

Cougar Connect

September 27, 2024

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



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Dear Families,

Today is THE ERAS CARNIVAL 🎪! We are eager to welcome you to a fun, light-hearted, and memorable event at OTE. The fun begins at 5:00 PM, so come prepared to bring your smiles, BIG energy, and appetite.

Reminders:

When dining with your child in the Cougar Café, some tables are designated for you and your child to dine at during lunchtime. To maintain a safe and healthy Cougar Café, other students are not allowed to sit at the designated visitor tables. We appreciate your support in maintaining a safe and healthy Cougar Café environment and families.

Arrival and dismissal are a rapidly busy experience for staff and families. Please adhere to the procedures to keep staff, students, and families safe by using the car line for drop-off and pickup and practicing civility as you transition through the parking lot. We appreciate all efforts to support a safe, efficient, and effective process for arrival and dismissal.

In a few short weeks, we will have fall conferences. If you have not yet reserved a conference time for your child, please [click here](#) to learn more about making a reservation.

With my family, I look forward to seeing you all at THE ERAS CARNIVAL! 📧

Kindly,
Erica McDonald
Principal

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Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

September

Friday, September 27: OTE Carnival; 5:00 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

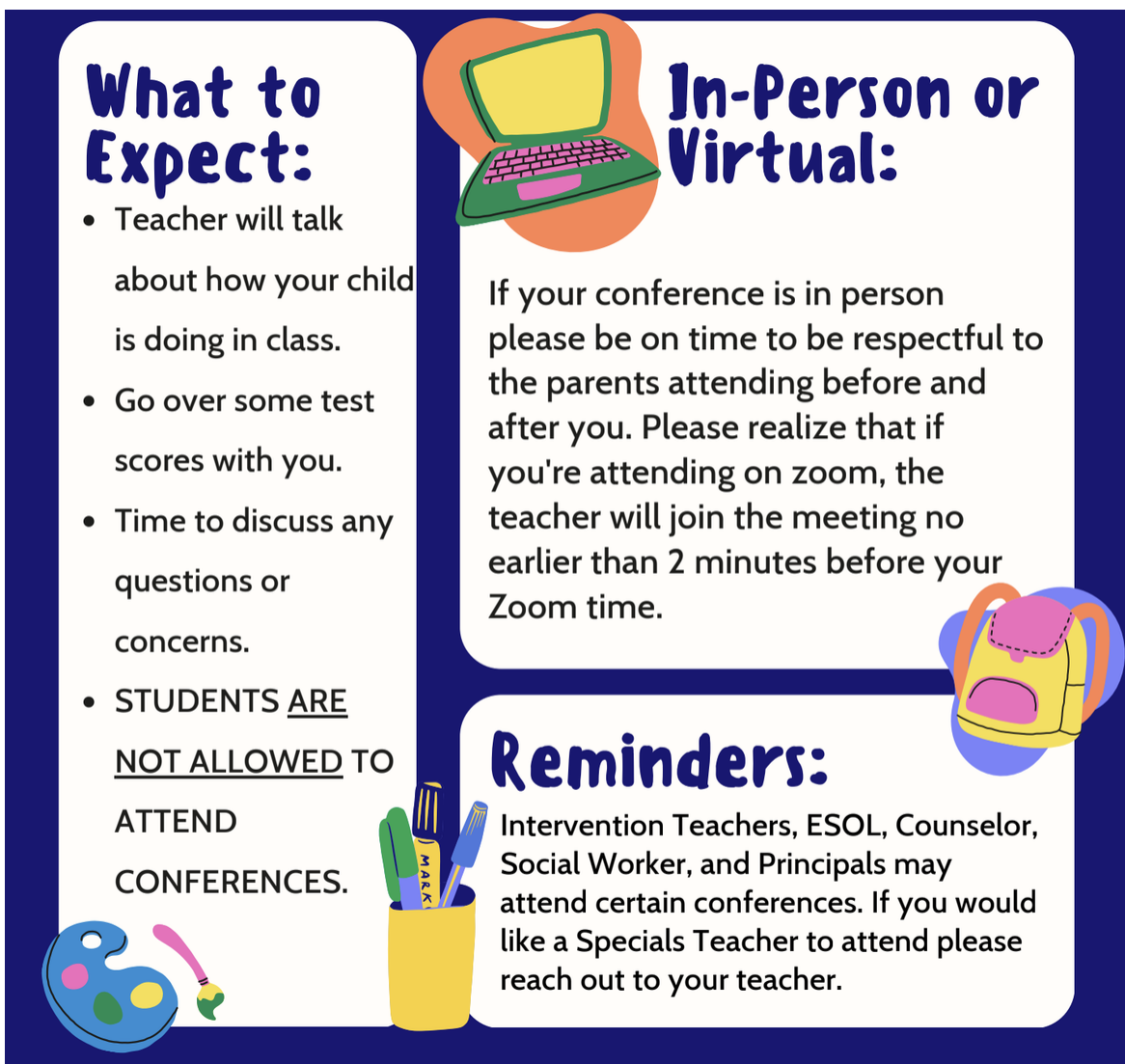
The PTO is already in full swing for the year ahead. Follow these simple steps to ensure you don't miss any of the fun!

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 | September/October

The Eras Carnival | Friday, September 27th

- **Volunteers Still Needed!** Volunteers are vital to the success of our carnival. These are three time slots and many different, fun activities available for sign up. There are three main shifts the night of the carnival and we are in need of volunteers. [Please sign up here!](#) Thank you in advance for your time and support!
- **Doors open at 5:00 pm on Friday.** If you pre-ordered and have a wristband, you may use the Backstage Entrance (Fast Pass) to enter the Carnival. If you still need to purchase your



wristbands, please use the Main Entrance. You must have a wristband to enter. Carnival will end at 8:00 pm.

