

Cougar Connect

September 6, 2024



A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear Families,

We would like to thank each of you for your support of the Professional Learning Day, which took place this past Tuesday. The Professional Learning that occurred consisted of disaggregating data to determine how to design our instructional practices to enhance student achievement and continuous growth. In addition, our grade level teams met vertically to further support student learning this school year.

On Monday, September 9, please prepare to receive communication inviting you to sign up for a fall conference. We encourage **every** family to conference, as this is a great opportunity to partner with teachers and learn more about your child's personal and academic progress. It is important to not the following:

- **Tuesday, October 22:** In-person or virtual; you will need to indicate your selection within your reservation.
- **Wednesday, October 23:** Virtual only; there will be no option on this evening to conference in person.
- **Thursday, October 24:** In-person or virtual; you will need to indicate your selection within your reservation.

Lastly, you will have the option to conference with our specials teachers (i.e., Art, Music, Spanish, and P.E.) through the same link shared on Monday morning.

Please let us know if you have any questions. I wish you a fantastic weekend, families!

Kindly,
Erica McDonald
Principal



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- Teacher Collaboration Days
- Nut-Safer Guidelines
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Save-the-Date

September

Wednesday, September 11: PTO Community Service

Friday, September 13: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:30 AM

Friday, September 13: Fifth Grade Field Trip | Kaufmann Stadium

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

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 OTE staff, members of the DEI Council, collaborated and created a friendly Nut-Safe List for families?

Click [here](#) to view the picture friendly list.

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



PTO Events | September

Cougar Community Service | Wednesday, September 11th: 3:45 – 4:30 p.m. – OTE Art Room

Students, join us for our first Community Service meeting of the school year! We will be assembling and decorating collection boxes for pull tabs for each classroom. OTE is collecting pull tabs from drink cans to donate to the Ronald McDonald House for recycling. OTE collected last year with great success, we are excited to do it again this year!

At our first meeting, we will also discuss our community service plans for this coming year and demonstrate how to enter volunteer hours for tracking for awards at the end of the school year. You don't want to miss this meeting!

Parents are encouraged to attend the meeting together with their children. Be sure to update your child's pick-up plan in Pick Up Patrol.

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.



Fall Carnival Sponsorship Opportunities

The Overland Trail Elementary PTO will be hosting our school's Fall Carnival on September 27th, 2024. This year's theme is "The Eras Carnival" and will be one of the PTO's major fundraisers for the year. We are currently seeking sponsors and donors for this event. You can help support your local Cougars while promoting your business at the upcoming Carnival. All the money collected will support OTE PTO's 20+ committees set up to enrich and benefit OTE's students, families, and staff. Any amount or

donation is greatly appreciated!

View all the sponsorship details and secure your spot on our PTO website at <https://otepto.membershiptoolkit.com/carnival-sponsors>.

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).

Friday, September 27 - The Eras Carnival coming to OTE

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 September 1st to guarantee t-shirt size. Swag bags guaranteed for first 400 students.

Welcome to OVERLAND TRAIL ELEMENTARY!

WELCOME TO

Overland Trail Elementary

DREAM
BELIEVE
ACHIEVE

Kathryn Parker

SCHOOLING: Bachelors in Elementary Education from the University of Kansas and Master's in Educational Administration from Emporia State University

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING IN SCHOOLS: 10 years working in schools – teaching experience in 3rd and 5th grade and latest role two years as an Instructional Reading Coach.

YOUR ROLE AT OTE: Instructional Design Coach

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I love to travel. I've been to 15 countries with many more on my bucket list! I love reading and audio books and try to set a goal every year.



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.

Proactive School Safety: How Blue Valley Addresses and Assesses Threats

At Blue Valley Schools, student safety is our top priority. Our approach to safety blends proactive prevention, fostering strong adult-student relationships and maintaining robust physical security measures. Central to our strategy is understanding and addressing potential threats.

What Constitutes a Threat?

A threat includes any expression of intent to harm, whether spoken or written. Identifying and responding to these expressions is crucial to the safety of our school community.

The Role of Threat Assessments

Blue Valley's comprehensive threat assessment process has two primary objectives:

- **Preventing Violence:** We work to intervene before potential threats escalate.
- **Resolving Underlying Issues:** By understanding the reasons behind a threat, we can resolve conflicts and provide necessary support.

Structured, Evidence-Based Approach

Blue Valley Schools follows the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG), a nationally recognized, evidence-based program. This approach ensures that we not only prevent violence but also support individuals in need.

Since the fall of 2023, Blue Valley building leaders have been trained in and actively using this Threat Assessment approach. This consistent use of CSTAG has equipped leaders with a common vocabulary and protocol, enabling them to resolve situations more effectively when threats arise.

By staying committed to this structured and compassionate approach, Blue Valley Schools ensures that students and staff are supported, safe and able to focus on what truly matters—learning through extraordinary educational opportunities.

More information about Blue Valley's threat assessment process is available on the [district website](#).

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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Erica McDonald

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters