

Cougar Connect

January 10, 2025

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



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Dear Families,

Next week, please look for communication to begin scheduling for winter conferences. This email will arrive separately from the community newsletter, and will require you to identify your preferred manner to conference on Tuesday, February 11, and Thursday, February 13. **Wednesday, February 12 is virtual only.** When you receive the email communication, please read it in its entirety to complete all steps needed to schedule your

conference.

We look forward to sharing your child's personal and academic progress in February.

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

Recent News:



- Incoming Kindergarten Pre-registration (2025-2026)
- 13th Annual Battle of the Bands
- Attendance Reporting and Notifications

Repeat News:

- Structured Expectations
 - Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades
 - Teacher Collaboration Days
 - Nut-Safer Guidelines
- Helpful Links (i.e., School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)

Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

January

Monday, January 13: PTO Trivia Night Registration Opens

Wednesday, January 15: PTO Community Service

Friday, January 17: PTO Teacher Grant Applications Due

Monday, January 20: No School | Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Friday, January 24: Major Saver Campaign Kickoff

Friday, January 24: Skate Party at Skate City; 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

Friday, January 31: No School | Teacher Professional Collaboration

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

Unity Squad Spotlight

☆☆ Unity Squad Spotlight ☆☆

In recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, students will be provided opportunities cross-curricular to learn more about his courage and tenacity that continues to influence The United States of America. Under this spotlight, the Unity Squad is proud to share fascinating facts about Mr. King.



King entered college when he was 15-years-old

King skipped two grades and entered college at the age of 15. He was admitted to Morehouse College in 1944 and [graduated in 1948](#) with a B.A. in Sociology at the age of 19. The Morehouse president, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, became an inspirational figure in King's life.

King continued his education at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. Despite receiving a C grade in a public speaking class, he was elected student body president and graduated valedictorian of his class in 1951. He enrolled in Boston University's doctoral program and was awarded his Ph.D. at the age of 25. While in Boston, King met Coretta Scott and became a member of the [Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.](#)

Community Celebrations and Observances



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

Some January Celebrations & Observances:

- **National Poverty Awareness Month** - While the United States is considered the richest country in the world, 37.9 million people live in poverty, including 12.5 million children. National Poverty Awareness Month works to bring awareness to issues of poverty and increase access to resources and services. To help and or find support, visit [Johnson County Outreach Services](#).
- **Maghi** - January 13 - a Sikh celebration. Some Sikh families will celebrate with a recitation of the holy Guru Granth Sahib and religious rituals in Gurdwaras - a Sikh place of assembly and worship meaning "Gateway to the Guru".
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** - January 15 - a day that honors the life and legacy of the civil rights leader. Some families will participate in a day of service to their communities.
- **World Religion Day** - January 21 - established by the Bahá'í Faith community in 1950. Now observed by people around the world, it seeks to find common values shared by different faiths, encourage tolerance and dialogue, and foster cooperation among religious communities.
- **International Holocaust Remembrance Day** - January 27 - an annual day of commemorating the six million Jewish victims and millions of other victims of the Holocaust and Nazism.

OTE | PTO



PTO Events | December

January Community Service Meeting | Wednesday, January 15

The meeting will be held in the OTE Art Room at 3:45 pm. Sign up using this link: <https://www.otepto.org/volunteer/142551>



Skate Party | Friday, January 24

Join your friends for some Friday night fun at Skate City from 5:00-7:00 pm.



Glow Party | Friday, February 7

Save date for the 2025 Glow Party - a free family event! More details to come soon.



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/overland-trail-elementary-ptu-upcoming-events).

Incoming Kindergarten Pre-registration

Dear Families,

We are excited to start welcoming our Kindergarten families for the Fall 2025. Children who reside in Blue Valley Schools and turn five by August 31 can attend kindergarten that school year. If you live within the Overland Trail Elementary boundaries and will have an incoming kindergarten student next fall, please complete the form linked below, Kindergarten Pre-registration (2025-2026) to begin receiving communication directly through email and text from Overland Trail Elementary. Please be mindful that this form is not a completion of registration but an opportunity for us to communicate openly and begin preparing for online registration.

[Kindergarten Pre-registration \(2025-2026\)](#).

More information will be shared with you on Tuesday, February 18, including welcome videos, online registration instructions, and information about Kindergarten Kick-Off on April 11, 2025. Please pass this link on to neighbors who might not have a student in our system and still need to receive our weekly emails.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the office at (913) 239-7000.

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.**

13th Annual Battle of the Bands



Join friends for a great adult night out with live music, a silent auction, a wine and bourbon pull and more! Proceeds from this annual fundraiser support music and performing arts programs throughout the district, and YOU can be part of the fun! Check out our new location at Fiorella's event space in OP for a great over-21 night out. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and YOU choose the "Best of Blue Valley" live band when the competition wraps up at 10 p.m. Bands are made up of BV parents, teachers and staff and funds provide significant funding for performing arts programs including

band, orchestra, choir, theater, debate and competitive speaking. Get tickets today at [Event Details](#).

Can't make it to the event in person? No worries! Visit [Silent Auction](#) to start your bid on incredible auction packages and see what your school submitted. Check back frequently as more items are added to the offerings every week. The auction will close on Friday, February 21 at 8:45 p.m. and you do not have to be present to win!

You can also vote by donation for your favorite adult school-affiliated band, and the winner receives a \$1,000 grant to their school of choice. The 2025 band names, order of performances and school representations are as follows:

Young Medicine- Lakewood Elementary

Modern Thieves- Mission Trail Elementary, Leawood Middle, Blue Valley North

KC Prime- Leawood Elementary and Leawood Middle

Hope to see you Friday, February 21, 2025, as we Rock the Valley for BV Schools!

Attendance Reporting and Notifications

Families can expect automated attendance messages by email, phone, and text if a child is absent and their absence has not already been reported by a parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to report an absence or reply to the automated email or phone message.

What is the purpose of attendance notifications?

We realize that students may occasionally need to miss school for planned absences, illnesses, and appointments. However, when a student does not arrive at school or unexpectedly misses a portion of the school day, we are concerned and want to make sure you are aware that your child is absent.

How can I get push notifications?

Families who would also like a push notification can download the ParentVUE app and manage their notifications. If a child has an unreported absence when a teacher submits attendance, then a push notification will immediately be sent to the parent/guardian's mobile device.

Interested in push notifications? Simply download the ParentVUE app ([iTunes app store](#) or [Google Play](#)), enable push notifications in device settings and select attendance notifications through in-app settings. Once the app is downloaded, [these instructions](#) will help you complete the set-up.

Structured Expectations

Structured Expectations

As we get ready to launch another semester we appreciate your partnership. As you know, our staff has been hard at work this year implementing structured expectations for our school community along with how we teach and reinforce them in all settings. You may have seen our visuals or graphics during first semester. Click [here](#) to read a few points about why these are important to our school.

	Classroom	Cougar Café	Hallway & Restroom	Special Events	Digital Citizenship
Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow classroom rules Listen to the teacher Use appropriate voice Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions Use appropriate materials Use appropriate technology Use appropriate behavior Use appropriate language Use appropriate actions

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.

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: November 1st 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 November 2nd.

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 list of nut-safe 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

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Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

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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

