

Cougar Connect

October 11, 2024

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



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Dear Families,

We look forward to welcoming each of you to our 📖 Book Fair Family Night this coming Tuesday, which will be combined with our 🙏 Conscious Discipline Family Night. Our Conscious Discipline Family Night will provide a unique approach to discipline, presented by Tabatha Rosproy, former Kansas Teacher of the Year. Please use this [link](#) to RSVP to the Conscious Discipline Family Night.

Please be mindful of this very important safety reminder. Periodically, OTE students are dropped off at school in the morning before the doors are unlocked or staff is present to welcome them. We believe this is an unsafe practice and ask parents to wait to drop off their children until our adult staff is on duty at 8:25 AM to provide supervision. I appreciate your cooperation.

The carline procedures have been methodically instituted with the help of the city, Overland Park Police Department, and Blue Valley Safety and Security. The carline may not be ideal for families, but it is a system created to ensure efficiency and pedestrian safety. We are seeing an increase in carline practices that should be corrected. Please read below regarding the specifics of arrival and dismissal.

Arrival

The carline begins to move at 8:25 when the doors open for students to enter the building. At this time, it is expected that car riders will be in the carline and traffic flow will continue consistently and efficiently without the disruption of pedestrians interfering with traffic. Both crosswalks at the front entrance are closed to pedestrians beginning at 8:25. If you would like to drive to the school and walk your child to the entrance, you will need to arrive before 8:25, and park in the lot south of

the building and walk your child along the sidewalk to the front of the building. Lastly, drivers and adult passengers must stay in their vehicle to support a student's exit from the car. Staff will provide support to sustain carline safety and efficiency.

Dismissal

The carline for OTE begins at 3:15. If you arrive before this time, you must park in the parking lot south of OTE to avoid disturbing the middle school dismissal traffic. If you would like to drive to OTE and walk to get your child, you will have to be in the south parking lot by 3:15, or your car rider will have to be dismissed by the carline, as it is intended for car riders. If you would rather your child be a walker, you may avoid the carline altogether by changing their dismissal to a walker and walking to pickup through the walker doors on the west side of the building.

OTE is a rather largely populated school, so the arrival and dismissal process will take some time to ensure every student is safely accounted for during these times. We understand the carline is extended; however, to clear the main road efficiently and effectively, we must adhere to the carline procedures and avoid alternatives that strain staff, students, and carline drivers who adhere to the policies in place. We appreciate your attention to following the staff, student, and family safety guidelines.

I wish you and your families an incredible weekend in the beautiful weather.

Kindly,
Erica McDonald
Principal

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Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

October

Tuesday, October 15-Thursday, October 17: Scholastic Book Fair

Tuesday, October 15: Book Fair Family Night; 5:30 PM-7:30 PM

Tuesday, October 15: Conscious Discipline Family Night; 6:00-7:00 PM

Wednesday, October 16: DEI Council Meeting; 4:00 PM-5:00 PM

Thursday, October 17: Donuts with Grownups; 7:15 AM-8:15 AM

Friday, October 18: Skate Party at Skate City; 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

Tuesday, October 22: Fall Conferences; 4:00 PM-7:40 PM

Wednesday, October 23: Fall Conferences; 4:00 PM-7:40 PM

Thursday, October 24: No School EC-8 | Fall Conferences; 8:20 AM-3:40 PM

Friday, October 25: No School | District-Wide Break

Thursday, October 31: Fall Celebration

The PTO is already in full swing for the year ahead. Follow these simple steps to ensure you don't miss any of the fun!

otepto.org

DEI Spotlight

☆☆ DEI Spotlight ☆☆

What is a Parent-Teacher Conference? You've asked, and we are delivering the information to you in a more clear format. Click [here](#) to learn more about Parent-Teacher Conferences and the purpose behind this valuable experience.

Are you interested in joining OTE's DEI Council? If so, please submit your contact information here: [DEI Council | Family Interest](#).

What to Expect:

- Teacher will talk about how your child is doing in class.
- Go over some test scores with you.
- Time to discuss any questions or concerns.
- **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO ATTEND CONFERENCES.**



In-Person or Virtual:

If your conference is in person please be on time to be respectful to the parents attending before and after you. Please realize that if you're attending on zoom, the teacher will join the meeting no earlier than 2 minutes before your Zoom time.



Reminders:

Intervention Teachers, ESOL, Counselor, Social Worker, and Principals may attend certain conferences. If you would like a Specials Teacher to attend please reach out to your teacher.

Community Celebrations and Observances



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

Some October Celebrations & Observances:

- **Down Syndrome Awareness Month** - celebrates those with Down syndrome and raises awareness of their abilities and accomplishments. The colors blue and yellow symbolize support for the Down syndrome community.
- **National Bullying Prevention Month and Bullying Prevention Day (October 2nd)** raise awareness about the harmful effects of bullying and promote kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.
- **Filipino-American Month** - celebrates the heritage and achievements of the second-largest Asian American population in the U.S.
- **Rosh Hashanah** - the Jewish New Year. The observance begins at sundown on Wednesday, October 2, and continues through the evening of October 4. Some families will attend synagogue services, eat apples and honey for a sweet new year, and/or abstain from work, school, activities, and technology use.
- **Yom Kippur** - the Jewish day of Atonement (Forgiveness). The holiest day of the year starts at sundown on October 11. For some, families may fast for 24 hours, attend services at synagogue, and/or abstain from work, school, activities, and technology use.

OTE | PTO



PTO Events | October

2024 Fall Book Fair Volunteers Needed for Next Week!

Let's make this year's Book Fair an event to remember! We're looking for volunteers to help with the registers and assist the kids while they shop for the fair! We'd also appreciate donations of plastic grocery bags and mochi squishes.

[Book Fair Volunteer Sign Up Here!](#)

Each classroom will have a designated day and time during the school day to visit the Book Fair as a class. We also have multiple Book Fair Family Activities planned—we hope to see you there!

TUESDAY OCTOBER 15

5:00-5:30 PM PTO Member VIP Shopping

5:30-7:00 PM Family Night

THURSDAY OCTOBER 17

Donuts with Grownups 7-8:15 AM

You're Invited: DEI Council Meeting October 16th

We're excited to kick off our first meeting of the year next Wednesday at Overland Trail Elementary. This will be a great opportunity to share with you our unique background, look back at last year's achievements and look forward to our plans for this schoolyear. We are looking forward to collaborate with you, share ideas, and work together to foster an inclusive environment for all our students.

We hope to see you there!

Melanie Shashindranath

Carolina Sampaio

Barbara Van Hamme

Costume Skate Party on Friday, October 18th!

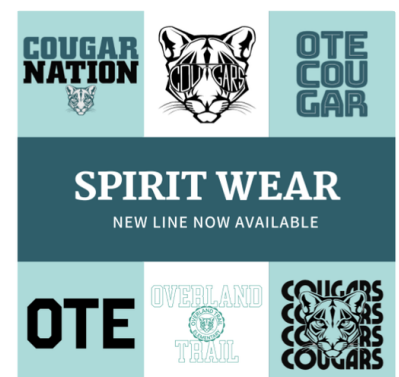
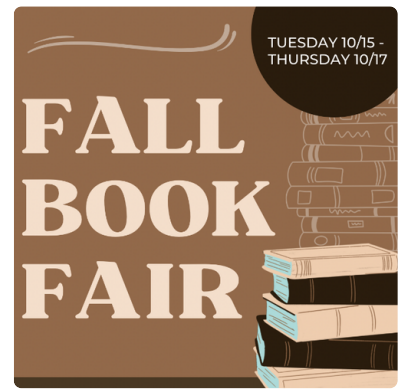
Join us for a Costume Skate Party and wear your favorite costume! Friday, October 18th from 5-7PM at Skate City Overland Park.

New Spirit Wear Line Now Available!

We're excited to announce the launch of our brand-new Spirit Wear line, and trust us—you're going to love it! With multiple designs, products, and price points to choose from, you can show off your school pride in style! Best of all, the store is 100% online and open 24/7, so you can browse and shop whenever it's convenient for you. Orders will ship directly to your house. Visit the store, grab your gear, and get ready to rock that school spirit from head to toe.

Happy shopping!

[Spirit Wear Online Store](#)



Upload your pictures for the Yearbook!

Your picture uploads throughout the year make the yearbook extra special. Please use the link below to upload pictures from school events, class parties, extracurricular activities, etc. Be sure to choose a folder for your pictures to help us keep them organized. Only the PTO will be able to see and access the photos you share. [Click here to upload pictures from the Carnival and other events!](#)

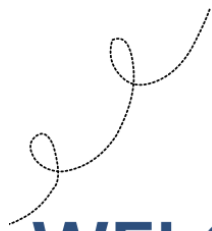


PTO Calendar of Events

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

Welcome to Overland Trail Elementary

**Welcome to
OVERLAND TRAIL ELEMENTARY!**



WELCOME TO



Overland Trail Elementary

Kirsten Henzlik

SCHOOLING: IN THE FALL OF 2005, I GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE IN DEAF EDUCATION. I RECEIVED MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN DEAF STUDIES: TEACHER EDUCATION FROM MACMURRAY COLLEGE, A PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE IN JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS PRIOR TO THAT.

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING IN SCHOOLS: I AM STARTING MY 22ND YEAR AS AN ITINERANT TEACHER OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING IN THE BLUE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT. BEFORE THAT, I TAUGHT IN THE LAWRENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR 6 YEARS. ALTOGETHER, I HAVE BEEN TEACHING FOR 28 YEARS.

YOUR ROLE AT OTE: DEAF/HARD OF HEARING TEACHER

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I BECAME AN AUNT 5 TIMES OVER IN 5 DAYS.

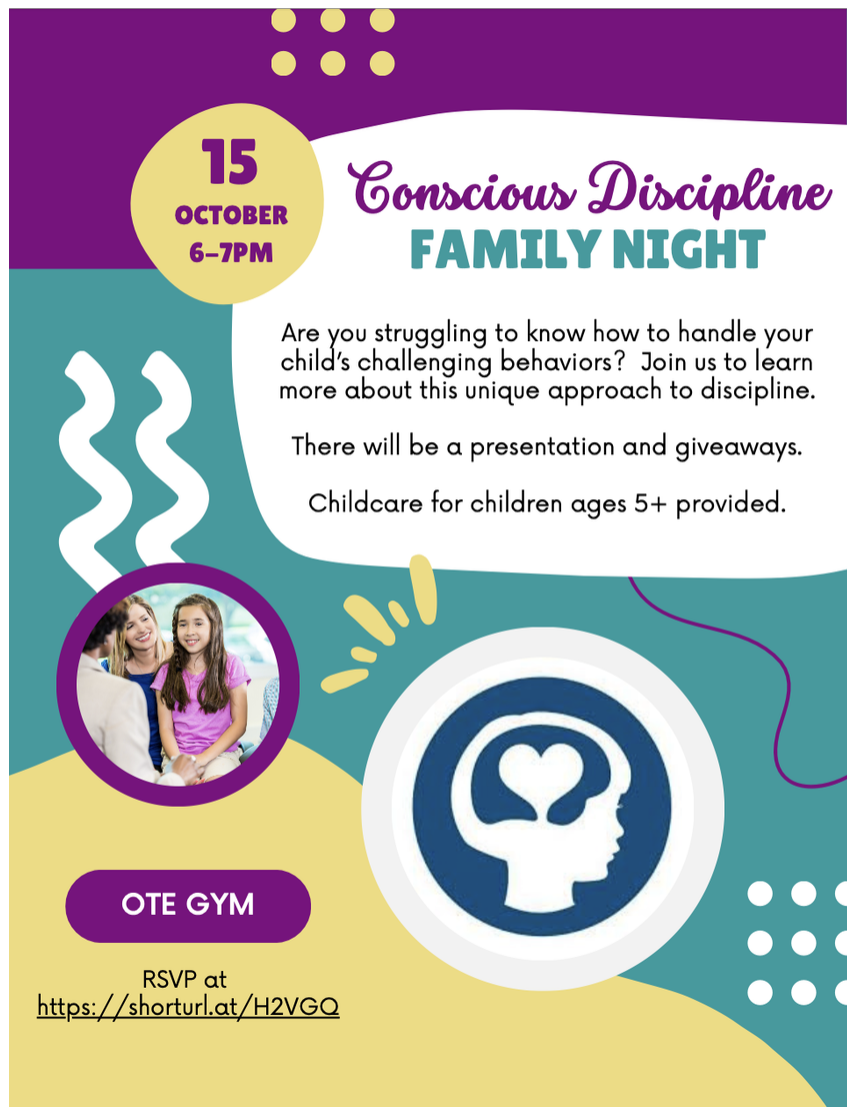


Every Child Can Read Act Information

Every Child Can Read Act Information

On July 1, 2023, the Every Child Can Read Act went into effect in Kansas. The intent of this legislation was to address literacy initiatives with a target of ensuring students reach grade level benchmarks by third grade. In Blue Valley, we prioritize partnership with families in conjunction with high quality, evidence-based instruction rooted in the science of reading. This has been and remains a large area of focus for professional learning. Rather than limit conversations about reading progress to 3rd grade, it is our practice to do so at each grade level. KSDE has provided a summary of this Act which can be found [here](#). Our teachers look forward to talking with you about your child during Parent-Teacher conferences.

Conscious Discipline Family Night | October 15th



15
OCTOBER
6-7PM

Conscious Discipline FAMILY NIGHT

Are you struggling to know how to handle your child's challenging behaviors? Join us to learn more about this unique approach to discipline.

There will be a presentation and giveaways.

Childcare for children ages 5+ provided.

OTE GYM

RSVP at
<https://shorturl.at/H2VGQ>

Canvas Family Resources

The Family Resources Canvas Course is now available for Blue Valley families. This course is designed to help families navigate Canvas, whether beginning or looking for a reminder. Additionally, the course includes Canvas guides for Observers (the role assigned to parents).



Enroll in this course: <https://bvusd.instructure.com/enroll/73CN87>

Blue Valley Unmuted | Understanding Threats and Their Consequences

Blue Valley Unmuted | Understanding Threats and Their Consequences

In the latest Blue Valley Schools' BV Unmuted podcast episode, Dr. Katie Collier, Deputy Superintendent for Learning, is joined by Overland Park Interim Police Chief Simon Happer and Director of Safety and Security Dan Carney to discuss school safety and the importance of understanding threats and their consequences.

To learn more about how families can partner with the district to ensure a safe and secure environment for our students and staff, listen to the podcast: [BV Unmuted: Understanding Threats and Their Consequences](#).

Halloween Celebration

On Thursday, October 31, we will have our school-wide Halloween celebration. We are excited to welcome our families to the school parade, but due to space constraints, we will only have room parents and three volunteers per class to enter the building to facilitate class parties. Additionally, we discourage siblings who do not attend OTE to attend. Please look forward to communication from your room parents soon providing more details about volunteering for this year's class celebrations.

Food

Provided food will need to come from our district-approved [Nut-Safer Guide](#). Please refrain from bringing homemade items for class celebrations. Additionally, goodie bags will need to be non-edible. Any edible goodie bags received will be returned.

Costumes

All students look forward to the Halloween Celebration; we have specific guidelines for these parties.

1. At classroom parties where costumes may be worn, violent or gory costumes are unacceptable.
2. Costumes should not take away from instructional time. If a costume distracts self and others, the student will be asked to go to the nurse to change.
3. No costume "weapons" or look-alike weapons may be brought to school, e.g., light sabers, swords, or toy guns.
4. Costumes will be worn to school and should not depict violence or gore.
5. Students should have costumes that do not require time-consuming assistance with makeup, dressing, etc. Also, masks and face paint should not be worn or brought to school.
6. Costumes must respect the Blue Valley dress code policy – BOE policy 3513.

Halloween Parade and Celebration

1:45 PM: Room Parents Enter and Parade Prep

- Room parents and three volunteers for each class will be invited to begin setting up for the class party and supporting costume adjustments. Please look forward to communication from room parents, who will facilitate communication with families to gather volunteers for this year's celebrations.

2:15 PM: Parade

- We will have a school-wide parade that includes the fifth grade leading all grade levels out the bus-cut doors, walking on the west side of the Early Childhood playground, and circling the track counterclockwise before entering the exterior gym doors. Families are invited to watch the parade from the field.

2:30 PM: Monster Mash

- Teachers will guide students into the gym for the Monster Mash, a short sing and dance-along led by specialists. When the Monster Mash concludes, students return to class for the class

celebration. Parents and caregivers will not enter the building for the Monster Mash.

2:55 PM-3:25 PM: Class Celebration

- The class celebration will consist of one game **or** craft and treats. Only room parents and their volunteers can attend the class celebration. Room parents and volunteers will submit dismissal changes through PUP if they apply. In addition, you will need to sign out on the provided sign-out sheet in the room you are supporting.

Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades

Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades

End of Quarter Information - Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades

At the end of each quarter, courses in Canvas will conclude and will no longer be visible on the Canvas app. However, a concluded course remains visible through the Canvas website by selecting ALL COURSES and then PAST ENROLLMENTS.

How do I view my child's report card?

- Log in on [ParentVue](#).
- Select the student's name
- In the left navigation bar, choose Report Card

Each new quarter, classroom teachers will publish the next quarter's Canvas course. As courses are published, students and families will again be able to see current courses on the Canvas app and Canvas website. For Canvas parent resources, visit www.bluevalleyk12.org/canvas.

Important dates for families:

	Courses Conclude on Canvas	Grades Viewable on ParentVue (after 4pm)
Quarter 1	Friday, October 11	Tuesday, October 22
Quarter 2	Friday, December 20	Friday, January 10
Quarter 3	Thursday, March 13	Wednesday, April 2
Quarter 4	Thursday, May 22	Wednesday, June 4

Please note: The dates are subject to change based upon calendar updates or technology needs.

Safe Schools Reporting

Safe Schools Reporting

Blue Valley Schools is committed to promoting and fostering a safe environment in and around all our schools. We are continuously working to prevent, mitigate, respond to and recover from a wide range of situations. Please check out [available ways to report safety concerns](#).

Teacher Collaboration Days

Teacher Collaboration Days

As we kick off the 2024-25 school year, I want to remind families about the teacher professional collaboration days designed for teacher plan and collaboration time. These eight days, which occur throughout the school year, are non-student attendance days for K-5 students. These days are vital to ensure the best possible preparation for our elementary students and key to quality teacher retention.

The following days, which can be found in the [2024-25 calendar](#) on the district website, have been designated as teacher professional collaboration days:

- August 30
- September 27
- November 1
- December 6
- January 31
- February 28
- April 11
- May 2

Reminder: November 1st is a K-5 non-student attendance day for teacher collaboration time. During this time, elementary educators will be in their buildings and classrooms working to ensure the best possible preparation for our elementary students and supporting student learning outcomes.

School will be back in session on November 2nd.

Nut-Safer Guidelines



Nut Safer List 24-25

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](#).

Helpful Links

[School Supply Lists](#)

[District Calendar \(2024-2025\)](#)

[Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage](#)

[Family Handbook](#)



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Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

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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

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Erica McDonald

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters