and other products have forced her to cut back and search for cheaper alternatives.

“It’s insane how expensive things have gotten,” said McGrath, 48, of Salt Lake City. “I’m looking for every sale I can.”

In Daytona Beach, Florida, Karin Kaiser was similarly struck by the cost of back-to-school shopping this year.

“It is crazy,” she said, estimating that she and her husband spent over \$100 on

just notebooks and loose-leaf paper for their two daughters. “That’s not counting what we had to pay for back-to-school clothes, shoes, haircuts.”

The cost of a typical school supply list – including notebooks, paper, pencils and glue sticks – is nearly \$175, almost 8% higher than in 2025, according to an analysis by the Groundwork Collaborative and The Century Foundation, two progressive think tanks.

Some essential items such as lunch boxes, notebooks and tissues cost 20% or more than they did a year ago, the analysis found, pointing in part to the effects of President Donald Trump’s tariff agenda, which the Federal Reserve said raised the cost of many products manufactured overseas for American consumers.

Over the same period, the cost of electronics such as headphones rose 6.6%, the report found. Meanwhile, typical lunch items cost 10.9% more than

they did in 2025, the analysis said, citing price hikes on products including blueberries and deli meat.

The rising prices come as Americans are already struggling with inflation and high gas prices stemming from the war with Iran, forcing many to take on debt and stretch their meals.

A survey by Credit Karma found that 57% of parents are entering the back-to-school season with credit card debt, and nearly half plan to pursue new credit to help pay for back-to-school expenses.

Major school supply brands have increased their prices in recent months, citing inflation, rising gas prices and tariffs.

Newell Brands, which owns well-known school supply brands such as Sharpie, Expo, Paper Mate and Elmer’s glue, increased prices to offset more

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Attendance law for Ohio schools has changed

Grace Tucker
Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ohio parents might get more calls about their student’s missed school days this year.

That’s because of changes in state law that activate the “chronically absent” label – or missing 10% of instructional time for any purpose, including excused and unexcused absences, like doctors appointments and staying home due to weather, respectively.

So, more absences will be monitored by schools, and parents can expect to be contacted more frequently about those absences. The idea is to inform parents of their student’s absences earlier and intervene if the student needs more support to get to school.

While both excused and unexcused absences have always been used to calculate chronic absenteeism, the legislative changes made in last year’s state budget require districts to respond to attendance issues sooner. The law also does away with the “excessively absent” label schools once reserved for students who reached a certain amount of unexcused or non-medically excused absences.

In short: Even medically excused absences now count toward the attendance thresholds that trigger school intervention. And parents can expect to hear from their district if their student misses as few as two or three days

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Habitat for Humanity breaks ground on affordable homes in Port Clinton

News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

Habitat for Humanity of Ottawa County officially broke ground on Oakland Acres, its newest housing development in Port Clinton, during a groundbreaking ceremony held Aug. 12.

The groundbreaking marked the beginning of a new chapter for Habitat. Once complete, Oakland Acres is expected to include 15-17 affordable homes, creating new opportunities for local families to achieve affordable homeownership and put down roots in the Port Clinton community.

“This development represents years of planning and a major investment in the future of affordable housing in Otta-

The Aug. 12 groundbreaking also celebrated the partnerships that continue to make Habitat’s work possible throughout Ottawa County.

wa County,” said Debi Heiks, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Ottawa County.

Many organizations, people put project together

Habitat for Humanity of Ottawa County extends its sincere appreciation to the Ohio Department of Development, as well as the partners, contractors, sponsors, donors and volunteers

who contributed their time, expertise and resources to move the development forward.

“For me, one of the best parts of the groundbreaking was seeing so many of the people who have supported this project gathered together in one place,” said Valerie Winterfield, community engagement director for Habitat for Humanity of Ottawa County. “A development like Oakland Acres truly takes a community. From our partners and contractors to our sponsors, donors and volunteers, so many people have played a part in getting us to this point. We are incredibly grateful, and we can’t wait to watch Oakland Acres

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