- **Don't miss the Raffle!** In addition to the amazing game and activities, you will have a chance to enter the Carnival Raffle to win incredible prizes. Tickets will be available for purchase at the Carnival. Prizes include a **PTO Parking Spot**, \$50 PTO Spirit Wear Gift Card, gift card to Johnson Family Farms, Chicken and Pickle court time, BRKTHROUGH passes, and more! Tickets will be \$5/1 ticket, \$20/5 tickets and you must be present to win.

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#/>

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](#)



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

**DREAM
BELIEVE
ACHIEVE**

Overland Trail Elementary

Holly Zahner

SCHOOLING: KANSAS NEWMAN UNIVERSITY. B.A.. AND
PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY M.A. ED

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING IN SCHOOLS: I HAVE BEEN
AN EDUCATOR FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS IN KANSAS,
OKLAHOMA. AND LOUISIANA.

YOUR ROLE AT OTE: TITLE 1 READING COACH

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I AM AVID SLALOM WATER SKIER
SINCE THE AGE OF 9.



Starting Strong



Starting STRONG

EARLY ELEMENTARY EDITION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 6-7:30PM
HILLTOP CONFERENCE CENTER

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.

Art Studio Volunteers Needed | 9/30-10/4

Art Studio Volunteers Needed | 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.

Update on Arrival Procedures

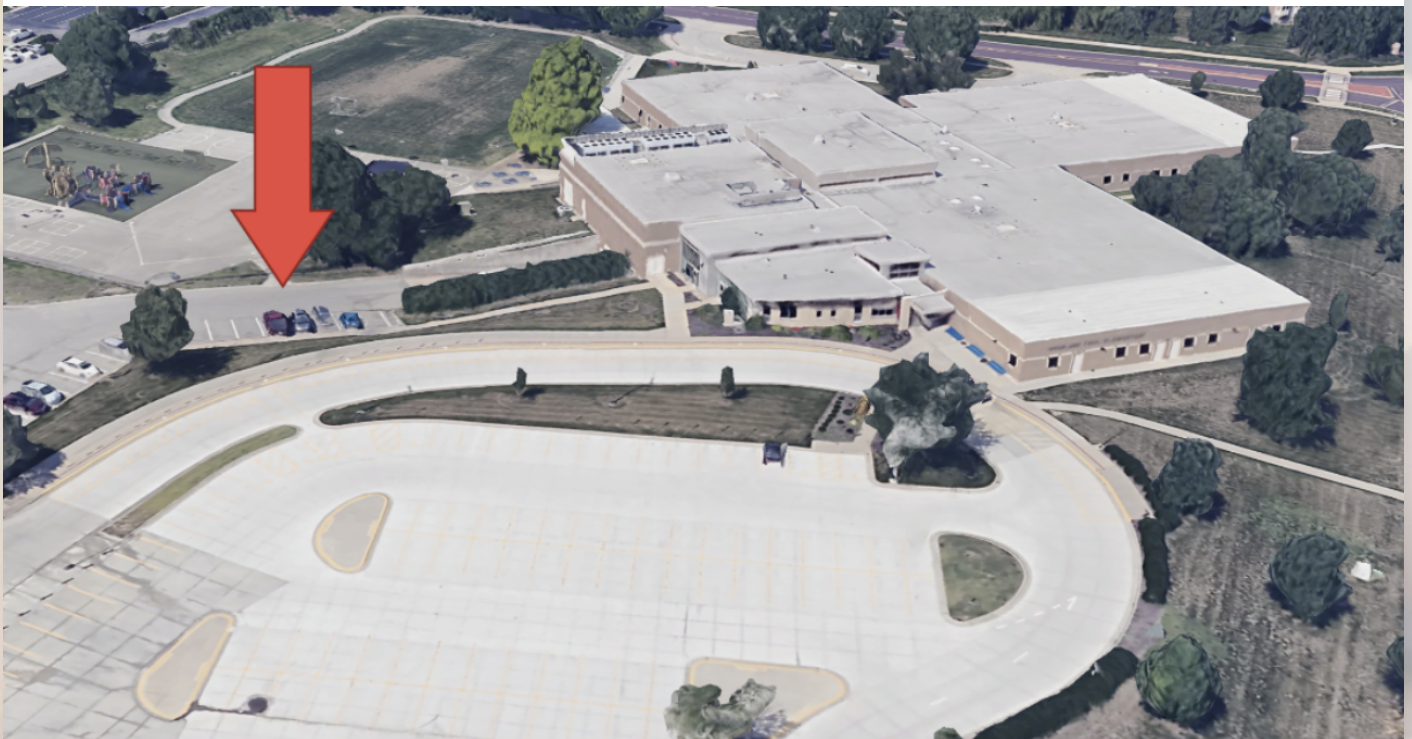
Update on Arrival Procedures

Arrival

- The car line is meant for every car to pull down through the line to the furthest point. This effort removes more vehicles from the main road and allows outside traffic to flow.
- When directed by a staff member to pull forward, pull up until you cannot proceed. Please do not stop at the entrance of the school. You will be directed to continue moving forward.
- Stay in the car line and avoid driving around cars to find a more favorable location to release your child.
- Stay in your car and allow staff to support your child exiting the vehicle.
- If you want to park and walk your child to the front entrance, you must park in the lot south of the building and walk along the front sidewalk (see below). **The crosswalk at the front of the building will be closed to support car line efficiency beginning at 8:25.** Please see the picture below for reference.



We appreciate your support, families, in supporting a safe and efficient car line for staff and students.



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: September 27 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 30.

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

Email: ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org

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

Phone: (913) 239-7000

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Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

Email: ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org

Website: 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

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

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Erica McDonald

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

