

Cougar Connect

April 25, 2025

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



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Good afternoon,

Next Tuesday is the start of the Spring Scholastic Book Fair. We are looking forward to the event kicking off on Tuesday with Family Literacy Night, too. Please refer to the PTO updates below for additional details.

As we prepare to close out the school year, the last day for lunch visitors is **Wednesday, April 30**. After this date, we will no longer accept visitors to eat with students in the cafeteria.

Lastly, we are excited to embark on the second Cultural Night at OTE. We look forward to seeing you tonight, OTE!

Best,
Erica McDonald
Principal

Newsletter Table of Contents

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Recurring News:

- Save-the-Date
- ☆☆Unity Squad Spotlight ☆☆
- Community Celebrations and Observances
- Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) News



- BVW Mathletics
- BVEF Champion for Students Award
- Teacher Collaboration Days
- Nut-Safer Guidelines
- Helpful Links (i.e., School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)

Recent News:

- Food Service Payment Change

Repeat News:

- Register for the 2025-26 school year today
- Blue Valley North Senior Reception | May 14
- BVUnmuted podcast episode: Personal electronic devices
- OTE Family Literacy Night | April 29
- Become a BVEF Parent Member and Support our Schools!

Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

April

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

Join us for OTE Cultural Night on Friday, April 25 from 6-8pm, 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

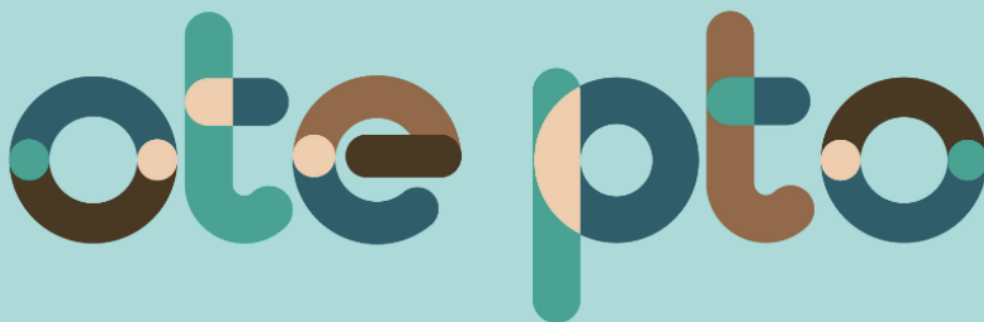


Community Celebrations and Observances - to promote awareness and appreciation of our Blue Valley families.

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

Join Us for Cultural Night! | Friday, April 25

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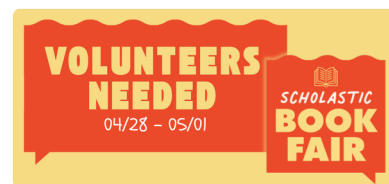
their own "passport" to explore the event, collecting stamps and learning something new at each table for a chance to win a prize. Don't miss this unforgettable celebration of culture, connection, and community—it's going to be an amazing night!

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



Spring Book Fair Volunteers Needed!

The OTE Spring BOGO Book Fair is coming up the week of April 28 and we need your help! **We are looking for volunteers to help with set-up, tear down, and running the registers** throughout the book fair. To see the available days/times and sign up to volunteer, click the link below.



Sign Up to Volunteer: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508044CA4A722A2F85-56460127-spring?useFullSite=true#/>

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!](#)

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.

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](#)



May Restaurant Night at Chipotle | Wednesday, May 21

Join us for dinner at Chipotle and support the Overland Trail Elementary PTO! Mention OTE when ordering and 25% of your purchase will be donated back to our PTO.



OTE Chipotle Restaurant Night

Wednesday, May 21 | 4-8PM

7040 W 135th Street

Online orders: use code 947ZRMH to have your purchase count toward the total sales.

PTO Calendar of Events

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

Food Service Payment Change

Blue Valley's Food and Nutrition Services team has shared an important update regarding changes to meal payments.

Beginning May 1, ACH/e-check payments will no longer be accepted as our payment processing system offers limited support for this payment method. Any ACH or e-check recurring payments will be disabled after April 30.

Families still have multiple payment options:

- Cash or check— Your child can bring cash or a check to school. Please make checks payable to "BVFNS" and include your child's full name and student ID number on the memo line.
- Credit Card via LinqConnect — If you haven't already, visit <https://lingconnect.com/main> to set up an account and make payments via credit card. A \$3 transaction fee applies each time you use a credit card.

If you have questions, please contact studentnutrition@bluevalleyk12.org.

To ensure you continue receiving important Food and Nutrition Services updates, please add noreply@lingconnect.com and noreply@titank12.com to your email contacts to prevent messages from going to your junk or spam folder.

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:
hlzahner@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.

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.**



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.

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.

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.

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



Nut Safer List 24-25

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 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](#)



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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

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Phone: (913) 239-7000

Twitter: [@OTECougars](#)



Erica McDonald

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters