

# Cougar Connect

May 16, 2025

## A Note From Mrs. McDonald



### A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Good afternoon,

Today's fifth-grade celebration was a show-stopping time. K.C. Wolf made his appearance and it was the perfect surprise for this beautiful day. Thank you, Amy Moss and team, for your planning, collaboration, and collective efforts to make today a memorable celebration for the fifth-grade OTE Cougars. I also witnessed a few adults joining in the fun! 🥰

As we gear up for the last week of school, please pay close attention to next week's events. Additionally, there is a change to next week's lunch menu. Please plan for the following:

- Wednesday: Chicken Nuggets and Mini Corn Dogs
- Thursday: Hamburger, Beef Hamburger, Veggie Burger, and Grilled Cheese

We look forward to closing out a great year with you, OTE—I hope you have a fantastic weekend, families.

Best,  
Erica McDonald  
Principal

## Newsletter Table of Contents

### Newsletter Table of Contents

#### Recurring News:

- Save-the-Date
- Community Celebrations and Observances



- Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) News

#### Recent News

- Summer 2025 Vaccine Clinics

#### Repeat News:

- Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades
- Fifth Grade Clap Out | Last Day of School
- OTE Fifth Grade | Welcome to Strings 2025-26

- Summer Technology Support
- Register for the 2025-26 school year today
- Nut-Safer Guidelines
- Helpful Links (i.e., School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)

## Save-the-Date



#### Save-the-Date

##### May

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

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

## Community Celebrations and Observances



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

Some May Celebrations & Observances:

- **Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month** - recognizes the achievements and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to American society, culture, and history.
- **Jewish American Heritage Month** - celebrates the achievements and contributions of Jewish Americans to American society, culture, and history.
- **Mental Health Awareness Month** - aims to raise awareness about mental health by fighting the stigma, providing support, and advocating for policies that support people affected by mental illness.
- **International Family Equality Day** - May 7 - celebrates the beauty and importance of family diversity.
- **World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development** - May 21 - a day set aside by the United Nations to deepen understanding of the value of cultural diversity and to learn to live together in harmony.

## OTE | PTO



## PTO Events | May

### Order School Supply Packs Today - Deadline May 20th

Order your child's school supplies for the 2025-26 school year! Save over 40% on supplies compared to other online retailers when you order a school supplies pack - see below for pricing and ordering details.

**K: \$46 | 1st: \$65 | 2nd: \$45 | 3rd: \$64 | 4th: \$50 | 5th: \$59**

**Order Deadline: May 20 | School ID: OVE003**

**BACK TO SCHOOL  
MADE EASIER**  
with EPI School Supply Packs

Teacher Approved ✓  
Delivered Before the First Day of School ✓  
Save Time and Money ✓

[SHOP NOW](#)

National Products, Inc.  
We're Great School Year

**EPI**

Order Deadline: 5/20 School ID: OVE003

*Your school supplies will ship directly to your home, not the school, before school begins.*

Order Now: [EPI School Supply Packs - Educational Products, Inc.](#)

## Make a Difference at OTE—Join the PTO!

Looking for a way to get involved and make a meaningful impact at OTE? PTO volunteers play a vital role in organizing events, supporting students and families, and fostering a **connected, vibrant community**. Whether you want to **lead as a Co-Chair, join a specific committee, or sign up as a General Volunteer**, every contribution—big or small—helps our programs thrive and enriches the school experience. No matter your availability or skill set, there's a place for you in the PTO!



Sign up today to be part of the team: [www.otepto.org/volunteer](http://www.otepto.org/volunteer)

## 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!

Sign Up to Volunteer: [Overland Trail Elementary PTO: Field day - May 20th](#)

## 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 \(otepto.org\)](#)

## Summer 2025 Vaccine Clinics



All students attending school in 2025-2026

# SUMMER Vaccination Clinics

All recommended childhood and school-required vaccines will be available.



**July 25, 2025, 1-4 p.m.**  
**August 1, 2025, 1-4 p.m.**  
Health Services Building  
11875 S. Sunset Drive  
Olathe, KS 66061

**August 8, 2025, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
Northeast Office Building  
6000 Lamar Ave.  
Mission, KS 66202



Bring insurance card if you have one.  
No one is turned away for inability to pay. Questions? Call 913-826-1261 or send an email to [jcdhe@jocogov.org](mailto:jcdhe@jocogov.org).

**JOHNSON COUNTY**  
KANSAS  
**Health & Environment**

## 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](http://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	Thursday, June 5

Please note: The dates are subject to change based upon calendar updates or technology needs.

## Fifth Grade Clap Out | Last Day of School

Fifth Grade Families,

On the last day of school, it is tradition for our fifth graders to walk the halls of OTE one last time. Staff and students will line the halls to congratulate our students and bid them farewell before dismissal at 11:45 AM. If you would like to participate in the clap out, we ask that you line up outside the playground doors and form a line, or tunnel, for students to walk down around 11:30 AM. Parents may not enter the building for the clap out. Once students have walked all the way out to the playground, they will be dismissed. You are more than welcome to take your student for dismissal at that time. All bus riders will reenter the building and wait for their bus to arrive.

## OTE Fifth Grade | Welcome to Strings 2025-26

Information you need to know about the Strings program, how to enroll, projected class schedule, how to receive communications, and the required supply list for the class.

**VPE Strings Teacher - Mrs. Judy Erpelding**

This is Mrs. Erpelding's 3rd year teaching strings at OTE. "Mrs. E" also teaches strings at Valley Park Elementary, and is the Director of Orchestras at Blue Valley North High School. Each day she travels between these three buildings to teach the five classes in total that she has. In total, Mrs. Erpelding teaches approximately 140 students currently in Blue Valley Schools.

**Contact Information for Mrs. Erpelding:**  
Email: [jerpelding@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:jerpelding@bluevalleyk12.org)  
Office Phone: (913) 239-3900 ext. 3138  
785-633-1377 (cell - please only use during school hours in the event of something emergent)

**Enrollment Information:**  
Enrollment for Strings at OTE takes place in April and May. It is kicked off by a performance for 4th grade students by the current 5th Strings students. For OTE this performance takes place on Monday, April 28, 2025 at 2:10 PM in the OTE Cafeteria. At this performance, 4th graders will get to hear examples of music that they will learn. They'll hear 5th graders talk about their experiences in Strings, and they will be provided with a Reprocard with the enrollment information about strings. In addition, 4th grade students and their parents will receive a packet with the enrollment information about strings.

### OTE Welcome to Strings 2025-26

OTE Strings 2025-26 Welcome to Strings at Overland Trail Elementary School! In this packet you will find all the information you need to know about the Strings program, how to enroll, projected class schedule, how to receive communications, and the required supply list for the class. ...

[docs.google.com](https://docs.google.com)

## Summer Technology Support

Here is the [summer technology support information](#) from BV Care. I.T. will also be putting this information on the district website the first week of June as one of the rotating banners.

## 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).

# 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.**



## 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](#)



**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](#)



**Erica McDonald**

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters