

Cougar Connect

October 25, 2024

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear Families,

Thank you for attending fall conferences and meeting with teachers to discuss your child's academic and personal progress. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions after reviewing report cards that were shared on Tuesday, October 22, through ParentVue, and meeting with your child's teacher. Our team appreciates your efforts to partner with the staff and work collaboratively to help students achieve.

As we prepare for the Halloween Celebration next Thursday, October 31, please review our directions below to avoid students accessing costumes, food, and drinks. We appreciate your attention to the guidance in place.

Next Friday, November 1 is a Teacher Collaboration Day will therefore be no school for students. Please be sure to prepare for the shortened week of school.

Our staff immensely appreciates the provided dinner purchased by PTO and coordinated by Lindsay Persell, Robin Snider, and Abby Ford. Maggiano's "Little Italy" was a gracious touch to our hearts, PTO, we are grateful.

Lastly, our Specials' teachers designed a newsletter that captures learning over the first quarter. Don't forget to read below to find out more about your child's learning experience in Art, Music, P.E., Spanish, and Computer and R.E.A.L.

I hope you have a spectacular weekend in the beautiful weather, families.

Kindly,
Erica McDonald
Principal

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- Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day | November 14, 2024

Repeat News:

- Canvas Family Resources
- Halloween Celebration
- Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades
- Teacher Collaboration Days
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- Helpful Links (i.e., Kindergarten Tidbits, School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)

Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

October

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

Monday, October 28: PTO Restaurant Night | Panda Express 10:00 AM-9:30 PM

Thursday, October 31: Fall Celebration

November

Friday, November 1: No School | Teacher Professional Collaboration

Friday, November 1: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:30 AM

Monday, November 4: BLT Meeting; 4:00 PM-5:00 PM

Tuesday, November 5: Picture Retake Day

Friday, November 8: All Staff Meeting; 8:00 AM-8:20 AM

Friday, November 8: Veteran's Day Assembly; 9:15 AM | Breakfast 10:00 AM

Monday, November 11: Support-A-Cougar Holiday Drive Begins

Wednesday, November 13: PTO Community Service

Thursday, November 14: Fourth Grade Field Trip | BV Wilderness Science Center

Thursday, November 14: Third Grade Music Program; Dress Rehearsal 2:30 PM; Performance 6:00 PM (OTMS)

Friday, November 15: Fourth Grade Field Trip | BV Wilderness Science Center

Friday, November 15: PTO Bingo for Books

Monday, November 18: Hearing and Vision Screening

Monday, November 18-Friday, November 22: American Education Week

Monday, November 25-Friday, November 29: Thanksgiving Break

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 ☆☆

Last week, we met as a DEI Council and reflected on where we've been as a committee and how we envision progression as we move forward. Please review the presentation [here](#) that captures the time spent on Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

The administration will work with the PTO DEI Council members to plan the next steps and determine how this information can be shared with the community as we plan to convene quarterly.

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

Community Celebrations and Observances



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

Some November Celebrations & Observances:

- **Native American Heritage Month** - celebrates the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, histories, and ongoing contributions of Indigenous peoples.
- **National Veterans and Military Family Appreciation Month** - honors the military family by recognizing their sacrifices and commitments.
- **All Saints Day** - November 1 - celebrated by some of the Christian faith, this solemn, holy day honors the saints of the church.
- **Day of the Dead** - November 1 - celebrated by some with Mexican heritage, a joyful time to remember and honor deceased loved ones.
- **Diwali** - November 1 - the festival of lights celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and the human ability to overcome observed by some Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others. Some will decorate their homes with lights and rangoli art, exchange gifts, dress in colorful clothing, feast with family, and/or go to temple.

OTE | PTO



PTO Events | October

PTO Restaurant Night | Panda Express 10:00 AM-9:30 PM

Join us for OTE's Restaurant Night at Panda Express (135th and Metcalf) on Monday, 10/28! Whether dining in or ordering online, 20% of all OTE sales will come back to support our school. Just be sure to show the flyer in-store (check student's folders or [download here](#)) or use promo code **373540** when placing your online order. This is a delicious way to help our school while enjoying your favorite Panda Express meals!



Veteran's Day Assembly

Calling all Veterans!

Veterans Day Assembly: We are honored to invite all veterans and their families to join us for our annual OTE **Veterans Day Assembly on Friday, November 8th at 9:15 am**. Coffee and pastries will be served in the library starting at 10:00 am for our veterans and their families to enjoy following the assembly. RSVP at otepto.org/veterans by November 1st to ensure we can prepare a special welcome for you!

Veterans Honor Wall: Do you have a veteran in your life you'd like to recognize? We are creating a Wall of Honor in the halls of OTE and would love to feature them! Please submit their information and photo at otepto.org/veterans.

We can't wait to celebrate and honor the bravery and service of our veterans!



The Eras Carnival T-shirt: Now in Adult Sizes!

You asked, we listened! For a limited time, the exclusive Overland Trail **The Eras Carnival T-shirt** is now available for purchase in *adult* sizes, along with remaining youth sizes. This is your last chance to get one—we will only print one additional run!

Don't miss out on this unique piece of school spirit. **Order by November 1st** to secure yours!

[Order your T-shirt today!](https://otepto.org/carnival)



BINGO for Books | Friday, November 15

Join us for an evening of fun, BINGO, and book prizes at this **FREE** family event on Friday, November 15. Keep an eye out for more information as we get closer to the date.

We hope to see you there!

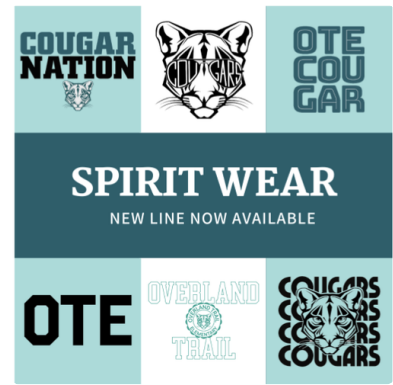


New Spirit Wear Line Now Available!

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 \(otepto.org\)](#).

Welcome to Overland Trail Elementary

Welcome to OVERLAND TRAIL ELEMENTARY!



WELCOME TO



Overland Trail Elementary

Courtney Rice

SCHOOLING: I GRADUATED FROM ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL AND ROCKHURST UNIVERSITY WITH A BA IN MARKETING AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING IN SCHOOLS: WHEN MY DAUGHTER STARTED KINDERGARTEN FIVE YEARS AGO, I BEGAN VOLUNTEERING AT ST. MICHAELS THE ARCHANGEL. I ENJOYED A NUMBER OF EXPERIENCES INCLUDING ASSISTING IN THE LIBRARY, LUNCH DUTIES, WORKING THE COPY ROOM AND IN THE PARISH OFFICE. I ESPECIALLY ENJOYED READING TO THE CLASSES AND OVERSEEING THE MARKETPLACE, WHERE I WORKED WITH THE STUDENTS DEVELOPING THEIR BUSINESS PLANS AND MARKETING THEIR GOODS.

YOUR ROLE AT OTE: INSTRUCTIONAL PARAPROFESSIONAL FOR LIBRARY/REAL

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I LOVE TO DANCE AND CHOREOGRAPH DANCES WITH MY DAUGHTER EMMY.



Cougar Specials Newsletter | Quarter 1

Cougar Specials Newsletter

Cougar Specials Newsletter

Quarter 1 (2024-2025)

Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day | November 14, 2024



Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day November 14th

Join us on Nov. 14, as students across the country will participate in **Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day**, an annual, commemorative event that honors the courage of Ruby Bridges, who made history by becoming the first Black student to integrate an all-white elementary school in New Orleans in 1960.

Students across the country now walk to school on this day to commemorate her bravery and continue the important conversation about equality and inclusion. To learn more about Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, scan the QR code. We invite our Overland Trail Elementary families to walk to school on November 14th to participate in this nationwide event.



Canvas Family Resources

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>

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.

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