

Cougar Connect

September 29, 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:

- Welcome to OTE, Alicia Anderson!
- Ticket Tee for Future Mustangs
- Peace Week | October 2-6
- Bullying Prevention Plan

Repeat News:

- Safe Schools Reporting
- Fifth Grade Celebration | Cast Your Vote
- Battle of the Books
- Children's Mercy--Powering Families Webinars
- Reporting Religious Absences
- Important Travel Outside of the USA
- OTE Library | "The family that reads together grows together."
Carmela Dutra
- Nut-Safer Guidelines
- Helpful Links (i.e., School Supply Lists, Family Handbook, etc.)



A Note From Mrs. McDonald

Dear families,

Our staff enjoyed meeting with you to share your child's progress during fall conferences. We appreciate your time, commitment, and overall partnership as we conclude the first quarter of the 2023-2024 school year. As we progress through the semester, we are confident that students will continue to flourish. Don't hesitate to reach out for questions or support.

☞ Thank you, Sarah Wiedeman, Lindsay Persell, and the PTO Board, for coordinating a delicious dinner for our staff for Tuesday night's conferences. We are grateful beyond measure for your support on this extended workday.

Sincerely,

Erica McDonald
Principal



Save-the-Date

October

Tuesday, October 3: PTO Restaurant Night | Papa Johns, All Day

Friday, October 6: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

Wednesday, October 11: PTO Community Service

Friday, October 13: No School | End of Quarter 1

Friday, October 20: Skate Party at Skate City; 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

Tuesday, October 24-Thursday, October 26: Scholastic Book Fair

Tuesday, October 24: Family Night; 5:30 PM-7:30 PM

Thursday, October 26: Donuts with Grownups; 7:15 AM-8:15 AM

Tuesday, October 31: Fall Celebration; details to come at a later date

November

Wednesday, November 1: No School | Professional Learning

Thursday, November 2: Hearing and Vision Screenings

Friday, November 3: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

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

Friday, November 10: Veteran's Day Breakfast 8 AM | Assembly 9 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)



PTO Events | September

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).



Tuesday, 10/3 – Restaurant Night at Papa Johns

Call in for pick up or delivery at the **6840 W 119th St** location & up to 25% of OTE sales will come back to support our school.

Use code **KSNN05** for online orders or tell them you're ordering for this fundraiser for call for sales to count.



Veteran's Day Assembly – Help Needed

Planning has started for our annual Veteran's Day Assembly. We are looking for at least two additional volunteers to help with decor and serving brunch. If you want to volunteer for the special event, please contact Natalie Mallare and Sue Clevenger at


OTEVetPics@gmail.com.

Also, Save the Date for the Veterans Days assembly on Friday, November 10th at 9 AM. Invite your special Veteran to attend. Details to follow.



Wednesday, 10/13 – October Community Service

Join the Community Service crew to discuss homelessness and organizations you can help that provide support care. We will also start making car kits that students can take home and finish to give



to a homeless person. The meeting will be held in the Art Room after school, 3:45-4:30 p.m. Parents are encouraged to attend with their children.

☆☆ **DEI Spotlight**

September 15 to October 15 is National Hispanic American Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is a month-long celebration of Hispanic and Latino history and culture. While we celebrate Hispanic and Latino communities beyond this month, from September 15 to October 15, we give extra recognition to the many contributions made to the history and culture of the United States, including important advocacy work, vibrant art, popular and traditional foods, and much more.


Hispanic Heritage Month provides an additional opportunity to explore Latinas and Latinos' incredible impact on the United States for generations. The Latino presence in America spans centuries, predating Spain's colonization of what is now part of the United States, and they have been an integral part of shaping our nation since the Revolutionary War. Through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Treaty of Paris that followed the Mexican-American and Spanish-American wars, the United States gained territories in the Southwest and Puerto Rico. This incorporated the people of this area into the United States and further expanded the presence of Hispanic Americans.

Today, the [Latino population](#) in the United States is over 60 million, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This makes up 18.9% of the population and is the largest racial or ethnic group. Latinos continue to help fuel our economy and enrich our nation as entrepreneurs, athletes, artists, entertainers, scientists, public servants, and more.

- September 15 - Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua
- September 16 – Mexico
- September 18 – Chile
- September 21 - Belize

Ellen Ochoa

Dr. Ochoa became the first Latina to go to space in 1993 as she flew aboard the space shuttle Discovery. She later became the Johnson Space Center's first Latina director, and her journey continues to inspire many others.





Welcome to **OVERLAND TRAIL ELEMENTARY!**

SCHOOLING: MidAmerica Nazarene University, Walden University, Pittsburg State University

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING IN SCHOOLS: 20

YOUR ROLE AT OTE: Assistant Principal

FUN FACT ABOUT ME: I love to roller skate!

**we
are
family**

Overland Trail Elementary



WELCOME



**ALICIA ANDERSON:
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

**"WHAT EXCITES ME MOST ABOUT JOINING THE OTE FAMILY
IS THE AMAZING STAFF, STUDENT AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY
AND THE CULTURE THAT EXISTS WITHIN"**

Ticket Tee for Future Mustangs



Peace Week | October 2-6

OTE families,

In celebration of Peace Week, our staff and students will honor being good friends and teaming up against bullies through a spirit week. We look forward to your child joining us in the acknowledgment of standing up for others while making great choices!

- Peace Day (Monday): Wear tie dye and be a good friend
- Work For Others (Tuesday): Wear workout clothes and stand up for others
- Put Mean Words to Rest (Wednesday): Wear PJs and end negativity
- Team Up Against Bullies (Thursday): Wear your favorite jersey or team
- We are (OTE) Family (Friday): OTE Spirit Wear Day- team up against bullies

Please review our Bullying Prevention Plan at OTE by clicking the button below.

Emily Harsch
Counselor

Linda Graves
Long-Term Substitute

Bullying Prevention Plan

Safe Schools Reporting

Blue Valley Schools is committed to promoting and fostering a safe environment in and around all of our schools. Through the convergence of physical and intellectual security measures, we are continuously working to prevent, mitigate, respond to and recover from a wide range of emergencies. Please check out [available ways to report safety concerns](#).

Fifth Grade Celebration | Cast Your Vote

Fifth grade families,

It's time to vote on what your student would like to do for their year-end 5th Celebration. Follow the link to read the full details and to cast your vote!

<https://forms.gle/c7xEo62XbQnX6CtH7>

Thank you,

Vanessa Blanchard

Battle of the Books

OTE Battle of the Books

We are looking for parent helpers to coach our 3rd - 5th grade teams!

- 5 books will be read by each team
- all questions/materials provided
- meet once a month during lunch
- Runs Nov - April
- "Battle" will be end of April

If you are interested or want more information

Email Mrs Mason@

jmason02@bluevalleyk12.org

Children's Mercy--Powering Families Webinar

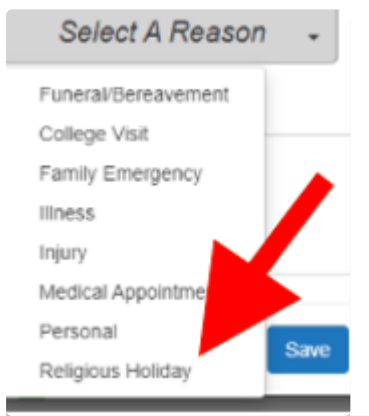
Each month, Children's Mercy will offer a free online educational event to provide parents and caregivers a chance to connect with Children's Mercy Kansas City experts on a variety of topics. Each event will include information about a specific topic followed by questions from attendees submitted via chat. Each event will be presented monthly at 12:00 noon. Webinar topics will include healthy eating, financial resources, anxiety and depression, kids' safety, and more! Participants will need internet access and a phone/tablet/computer to participate. These webinars are free, but registration is required. If families cannot attend virtually at noon, the webinar will be recorded and posted on the [Powering Families homepage](#) for later access.

These webinars are free, but [registration](#) is required. Once you have [submitted your registration](#), you will be emailed the link to join the event.

Upcoming sessions:

- Preventing Unintentional Childhood Injuries – Tuesday, October 24, 2023, 12-1 pm

To access the full list of recordings, view all upcoming webinar topics, or register for a session, visit the [Powering Families webpage](#).



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.

OTE Library | "The family that reads together grows together." Carmela Dutra

Mrs. Mason is looking for pictures of you and your family reading together to include on a bulletin board across from the library. Email your pictures to jmason02@bluevalleyk12.org.



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 **Nut Safer Foods** and BV Guidelines can be found [here](#).

School Supply Lists

District Calendar (2023-2024)

Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage

Family Handbook




Erica McDonald, Principal

 @OTEMcDonald

 6225 West 133rd Street, Overla...

 ECMcDonald@bluevalleyk12.org

 (913) 239-7000


 bluevalleyk12.org/OTE



Alicia Anderson, Assistant Principal

 @OTEAnderson

 6335 West 135th Street, Overla...

 ARAnderson@bluevalleyk12.org

 (913) 239-7000

 bluevalleyk12.org/OTE



Office Staff

 @OTECougars

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

 6225 West 133rd Street, Overla...

 (913) 239-7000

 bluevalleyk12.org/OTE

full of family

Overland Trail Elementary

