

Cougar Connect

September 13, 2024



Erica McDonald
Principal

A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear Families,

Seeing many parents and caregivers in the building contribute to our school-wide efforts has been such a treat. We value your partnership and want to sincerely thank you for volunteering and committing to supporting Overland Trail Elementary.

I wish you a great weekend, families!

Kindly,



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- Code of Conduct
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Save-the-Date

September

Friday, September 20: Picture Day | Individual and Classroom

Tuesday, September 24: LIFT Field Trip | Olathe Lanes East Bowling

Wednesday, September 25: Fourth Grade Field Trip | Johnson

County Fairgrounds

Thursday, September 26: First Grade Field Trip | Ernie Miller Tipi @ OTE

Friday, September 27: No School | Teacher Professional Collaboration

Friday, September 27: OTE Carnival; 5:30 PM-8:00 PM

October

Friday, October 4: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:30 AM

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: Family Night; 5:30 PM-7:30 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 ☆☆

Did you know that you must have valid identification to accompany a student with a late arrival, dismiss a student early, or enter the building? If you do not have a valid Driver's License, you can also use a passport to verify identification.

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- to promote awareness and appreciation of our Blue Valley families

Some September Celebrations & Observances:

- **National Hispanic Heritage Month** - September 15 to October 15 celebrates the history, diverse cultures, and contributions of those with Hispanic and Latinx heritage.

- **Hunger Action Month** - dedicated to taking action to end hunger. The BV Food Pantry, located at Hilltop Conference Center, is available to all Blue Valley community members.
- **Suicide Prevention Month** - recognized by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Raises awareness of mental health and resources available to discuss suicide prevention and seek help. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, call or text 988 immediately or chat with the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).
- **Labor Day** - September 2 celebrates the achievements and contributions of workers to America's strength, prosperity, and well-being.
- **Constitution Day** - The United States commemorates the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787.



PTO Events | September

Blue Valley North Homecoming Parade | Wednesday, September 18 @ 6:15 p.m.

Feeder school students and families are encouraged to come cheer for the Mustangs along the route! Come on out for the parade and enjoy food trucks (on the back side of the school near the baseball field) and stay for the bonfire and fireworks after the parade! The festivities will all wrap up by 8pm. See the map for parade route, food trucks, bonfire, and fireworks.

Are you part of a youth organization or team that might want to walk in the parade or create a float to represent our feeder school students? If so, you can express interest through this [Parade Entry Form](#).

Parade & Bonfire Map - Food trucks, bonfire and fireworks will be on the backside of BVN near the baseball fields in the area highlighted blue. Parade route through the neighborhood and around the school is highlighted in red. Questions? Contact Lauren McMonagle - lmcmonagle@gmail.com

Freddy's Restaurant Night | Wednesday, September 25th 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Donate with a Freddy's Double. Freddy's is proud to contribute 15% of event sales! Head to Freddy's on Wednesday, September 25th between 4 - 8 p.m., and all you need to do is say "I'm here for the fundraiser." Ordering online? Use promo code: GIVEBACK.

PTO Back to School Checklist

1. Visit otepto.org.
2. Login or create a FREE account by clicking the "Login" button.
3. Complete the Family Information and Publish Preference forms under "My Account". By doing this you'll receive your child's Field Trip shirt for the 24/25 school year.
4. Consider a PTO membership. Click "Register" to join. This funding helps support PTO programs.
5. Explore! Buy carnival tickets, check out the calendar of events, and follow the PTO on Facebook and Instagram.



The Eras Carnival | Friday, September 27th

Tickets to The Eras Carnival are on sale now! Perks to pre-ordering wristbands: fast pass entrance, carnival t-shirt*, and swag bag.* Click to pre-order! [Overland Trail Elementary PTO - Carnival \(otepto.org\)](http://otepto.org)

Place your order by end of day September 13th to guarantee t-shirt size. Swag bags guaranteed for first 400 students.

Order deadline for all pre-orders is Friday, September 20th.

PTO Calendar of Events

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

Welcome to
OVERLAND TRAIL ELEMENTARY!



WELCOME TO



Overland Trail Elementary

Sara Moore

SCHOOLING: I WENT TO K-STATE AND GOT A DEGREE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION WITH AN EMPHASIS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. I ALSO HAVE A MINOR THAT IS IN VISUAL ARTS.

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING IN SCHOOLS: THIS WILL BE MY 5TH YEAR TEACHING ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN IN 3RD GRADE.

YOUR ROLE AT OTE: 3RD GRADE TEACHER

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I COLLECT COFFEE MUGS. I HAVE OVER 50!



Picture Day Volunteers Needed: 9/20

Dear families,

For Picture Day on Friday **9/20/24** we need volunteers to make sure that day runs smoothly & efficiently. The photographers will be bringing coupons for any volunteer helping out that day to receive a free picture packet.

Please use this [link](#) or the attached QR code to sign up to volunteer for available slots.

Thank you!
OTE PTO



Art Studio Parent Volunteers: 9/30-10/4

Mr. Van Leeuwen would love to invite you to volunteer in the art room, with grades Kindergarten through 2nd, the week of September 30th during Art. Parents will be helping small groups of students with a project involving book tape. Please click on this [link](#) to see the schedule, sign up and find other opportunities to help out in the art studio.

Please be mindful that all volunteers will need to complete the volunteer agreement located in the front office. The volunteer agreement is valid for the 2024-25 school year upon completion.

Code of Conduct

As we begin the school year, we would like to remind you to review the updated *Blue Valley Student Code of Conduct*. It can be found on our district home page bluevalleyk12.org under the "Student Quick Links" section at the bottom main home page. It can also be found on our school website home page bluevalleyk12.org/OTE.

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: August 30 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 September 4.



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 \(2024-2025\)](#)

[Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage](#)

[Family Handbook](#)



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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