

# Cougar Connect

October 4, 2024

## A Note From Mrs. McDonald



### A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear Families,

Seeing staff, students, and families at last Friday's Eras Carnival was terrific. The event was fun, warm, and memorable for all. Thank you to our PTO presidents, Libby Moss and Barbara Van Hamme, as well as the PTO board and members, for contributing countless hours and time to plan an enjoyable time for all families. The McDonald family enjoyed ourselves and could not be more thankful to be a part of such a remarkable school community.

We have been able to set a date for Conscious Discipline Family Night which will be on the same night as the Scholastic Book Fair Family Night. If you'd like to come out and learn about our staff philosophy and how behaviors are viewed and supported at OTE, this is the perfect opportunity for you, parents, and caregivers. You will be able to listen to the enlightening Tabitha Rosproy and learn how to align efforts at home with those of OTE, creating a more consistent approach to supporting your child socially and emotionally. Behavior is a form of communication, so we invite you to learn the best way to engage in these interactions with your child. Please read below for additional details.

Please let us know if you have any questions, families--have a great weekend.

Kindly,  
Erica McDonald  
Principal

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### Repeat News:

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## Save-the-Date



### Save-the-Date

#### October

**Wednesday, October 9:** PTO Community Service

**Friday, October 11:** No School | End of Quarter 1

**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

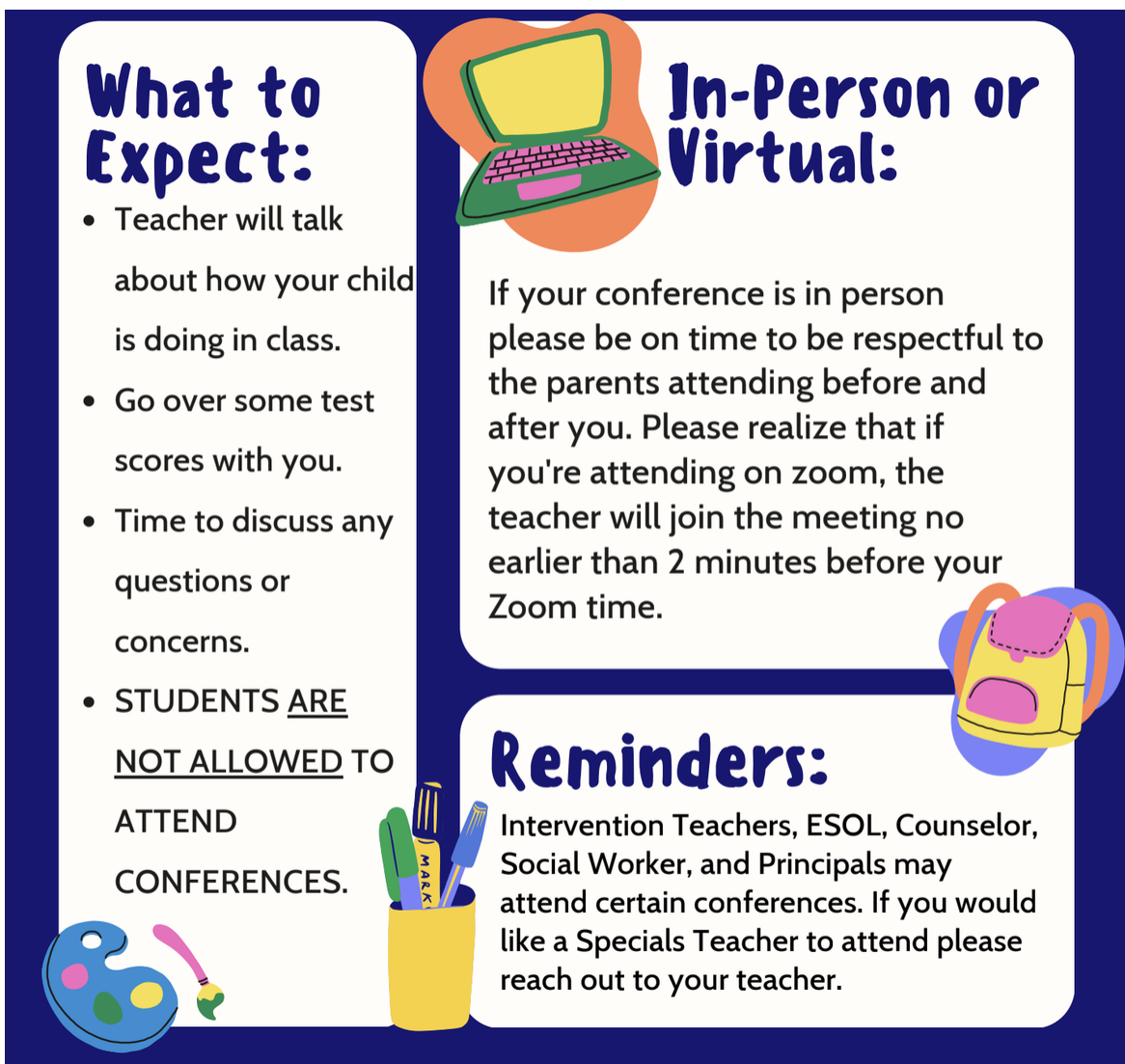
The PTO is already in full swing for the year ahead. Follow these simple steps to ensure you don't miss any of the fun!

## 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

### October Community Service | October 9th

The next community service meeting will be on October 9th from 3:45 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Art Room. We will be putting together Happy Kits for Children's Mercy! These kits are used in a variety of areas throughout the hospital to make patients and families feel welcome and happy during their visit. Please sign-up using the link to ensure we have enough supplies for all students attending. We are asking each child that comes to bring at least one coloring book to include in

the kits if they are able. As a reminder, we request that a parent accompany their child to the meeting and make certain to update PUP for that day!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0B4BA8AC2CA31-51725112-oteoctober#/>

## 2024 Fall Book Fair

We need volunteers to help run the registers and help kids shop during the fair. Please see below and add your name to the time slot that works best. We would also love donations of plastic grocery sacks and mochi squishies.

[Book Fair Volunteer Sign Up Now Available!](#)

## 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](#)

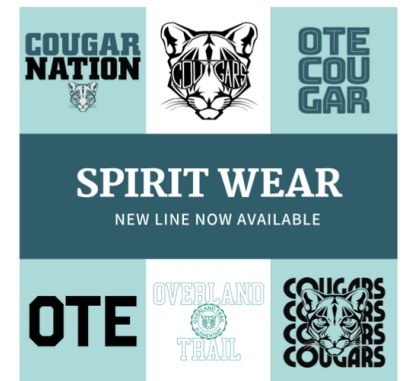
## Upload your pictures for the Yearbook!

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*

DREAM  
BELIEVE  
ACHIEVE

## Caroline Mall

**SCHOOLING: HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

**NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING IN SCHOOLS: I HAVE BEEN WORKING IN BLUE VALLEY FOR ONE YEAR AND IN CHILDCARE FOR 5 YEARS.**

**YOUR ROLE AT OTE: LIFT PARAPROFESSIONAL**

**FUN FACT ABOUT ME: FLAMINGOS ARE MY FAVORITE ANIMAL.**



## Peace Week | October 7th-10th

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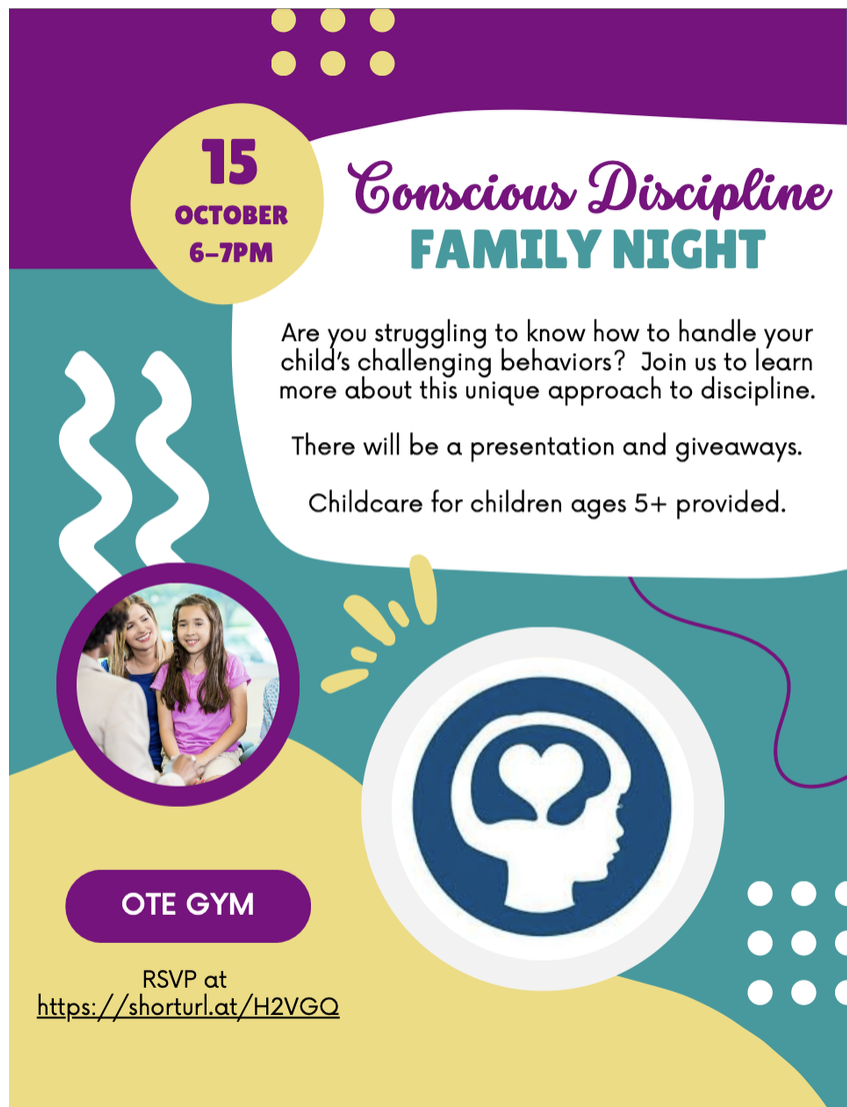
Dear families,

October is National Bullying Prevention/Awareness month! At Overland Trail Elementary, we are serious about keeping our students safe from bullying. To celebrate this month at OTE we will participate in PEACE WEEK next week October 7th -10th. Please look forward to daily communication on how you can help your child participate in campaigning this important week.

Emily Harsch  
School Counselor



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](#).



# Starting Strong



## THE BRAIN, BEHAVIOR, AND LEARNING

Understanding and Supporting Your Child's Nervous System

**BV Well** and **Blue Valley School Counselors, Social Workers and Psychologists** invite you to this FREE session designed especially for early elementary (K-2) parents and caregivers. Presented by **Dr. Dustin Springer**, this workshop will:

- **explore the connections between early brain development, behavior, and learning** through the lens of applied educational neuroscience
- **examine how to support your child both at school and home** with the understanding that behaviors are often signs of nervous system dysregulation
- **offer practical strategies and deeper understanding** for creating environments that promote regulation, resilience, and optimal learning for every child.

A **Panel Discussion with Dr. Springer and Blue Valley educational leaders** will follow the presentation. The session is free but please register in advance via the QR code below.



**Dr. Dustin Springer** is an experienced educator with 27 years of service as an elementary teacher, a community school liaison, and now an elementary school administrator. He is also a consultant for Revelations in Education and a renowned author and international speaker specializing in applied educational neuroscience and trauma-responsive practices. He serves as affiliate staff at Butler University, co-teaching in the applied educational neuroscience certification program alongside Dr. Lori Desautels. Guided by the belief that "hard work is heart work," he is committed to leading a much-needed paradigm shift in education, fostering connection, equity, and resilience within school communities.



Dr. Springer's presentation sponsored by:



## 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](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/canvas).

**Important dates for families:**

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



## Erica McDonald, Principal

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

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## Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

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

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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

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

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**Erica McDonald**

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



