

# Cougar Connect

April 18, 2025

## A Note From Mrs. McDonald



### A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Good afternoon,

What a wonderful week it's been in our school community. From the bright smiles in the hallways to the curiosity and creativity happening in every classroom, including field trips, it's clear that our students are growing, learning, and shining more each day.

For Cultural Week beginning Monday, students will embark on a week of immersing themselves in the learning of various cultures represented at OTE. We invite all families to embrace the spirit and share information with your child's teacher to help capture more about your family's background.

It promises to be an exciting and learning-filled week--wishing you a well-rested and joyful weekend.

Best,  
Erica McDonald  
Principal

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- Community Celebrations and Observances
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- Register for the 2025-26 school year today
- Blue Valley North Senior Reception | May 14
- BVUnmuted podcast episode: Personal electronic devices

#### Repeat News:

- OTE Family Literacy Night | April 29
- Become a BVEF Parent Member and Support our Schools!

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- Helpful Links (i.e., School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)

## Save-the-Date



### Save-the-Date

#### April

**Monday, April 21- Friday, April 25** | Cultural Week

**Friday, April 25:** Cultural Night; 6:00-8:00 PM

**Thursday, April 22:** Fifth Grade Music Program; 6:30 PM

**Tuesday, April 29:** Family Literacy Night; 5:30-7:30 PM

**Tuesday, April 29-Wednesday, April 30:** Scholastic Book Fair

#### May

**Thursday, May 1:** Scholastic Book Fair

**Monday, May 5- Friday, May 9:** Staff Appreciation Week

**Friday, May 9:** PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

**Wednesday, May 14:** Community Service

**Wednesday, May 14:** BVN Senior Reception; 4:00-5:00 PM

**Friday, May 16:** 5th Grade Celebration

**Friday, May 20:** Field Day and Yearbook Signing

**Friday, May 23:** Last Day of School | Half-Day Dismissal; 11:45

## ✨ Unity Squad Spotlight ✨

**Cultural Week | Monday, April 21-Friday, April 25**

**Cultural Night | Friday, April 25**

Next week, we will celebrate the diversity represented throughout our school during our OTE Cultural Spirit Week. Please see the attached infographic for more information.

This coming Friday, join us for OTE Cultural Night on Friday, April 25, and celebrate the rich diversity of our community! This family-friendly event will be an evening filled with music, dance, art, and traditions from around the world. Stroll through colorful cultural displays, savor delicious



foods, and enjoy captivating performances that bring global cultures to life. OTE students will even get their own "passport" to explore the event, collecting stamps and learning something new at each table for a chance to win a prize. Don't miss this unforgettable celebration of culture, connection, and community—it's going to be an amazing night!

## Community Celebrations and Observances

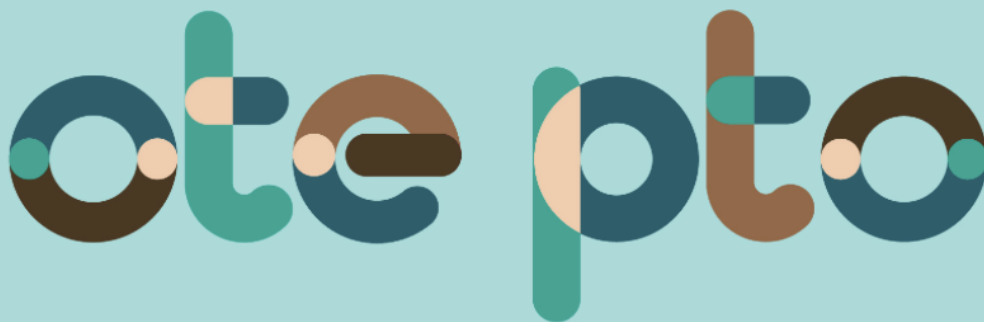


**Community Celebrations and Observances** - to promote awareness and appreciation of our Blue Valley families.

Some April Celebrations & Observances:

- **National Arab American Heritage Month** -recognizes the achievements and contributions of Arab Americans to society, culture, and American history.
- **Deaf History Month** - celebrates the history, culture, and accomplishments of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.
- **Day of Silence** - April 11 - a national, student-led demonstration where LGBTQ+ students and allies take a vow of silence to protest the silencing and discrimination of LGBTQ+ people in schools.
- **Passover** - evening of April 12-20 - a Jewish holiday commemorating the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt. Some families will observe the holiday with a special meal, called a Seder, eating foods of symbolic significance and reciting traditional prayers.
- **Holy Week and Easter Sunday** - April 13-20 - includes the Christian holidays of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. Some families will attend church services to commemorate the week leading to the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

OTE | PTO



PTO Events | April / May

### Help Make Our Yearbook Unforgettable!

We need your help capturing all the special moments from this school year! 📷 If you've taken photos at school events, sports games, classroom activities, or any extracurriculars, we'd love to include them in the yearbook.

Upload your pictures today and help us showcase the amazing memories our students have made!

Upload Pictures: <https://dropevent.com/OTE>



## One Week Until Cultural Night! | Friday, April 25

Join us for OTE Cultural Night on Friday, April 25, and celebrate the rich diversity of our community! This family-friendly event will be an evening filled with music, dance, art, and traditions from around the world. Stroll through colorful cultural displays, savor delicious foods, and enjoy captivating performances that bring global cultures to life. OTE students will even get their own "passport" to explore the event, collecting stamps and learning something new at each table for a chance to win a prize. Don't miss this unforgettable celebration of culture, connection, and community—it's going to be an amazing night!



Cultural Night Information and Sign Up: <https://www.otepto.org/cultural-night>

## Spirit Night at Urban Air | Thursday, May 1

Come join your friends for Spirit Night at Urban Air! Mark your calendars for **May 1 from 4-8pm** and enjoy a night of fun with 20% of the proceeds donated back to the Overland Trail Elementary PTO.



**Spirit Night Pricing:** Ultimate Attractions: \$33.99 // Deluxe Attractions: \$26.99

**Location:** Urban Air, 14401 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66223

*Tickets available at the Urban Air front desk and can be purchased the night of the event. Tickets purchased online are not valid towards Spirit Night fundraiser events. Must mention Spirit Night at time of purchase. Urban Air Socks not included. Spirit Night eligible proceeds are valid from 4pm-8pm on the day of the event only.*

## Staff Appreciation Gift Card Drive

Every year during Teacher Appreciation Week (5/5 - 5/9) the PTO does something special for the Staff each day of that week. We cap off the week by giving a \$10 Amazon gift card to EVERY Staff member. Typically, the PTO asks for your support for the various meals and treats provided that week. This year instead, we're asking for a \$10 contribution to support the gift cards. Thank you



for helping us show our gratitude to our wonderful OTE Staff, we appreciate your support.

[Give a Gift Card!](#)

## Field Day Volunteers Needed! | Tuesday, May 20th

OTE Field Day is coming up on Tuesday, May 20th! **Each class needs 4 parent volunteers** to walk around with each class to the stations to ensure a safe and fun experience.

Field Day is a day of activities and recreation for our OTE students. They'll visit 14 different activity stations on the playground.

**Interested in volunteering?** Click the link below to sign up!

[Field Day Sign Up](#)

## PTO Calendar of Events

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

## OTE Family Literacy Night | April 29th

# OTE FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT

### When:

Tuesday, April 29th  
5:30-7:30



### Where:

Overland Trail Elementary  
Gymnasium

### What:

Come and play phonological (sounds), syllables, and morphology (meaning) games with your child.



### Why:

Games for reading instruction that showcase the reading skills taught in the classroom.



### Bonus:

Choose a free book after playing games!



Any questions, please email:  
[hzahner@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:hzahner@bluevalleyk12.org)



## Register for the 2025-26 school year today

[Elementary school registration](#) for the 2025-26 school year is now open for current students. Registration is required annually and is the time to update your child's information and pay required and some optional fees. Completing registration confirms that your child will attend school in August and helps the district appropriately staff classrooms. Beginning in 2025-26, all 6th and 9th graders will be required to provide proof of residency (a current purchase contract, lease or utility bill, within the attendance area for your address) as part of the transition to a new level.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this important step. For more registration information, visit [www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration).

## Blue Valley North Senior Reception | May 14



## BVUnmuted podcast episode: Personal electronic devices

The district's #BVUnmuted series continues with Superintendent **Dr. Tonya Merrigan** joined by **Dr. Tyson Ostroski** (Blue Valley North Principal), **Scott Roberts** (Executive Director of School Administration) and **Jeff Breedlove** (Blue Valley North Teacher) to discuss an update on the implementation of the district's personal electronic device policy this school year.

To listen to the podcast episode, visit [www.tinyurl.com/BVDevices](http://www.tinyurl.com/BVDevices).

# Become a BVEF Parent Member and Support our Schools

As you prepare to register your student for the upcoming school year, BVEF invites you to **join us as a parent member** to make a meaningful impact on our schools and your child's education.



Parents are a driving force behind the Educational Foundation. Last year alone, Blue Valley **parents contributed over \$80,000 in support**. *Every dollar* provided by parents is directed back into classrooms through grants and directly impacts our students.

Joining is simple! While completing your student's registration, under "Optional Fees," select a donation amount from the drop-down menu next to "BV Ed Foundation Membership". The donation will be added to your fees at checkout.

Membership starts at \$35. Parents who give \$100 or more will receive a digital Activity Pass, granting free admission for one to district sponsored events throughout the 2025-26 school year\*. Members \$200+ will receive two passes and \$500+ will receive a BVEF T-shirt.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about parent membership, feel free to contact us at [ayeagle@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:ayeagle@bluevalleyk12.org).

Thank you for being an integral part of our school community and for helping empower educators and ensure educational excellence for all Blue Valley students!

\*Does not include admission to KSHSAA playoff games. Limit to two passes per family. If eligible, you'll receive your electronic activity pass via email prior to the start of 25-26 events.

## Blue Valley West | Athletics





## BVW MU ALPHA THETA MATHLETICS

THE COMPETITION IS OPEN TO ALL 3RD, 4TH AND 5TH GRADERS. IT WILL FEATURE MATHLETICS STYLE QUESTIONS, REQUIRING TEAMS TO WORK IN TEAMS OF 3. TEAMS WILL BE COMPOSED OF STUDENTS IN THE SAME GRADE LEVEL.

Each student is responsible for bringing their own calculators and pencils.  
The top 5 teams from each grade level will be awarded

REGISTER HERE  
BY APRIL 20TH!

<https://forms.gle/mAvfTYFwgZwe7JCg9>



**DATE:** APRIL 23rd, 2025  
**TIME:** 4PM - 6PM  
**LOCATION:** BLUE VALLEY  
WEST HIGH SCHOOL

**CONCESSIONS WILL NOT**  
BE AVAILABLE  
**REGISTRATION IS \$5 PER**  
STUDENT/\$15 PER TEAM  
(by registration date)  
\$10 per student at the door

CONTACT US AT  
MATHBVW@GMAIL.COM WITH  
ANY QUESTIONS!

## Kindergarten Registration | 2025 - 2026

Dear Families,

Kindergarten registration for the 2025-2026 school year is now open.

 To read this message in a language other than English, [click here](#).

We are excited to welcome your new kindergarten student for the 2025-26 school year. Please review and complete the steps below. Your timely registration will ensure our team is prepared. In a future message, we will send more information about Kindergarten Kick-Off (formerly known as Kindergarten Round-Up).

**Step 1: Please watch this school welcome [here](#).**

**Step 2: Do you have questions about kindergarten programs in Blue Valley? (Click on the blue links below)**

- What do kindergarten students experience during a [typical day](#)?
- How can I learn about the [Chinese immersion](#) option?

**Step 3: Is there another language spoken in your home?**

If so, please complete this [form](#). Otherwise, move to step 4.

Note: If your family speaks English *in addition* to another language, you will still need to complete

the form.

#### **Step 4: How do I register my child?**

 To view registration instructions in a language other than English, [click here](#).

To begin the registration process for the 2025-26 school year, simply go to [www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration](http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/registration) and click **New Student Registration** in the Useful Links. Families new to Blue Valley will be asked to create an online parent account. Online registration will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and it is an important step in getting your student started in kindergarten! You will be asked to pay fees later this spring.

**Please note:** If your child is currently enrolled in the Blue Valley early childhood program, you will not complete online registration at this time. Families transitioning from early childhood to kindergarten will be able to verify the information and complete the registration process later this spring.

To make Blue Valley's Online Registration process smooth and convenient, please have the following information available:

- Student proof of identity (birth certificate)
- Emergency contact name(s) and phone number(s)
- Doctor, dentist, and preferred hospital contact info
- Immunization record and health assessment (physical)
- Proof of residency (purchase contract, lease, or current utility bill)
- Custodial documentation (if applicable)
- Previous school records and contact info
- IEP or 504 Plan (if applicable)

**Tip:** As soon as your child's registration is complete, you will receive all school communication items that will help welcome you and your family into the school community.

If you have any questions, please call the Overland Trail Elementary office at 913-239-7000.

#### **Important Dates for Kindergarten Families**

- Kindergarten Online Registration Begins | Tuesday, February 18
- Kindergarten Kick-Off Sessions | Friday, April 11
- Kindergarten Orientation Sessions | Wednesday, August 13
- First full day of school for Kindergarten | Thursday, August 14

Thank you,  
Erica McDonald  
Principal

# INCOMING KINDERGARTEN DATES 2025-2026

**Kindergarten Online Registration Begins**

**February 18**

**Kindergarten Kick-Off Sessions**  
(Formerly Kindergarten Round-Up)

**April 11**

**Kindergarten Orientation Sessions**

**August 13**

**First full day of school for Kindergarten**

**August 14**



**Contact your neighborhood  
school for more information.**



## 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
- April 11
- May 2

## 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**



Nut Safer List 24-25

**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 list of nut-safe foods and BV Guidelines can be found [here](#).

## Helpful Links

[School Supply Lists](#)

[District Calendar \(2024-2025\)](#)

[District Calendar \(2025-2026\)](#)

[Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage](#)

[Family Handbook](#)



**Erica McDonald, Principal**

**Email:** [ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org)

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

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

**Phone:** (913) 239-7000

**Twitter:** [@OTEMcDonald](https://twitter.com/OTEMcDonald)



## Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

Email: [ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org)

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

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

Phone: (913) 239-7000

Twitter: [@OTECougars](https://twitter.com/OTECougars)



**Erica McDonald**

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters