

# Cougar Connect

April 19, 2024



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information)

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## A Note From Mrs. Anderson

Dear families,

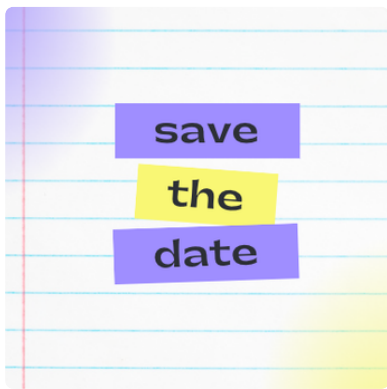


This week, several grade levels experienced a field trip opportunity. Through these field trips, students learned content through real-world experiences and were provided with opportunities to connect and reflect on their learning.

On another note, today wraps up Public Schools Volunteer Week. Thank you to those of you who volunteer at OTE in any capacity. Your willingness and helping hand continually benefits our school community!

Enjoy your weekend, families!

Sincerely,  
Alicia Anderson  
Assistant Principal



### Save-the-Date

#### April

**Thursday, April 25:** Fifth Grade Music Program; Dress Rehearsal 2:30 PM; Performance 7:00 PM (OTMS)

**Friday, April 26:** Birthday Book Lunch: March, April and May Birthdays

**Tuesday, April 30:** Scholastic Book Fair

**Tuesday, April 30:** Conscious Discipline and Literacy Night; 5:30-6:15 PM

#### May

**Wednesday, May 1 - Thursday, May 2:** Scholastic Book Fair

**Friday, May 3:** PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

**Monday, May 6- Friday, May 10:** Staff Appreciation Week

**Monday, May 6:** BLT Meeting; 4:00 PM-5:00 PM

**Friday, May 10:** All Staff Meeting; 8:00 AM-8:20 AM

**Tuesday, May 18:** PTO Restaurant Night | Yourtini, All Day

**Friday, May 24:** Last Day of School | Half-Day Dismissal; 11:45



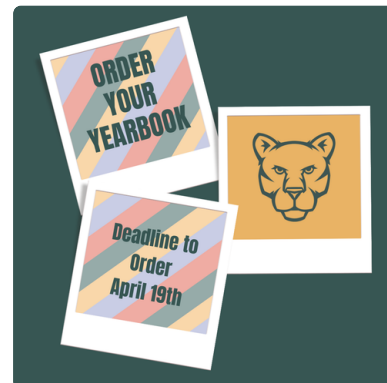
PTO Events | April

## PTO Calendar of Events

For a complete list of all upcoming PTO events, visit [Overland Trail Elementary PTO - Upcoming Events \(otepto.org\)](https://www.otepto.org).

### Yearbook Orders – Now Open

If you didn't order a yearbook for your child through ParentVue during enrollment, its time to place your order! **Deadline to order yearbooks is April 19th**, late requests to purchase after this date cannot be accommodated. Place your order here, [Overland Trail Elementary PTO - 2023-2024 Yearbook \(otepto.org\)](https://www.otepto.org).



### Sponsor a \$10 gift card for Staff Appreciation Week

Every year during Teacher Appreciation Week (5/6 - 5/10) the PTO does something special for the Staff each day of that week. We cap off the week by giving a \$10 Amazon gift card to EVERY Staff member. Typically, the PTO asks for your support for the various meals and treats provided that week. This year instead, we're asking for a \$10 contribution to support the gift cards. Thank you for helping us show our gratitude to our wonderful OTE Staff, we appreciate your support. [Overland Trail Elementary PTO - Staff Appreciation Gift Card Donation \(otepto.org\)](https://www.otepto.org).



### Book Fair – April 30th – May 2nd

Book Fair is coming up and we need your help! Volunteers are needed! Please click [HERE](#) to grab a volunteer slot to help make Book Fair a success. And mark your calendars for all the Book Fair Fun!

April 30th - May 2nd: Class Shopping, April 30th: Family Night, 5-5:30 p.m. - VIP Shopping for PTO Members, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. - Family shopping.



### 24/25 Birthday Marquee Spots

While the majority of our Birthday Marquee spots sold during our online Auction, a few spots remain for the 2024/2025 school year. The PTO offers **3** name spots for each month to celebrate your student on our school marquee during their birthday month. If you would like to grab one of the remaining spots, you may do so here: <https://www.otepto.org/birthdaymarquee>



### ☆☆ DEI Spotlight

April is Celebrate Diversity Month



Started in 2004, Celebrate Diversity Month was organized to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, we hope that people will get a deeper understanding of each other.

We challenge everyone to broaden their view of the world, and take some time to learn about cultures, populations or religions that are different from your own.



## **BVEF Champion for Students Award: Nominations Open!**

Do you know an educator who cultivates a learning environment where relationships are the cornerstone, where kindness and compassion are guiding principles, and making a profound difference in the lives of young people is not just a goal but a lived reality? Now is your chance to recognize those educators whose impact extends far beyond their role, shaping the trajectory of our students' journeys and leaving an enduring legacy of excellence.



### **Nominations are officially open for BVEF's new Champion for Students Award.**

Anyone in the Blue Valley Schools' community is welcome to nominate an educator (any staff member, e.g., teacher, paraprofessional, administrator, kitchen manager, etc.) for this prestigious honor. Nominate a Champion for Students today! <https://bit.ly/BVEFCFS2024>.

Winners will receive one of the following:

\$2500 cash prize (subject to tax)

\$2500 grant for their learning environment

### **Register for the 2024-25 school year today**

[Elementary school registration](#) for the 2024-25 school year is open and [online now](#) for current students. Registration is required annually and is the time to update your child's information and pay fees. Completing registration confirms that your child will attend school in August. Thank you for providing important information as part of this annual process. For more registration information, visit [www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration).

### **Elementary Plan/Collaboration Time Update**

Thank you to all the families who took the time to provide feedback on elementary plan and collaboration time. Your input is invaluable as the district strives to support student learning outcomes through enhanced teacher plan and collaboration time.

As the district plans for the upcoming 2024-25 school year, we remain steadfast in this commitment. Our focus is on fostering professional collaboration among our dedicated teaching staff and ensuring they have the time and resources needed to excel in their roles. Any modifications to the 2024-25 school calendar that are approved by the Board of Education will be shared with families before the start of the school year.

### **Blue Valley Ability Showcase**



## CALLING ALL PERFORMERS AND ARTISTS!

The Blue Valley Ability Showcase is back!!! Any Blue Valley SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT or STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY that is interested in participating in the Blue Valley Ability Showcase on the evening of April 26, 2024, at Blue Valley West High School, please visit the link below for more information and to apply: <https://forms.gle/m7VzrGZCaKPjtrbs9>



Deadline to apply is April 12, 2024

PLEASE JOIN US FOR  
**CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE AND LITERACY NIGHT**  
APRIL 30TH IN POD A  
5:30 TO 6:15 PM



**Conscious Discipline for Caregivers:**  
Join staff to learn more about the Conscious Discipline program we utilize at OTE and how to incorporate some of the Conscious Discipline practices at home. The Conscious Discipline program helps children and adults learn how to manage their own upsets and understand their own feelings all leading to improved self-regulation

**Literacy Night for Students:**  
OTE students can participate in literacy activities focusing on syllables while parents learn nearby. Students will have the opportunity to fill up their literacy punchcard and receive a free book! (Siblings that do not attend OTE will need to stay with their caregiver).

**Putting It All Together:**  
Reading together with your child is a great way to create a connection as well as increase student vocabulary and background knowledge. Mrs. Armistead will share some quick information on the public library, e-book options as well as book recommendations that align with Conscious Discipline.

## Community Celebrations and Observances - to promote awareness and appreciation of our Blue Valley families.

Some April Celebrations & Observances:

- World Autism Awareness Month - aims to increase understanding and acceptance of people with autism.
- National Arab American Heritage Month - recognizes the achievements and contributions of Arab Americans to society, culture, and American history.
- Eid al Fitr - marks the end of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting. Some families will celebrate the "Festival of Breaking the Fast" by joining in communal prayer and meals, visiting family, gift-giving, and charity.



- Day of Silence - April 14 - a national, student-led demonstration where LGBTQ+ students and allies take a vow of silence to protest the silencing and discrimination of LGBTQ+ people in schools.
- Passover - evening of April 22-30 - a Jewish holiday commemorating the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt. Some families will observe the holiday with a special meal, called a Seder, eating foods of symbolic significance and reciting traditional prayers.

## Incoming Kindergarten Information

Dear families,

We are excited to welcome your new kindergarten student for the 2024-25 school year. Please review/complete the steps below. Your timely registration will ensure our team is prepared. We will send more information about Kindergarten Round-Up in a future message.

**Step 1:** [Please watch this school welcome video.](#)

**Step 2: Do you have questions about kindergarten programs in Blue Valley? (Click on the blue links below)**

- What do kindergarten students experience during a [typical day](#)?
- What opportunities are provided within our partnership with Greenbush for [Virtual Education](#)?
- How can I learn about the [Chinese immersion](#) option?

**Step 3: Is there another language spoken in your home?**

If so, please complete this [form](#). Otherwise, move to step 4.

**Step 4: How do I register my child?**

🌐 To view registration instructions in a language other than English, [click here](#).

To begin the registration process for the 2024-25 school year, simply go to [www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration) and click **New Student Registration** in the Useful Links. Families new to Blue Valley will be asked to create an online parent account. Online registration will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and it is an important step in getting your student started with kindergarten! You will be asked to pay fees later this spring.

**Please note:** If your child is currently enrolled in the Blue Valley early childhood program, you will not complete online registration at this time. Families transitioning from early childhood to kindergarten will have an opportunity to verify the information and complete the registration process later this spring.

To make Blue Valley's Online Registration process smooth and convenient, please have the following information available:

- Student proof of identity (birth certificate)
- Emergency contact name(s) and phone number(s)
- Doctor, dentist and preferred hospital contact info
- Immunization record and health assessment (physical)
- Proof of residency (purchase contract, lease or current utility bill)
- Custodial documentation (if applicable)



- Previous school records and contact info
- IEP or 504 Plan (if applicable)

**Tip:** As soon as your child's registration is complete, you will begin receiving all-school communication items that will help welcome you and your family into the school community. [This newsletter](#) includes important information regarding registration for the new school year, school supplies, and PickUp Patrol, our dismissal system used at OTE.

We recommend that you keep the link to this newsletter accessible, as it will be updated as we receive new information to share.

If you have any questions, please call the Overland Trail Elementary office at 913-239-7000.

**Important Dates for Kindergarten Families**

- Kindergarten Online Registration Begins | Tuesday, February 20
- Kindergarten Round-Up Sessions | Friday, April 12
- Kindergarten Orientation Sessions | Wednesday, August 13
- First full day of school for Kindergarten | Thursday, August 14

Thank you,  
Erica McDonald  
Principal

Alicia Anderson  
Assistant Principal

**INCOMING KINDERGARTEN DATES**  
**2024-2025**

**Kindergarten Online Registration Begins**  
**February 20**

**Kindergarten Round-Up Sessions**  
**April 12**

**Kindergarten Orientation Sessions**  
**August 13**

**First full day of school for Kindergarten**  
**August 14**

**Contact your neighborhood school for more information.**

## Boundary and Neighborhood Changes for OTE

Our OTE community will be impacted by some neighborhood boundary changes. We will be welcoming some amazing, new families to our school this year. At the June 2023 Board of Education meeting, the board adopted boundary adjustments that address elementary school enrollment and building capacity issues. These will begin for the 2024-25 school year. The following neighborhoods are impacted:

- Autumn Park (Arcadia), Villages of Overland View and Executive Hills boundaries will be adjusted to attend Indian Valley Elementary. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Oxford Middle and Blue Valley Northwest.
- Deer Creek boundaries will be adjusted to attend Overland Trail Elementary.
- Sandstone Creek, Savoy and Plaza Gardens boundaries would be adjusted to attend Harmony Elementary. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Harmony Middle and Blue Valley Northwest.
- Villas of Carrington Square Area boundaries will be adjusted to attend Heartland Elementary
- Glen Abbey & Villas of Chapel Green, and Highland Villas and Highlands Creek boundaries will be adjusted to attend **Prairie Star Elementary**. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Prairie Star Middle and Blue Valley High.

## OTE Volunteer Agreement

In order to ensure the safety of our students and staff, the admin team, in collaboration with the office staff, has devised a volunteer agreement that all volunteers must acknowledge and sign in the front office prior to volunteering in the building. Effective immediately, this volunteer agreement





### School Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for offering to volunteer at Overland Trail Elementary in the Blue Valley School District. We value having parents and caregivers in the building to support our students, staff, and school community.

The following agreement establishes an understanding of the role of a volunteer and ensures and understanding of the volunteering guidelines and school culture.

As a volunteer at Overland Trail Elementary, my initials below indicate that I understand and agree with the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I must have my driver's license present at arrival to access the building.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I will sign in at the office and acquire a volunteer sticker to wear visibly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I will report to my designated place of support and attend to my requested task.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I will stay in my designated place of work and will not transition to places where my support is not requested.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I understand volunteering is a complimentary service to Overland Trail Elementary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I will respect student confidentiality and not discuss my observations or experiences with other individuals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I understand that transporting or instructing students is not a volunteer's role.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I will inform the school's administrators of any issue that may impact my service as a volunteer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I will adhere to the Blue Valley School District board policy CIVILITY TOWARD STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES 4341 (see opposite page)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Upon conclusion of my volunteering, I will sign out in the front office.

I understand this agreement and will follow the guidelines set forth:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Volunteers need to fill out this agreement once per school year.*

## New Assessment Tool Replaces Longtime MAP Tests

A new assessment taking the place of MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) testing has made evaluating data easier for teachers and decreased testing time for students, allowing for more focused instruction time.

The district's goal for the school year is to have 84% of students who take the assessment score in the low-risk or college-ready category – or the 40th percentile.

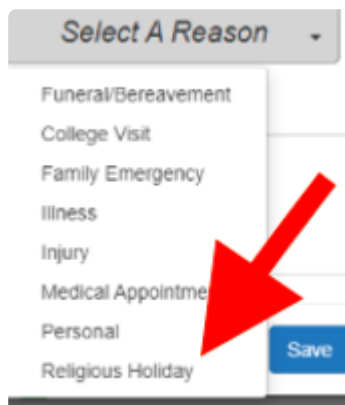
To learn more about Fastbridge, read [this Learning Connection story](#).

## Out of the Country Information

✈️ This important message is for any family or staff that will **travel out of the United States** during school breaks. [Click here](#) to read the restrictions and recommendations for out of the country travel. Canvas, Classlink, and email are not accessible out of the country unless you have a **personal device** with a VPN on it.



We do not recommend BV Devices leave the country.



## Reporting Religious Absences

Did you know? Families can select "Religious Holiday" as an option for a child's absence in ParentVue, when applicable. This notation could be helpful to our school staff so they can plan accordingly for your student's absence.

## Important Travel Outside of the USA

This important message is for any family or staff that will **travel out of the United States** during the school year. Please [click here](#) to read the restrictions and recommendations for Out of the Country travel. Blue Valley resources such as Canvas, Classlink, and school email are not accessible out of the country unless you have a **personal device** with a **VPN** on it.



## Nut-Safer Guidelines

At OTE, we have a wide variety of food allergens and restrictions. To remain safe and to prevent exclusion, we don't accept food, including items from the Nut-Safe List, to serve in school or send home with students for birthday celebrations. This complies with our **non-edible birthday celebration**. Essentially, we must remember that sending food home is a risk for children as they transition between school and home, putting our families in an undesirable position when they cannot eat what is provided.

Blue Valley (BV) School's Nut Safer Guidelines for daily snacks will be implemented throughout the school year.

- Classroom snacks must be from the Nut Safer list.
- Nut Safer seating is available in the café during lunch.

We appreciate your support as we work to be more preventative with food safety measures to enhance student and staff safety.

The complete **Nut Safer Foods** and BV Guidelines can be found [here](#).

[School Supply Lists](#)

[District Calendar \(2023-2024\)](#)

[Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage](#)

[Family Handbook](#)

**Erica McDonald, Principal**

Email: [ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org)

Website: [www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE)

Location: [6225 West 133rd Street, Overland Park, KS, USA](#)

Phone: (913) 239-7000

Twitter: [@OTEMcDonald](https://twitter.com/OTEMcDonald)



### **Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal**

**Email:** [ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org)

**Website:** [www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE)

**Location:** [6335 West 135th Street, Overland Park, KS, USA](#)

**Phone:** (913) 239-7000

**Twitter:** [@OTEAnderson](https://twitter.com/OTEAnderson)



### **Office Staff**

- Robin Warren, Administration Assistant/Bookkeeper
- Yolonda Merritt, Administration Assistant/Registrar
- Debby Alexander, Attendance

**Website:** [www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/OTE)

**Location:** [6225 West 133rd Street, Overland Park, KS, USA](#)

**Phone:** (913) 239-7000

**Twitter:** [@OTECougars](https://twitter.com/OTECougars)



**Erica McDonald**

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters