

Cougar Connect

November 3, 2023



Newsletter Table of Contents

Recurring News:

- A Note From Mrs. McDonald, Principal
- FYI and Save-the-Date
- Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) News
- ✨ DEI Spotlight

Recent News:

- Holiday Support-a-Cougar

Repeat News:

- Holiday Assistance
- Reporting Religious Absences
- Important Travel Outside of the USA
- Nut-Safer Guidelines
- Helpful Links (i.e., School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)



A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear families,

This week's Halloween Celebration is one for the book families! Much of the success is attributed to the well-oiled support and organization provided by PTO. Words cannot express our gratitude for how seamless the day's events were due to the outstanding collaboration and partnership held with our parent community. Thank you, parents and caregivers; we appreciate you beyond measure!

It promises to be a weekend of beautiful weather--GO CHIEFS! ♥

Sincerely,

Erica McDonald



Save-the-Date

Monday, November 6: PTO Restaurant Night | Goodcents, 3:00 PM-8:00 PM

Friday, November 10: Veteran's Assembly 9:00 AM | Reception at 10:00 AM

Monday, November 13-Friday, November 17: American Education Week

Thursday, November 16: Third Grade Music Program; Dress Rehearsal 2:30 PM; Performance 7:00 PM (OTMS)

Monday, November 20-Thursday, November 24: Thanksgiving Break

Friday, December 1: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

Monday, December 4: Picture Retake Day

Monday, December 11: PTO Restaurant Night | Torchy's Tacos, 10:00 AM-9:00 PM

Friday, December 15: Birthday Book Lunch: November, December, and June Birthdays

Wednesday, December 20: Jingle Bell Assembly; 10:15 AM | Half Day Dismissal; 11:45 AM | End of Quarter 2 | End of First Semester

Thursday, December 21-Sunday, December 31: No School | Winter Break



PTO Events | October

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).



Volunteers Needed – Veterans Day Assembly (11/9 & 11/10) & Bingo for Books (11/10)

Two big PTO events are coming up next week and we need YOUR help with some basic event needs. Please click [HERE](#) to volunteer there are several opportunities to lend a hand.



Restaurant Night @ Goodcents - Monday, November 6th.

Dinner made easy! Pop in Goodcents or place an online order (use code OTE), and a portion of OTE sales will come back to support our school!



Community Service Candy Drive (11/2 – 11/7) & Event (11/8)

We will be collecting unopened Halloween candy November 2nd - 7th for our November Community Service project. Collection bins will be in the front hallway. Then, join us on November 8th to create candy bags to be included in winter break food bags for the Love, Literacy, Life organization. Click [HERE](#) to RSVP for November's Community Service event. Parents are encouraged to attend with their student(s).



Bingo for Books - Friday, November 10th.

Join us for a FREE family night in the OTE gym. Play Bingo and win books! Doors will open at 6:00 p.m., with Bingo beginning at 6:30 p.m. The event will conclude at 8:00 p.m. No RSVP is needed, show up and play! Everyone will go home with a book!



Garden Club Event – Saturday, November 11th at 10:00 a.m.

Help get OTE's landscaping ready for winter! This is a family event. Our Garden Club leaders will provide instructions; no previous experience is needed. As a bonus, McLain's Bakery is donating cookies to help fuel our volunteers. Click [HERE](#) to RSVP!

☆☆ DEI Spotlight

Did you know that OTE's DEI Council includes parents, caregivers, and OTE staff? We have many staff members who have worked countless hours outside of their contract to design aspects that create a more culturally inclusive environment.

For example, all visitors must push the intercom button to receive support from the front office. This added layer of security is unique, so the sign below is at the front of the building and is a helpful reminder not to forget this important step to getting office support.

Our staff will continue to implement strategies to support families transitioning to OTE.



Holiday Support-a-Cougar

During these challenging economic times, it has become increasingly difficult for some families to provide items to their children during the holiday season. We understand and know some of our Overland Trail Elementary families need support this upcoming time of year.

As such, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) will sponsor and adopt a student program called Support-a-Cougar. This is an anonymous opportunity to make sure OTE students enjoy the holiday season. Selected families will receive a gift card to purchase presents or necessary items for their child(ren). Families will also choose a book and a board game for their child.

If you want your child to participate, complete the online form at <https://tinyurl.com/y4tqx4sd> by **December 1, 2023**.

Substitute school counselor, Linda Graves, and school social worker, Lacey Koester, will later follow up with families to provide more details, including dates to collect the items. Multiple families will be chosen. You must be a current OTE student to participate in the program.

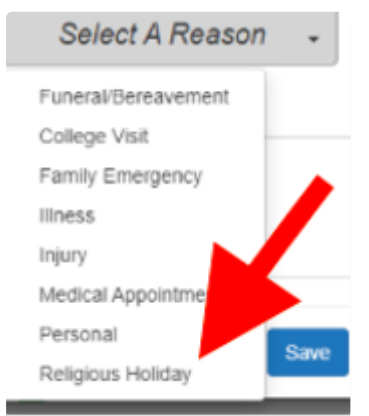


Holiday Assistance

Do you need some assistance in purchasing items for the upcoming holidays? If so, consider seeking support at one of the local area organizations providing assistance. Click the links below for more details and online applications.

[Johnson County Christmas Bureau](#)

[Salvation Army](#)



Reporting Religious Absences

Did you know? Families can select "Religious Holiday" as an option for a child's absence in ParentVue, when applicable. This notation could be helpful to our school staff so they can plan accordingly for your student's absence.

Important Travel Outside of the USA

This important message is for any family or staff that will **travel out of the United States** during the school year. Please [click here](#) to read the restrictions and recommendations for Out of the Country travel. Blue Valley resources such as Canvas, Classlink, and school email are not accessible out of the country unless you have a **personal device** with a **VPN** on it.



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.

School Supply Lists

District Calendar (2023-2024)

Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage


Family Handbook



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Office Staff

 @OTECougars

- Robin Warren, Administration Assistant/Bookkeeper
- Yolonda Merritt, Administration Assistant/Registrar
- Debby Alexander, Attendance

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full of family

Overland Trail Elementary

