

Cougar Connect

May 9, 2025

A Note From Mrs. McDonald



A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Good afternoon,

This week, our staff at OTE received many tokens of appreciation. We want to thank the PTO for all the gifts and treats provided to our staff throughout this week. Additionally, thank you to every family who sent heartfelt notes, gifts, kind words, and/or other acts of kindness to show their appreciation for the educators in our building.

This weekend, I encourage you to take some time to celebrate a special individual in each of your lives who has been a mentor, nurturer, encourager, or has provided words or wisdom that have had an impact on your life.

Best,
Erica McDonald
Principal

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Save-the-Date



Save-the-Date

May

Wednesday, May 14: Community Service; 3:45-4:30 PM

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

Friday, May 16: 5th Grade Celebration

Tuesday, May 20: Field Day and Yearbook Signing

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

✨ 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.

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.](#)

May Community Service Activity | Wednesday, May 14

Join us for the last community service activity of the school year on Wednesday, 5/14 from 3:45-4:30 p.m. We will be tying blankets for My Very Own Blanket to help warm the heart of a child in the foster care system with a blanket. These blankets give these children a feeling of comfort, security and, most of all a SMILE!



Materials will be provided. Parents will be needed to help cut the fleece fabric so children can tie the blankets, as such please include yourself when signing up! Bring fabric scissors with you if you have them to help with the cutting.

Reminder: Change your child's method of pick-up in PickUpPatrol (select Other and note OTE Community Service Meeting in Art Room in the comments).

Sign Up Now: [Overland Trail Elementary PTO - Community Service Meetings](#)

Last Call for Pop Tabs!

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



Students can bring in pop tabs to OTE by May 16 for the tabs to be added to this school year's collection. We can't wait to see how many pop tabs our OTE Cougars can collect!

Ice Cream Fundraising Night at Andy's | Monday, May 12

Join us for a sweet treat at Andy's Frozen Custard and support the Overland Trail Elementary PTO! Mention OTE and show the voucher below when ordering and \$1 of your purchase will be donated back to our PTO.



OTE Andy's Frozen Custard Fundraising Night
Monday, May 12
5821 W. 135th Street

Must present this voucher:



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 \(otepo.org\)](#).

Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades

End of Quarter Information - Viewing Canvas Courses and Quarter Grades

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.

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.

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
Office Phone: (913) 238-3000 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 2:15 PM in the OTE Café. 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 Signpostcard with the enrollment information about strings. In addition, 4th grade students and their parents will receive a letter with 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](#)

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://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.

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.

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

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

Phone: (913) 239-7000

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



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

