

Cougar Connect

May 2, 2025

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Good afternoon,

As we wrap up another wonderful week of learning, I want to take a moment to thank you all—students, families, and staff—for your continued energy, support, and dedication to making our school such a vibrant and welcoming place.

This week, we saw so many moments that reflect the heart of our community: students engaged in meaningful learning, staff going the extra mile to support one another, and families showing up in ways big and small to help us all succeed.

Looking ahead, we're excited to celebrate **Teacher Appreciation Week**! Our educators give so much of themselves each and every day to help students grow, and next week is our chance to show them just how valued they are. Whether it's a kind note, a smile, or a simple "thank you," we invite everyone to take part in recognizing the incredible work our teachers do. Let's carry this positive momentum into the week ahead as we celebrate the people who make learning possible.

As the weather warmer approaches, the influenza season is still in effect, and we continue to see positive cases of influenza B. If your child experiences any of the following flu symptoms, please keep them home from school and consider having your child tested for influenza:

- *Fever
- *Vomiting
- *Sore throat
- *Cough
- *Fatigue

If your student does test positive for flu, please contact Nurse Jenn at JAArnoldColeman@bluevalleyk12.org or 913-239-7013 as known flu cases are then reported to the district as well as Johnson County for disease monitoring purposes. Thank you for your family's contribution to keeping our OTE family healthy!

Lastly, next week, we will celebrate all of our educators during Teacher Appreciation Week. I encourage you to express your appreciation toward your child's teacher(s) for their contributions to their academic success.

Wishing you a restful weekend, OTE!

Best,
Erica McDonald
Principal

Newsletter Table of Contents



Newsletter Table of Contents

Recurring News:

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

Recent Newss

- OTE Fifth Grade | Welcome to Strings 2025-26
- Summer Technology Support

Repeat News:

- Food Service Payment Change
- Register for the 2025-26 school year today
- Blue Valley North Senior Reception | May 14
- BVUnmuted podcast episode: Personal Electronic Devices
- Become a BVEF Parent Member and Support our Schools!
- Nut-Safer Guidelines
- Helpful Links (i.e., School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)

Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

May

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

✨ Unity Squad Spotlight ✨



Cultural Night | THANK YOU!

On behalf of Overland Trail Elementary PTO, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you who hosted a table or performed at our Cultural Night.

Thanks to your incredible efforts, generosity, and spirit, the evening was an immense success. The room was filled with warmth, color, music, and the beautiful diversity that makes our community so special. From the delicious foods and stunning displays to the amazing performances that lit up the stage, every moment was a testament to the power of sharing and learning from one another.

We are so grateful for the time, energy, and love you put into this event. You helped create an evening our students and families will remember for a long time.

OTE PTO

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.



PTO Events | May

Pop Tabs Collection | Due May 16

Overland Trail Elementary has been collecting aluminum pull tabs from drink cans during this school year to donate to Ronald McDonald House. Send in pop tabs with your student by May 16th! This is your last chance to make a difference and help our collection drive!

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](#)



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

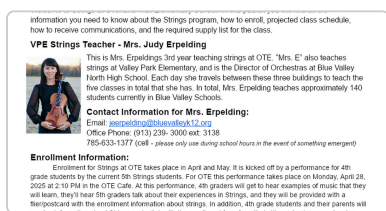
7040 W 135th Street

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://otepto.org).

OTE Fifth Grade | Welcome to Strings 2025-26



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

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.

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://linqconnect.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@linqconnect.com and noreply@titank12.com to your email contacts to prevent messages from going to your junk or spam folder.

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.

A graphic with a light blue background and a collage of school supplies on the right side, including a pink folder, pencils, paper clips, a magnifying glass, and a watercolor palette. The text is centered and uses a mix of bold, black, and orange fonts. The dates are highlighted in black brushstroke-style boxes.

**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.

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

Website: 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

Website: 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

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

