

# OTE News

January 22, 2023



Hello OTE Families,

On Friday, January 13th, parents/guardians were sent an email inviting them to sign up for a February conference. If you have not seen this email, please check your Spam/Junk folder, as many reported Blue Valley emails filtering to these boxes most recently. Additionally, you can ask your child's teacher to forward you the email.

## **Café**

We aim to enhance students' lunch experience in the café by encouraging behaviors that promote respect, responsibility, and safety. To partner with our staff, it would be helpful to reinforce the following skills at home. We appreciate your support, families.

- Walk patiently in line to get your food.
- Show gratitude to the staff helping you.
- Walk to your seat and the bathroom.
- Raise your hand when assistance is needed.
- Use an inside voice while talking to those at your table.
- Use dining manners (e.g., stay in your seat, don't play with food, have appropriate topics for discussion, etc.).
- Listen to the directions that the adults give.

Thanks so much to all who provided soups for our amazing staff this week. It was such a fun treat!

Melissa Hansen  
Principal



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### FYI and Save the Date

**Monday, February 13:** Parent Teacher Conferences (in person)

**Wednesday, February 15th:** Parent Teacher Conferences (virtual)

**Thursday, February 16th:** Parent Teacher Conferences (in person)

**Thursday, February 16:** No School (Conferences)

**Friday, February 17:** No School (District-wide Break)

**Monday, February 20:** No School (Presidents' Day)

**Friday, March 10:** No School (Staff Professional Learning and Grade Prep)

**Monday, March 13-Friday, March 17:** No School (Spring Break)

**Monday, March 20:** No School (Staff Professional Learning)

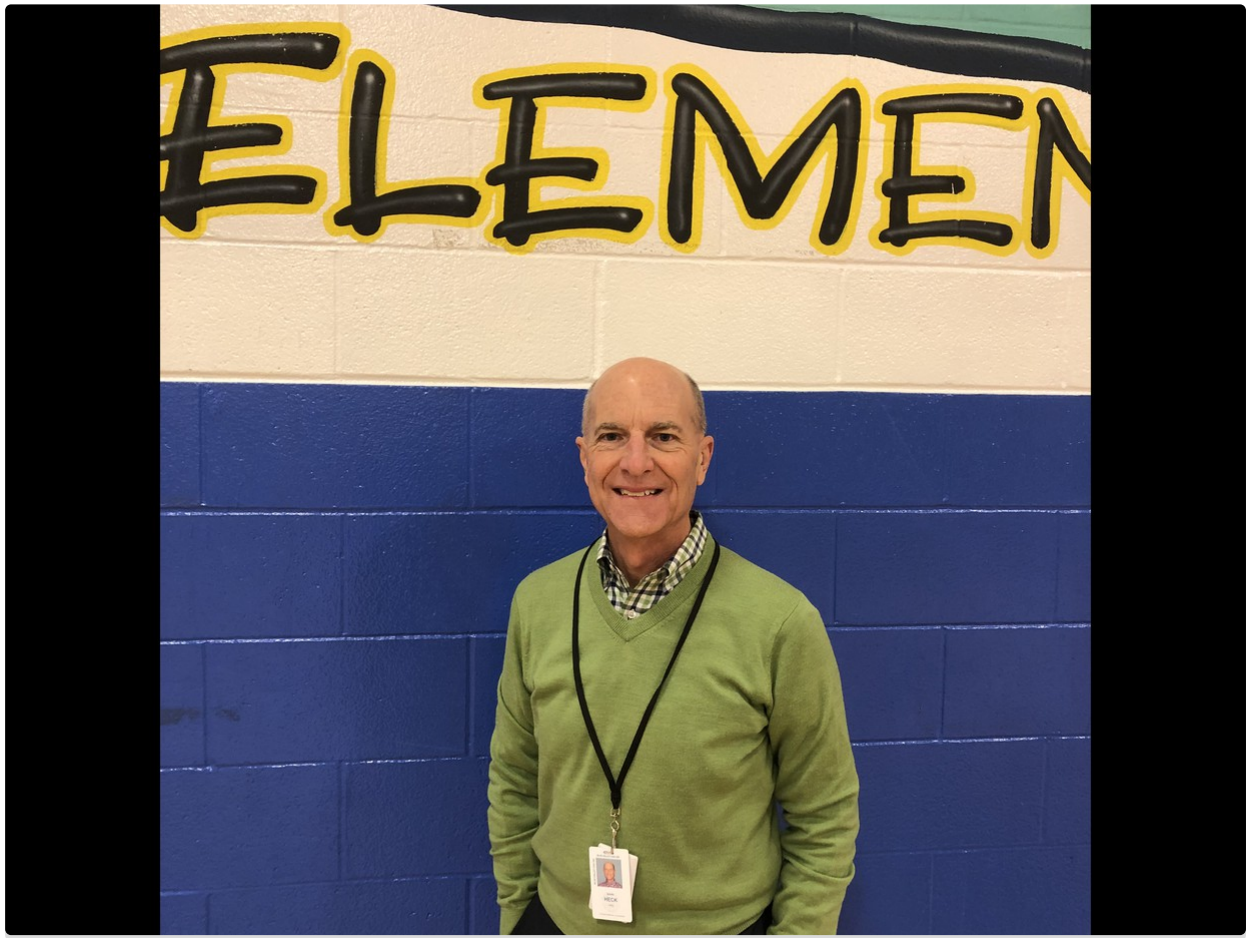
**Monday, April 24:** No School (Staff Professional Learning)

### Welcome Back Dr. Mark Heck

Dr. Mark Heck is pleased to return to Overland Trail Elementary to serve as interim assistant principal for the remainder of the school year due to the promotion of Mrs. Erica McDonald to the position of principal at Cottonwood Point Elementary. You may remember Dr. Heck from the first quarter of the 2021-2022 school year when he served as the substitute assistant principal for Mrs. McDonald while she was out for maternity leave.

Dr. Heck retired in June of 2019 after serving 20 years as an elementary school principal in the Olathe School District and a total of 38 years in education. His other 18 years of service took part in the Shawnee Mission and Piper School Districts in roles as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal. He is happy to be back among many familiar faces while meeting many new faces as well.

Dr. Mark Heck, Interim Assistant Principal  
Overland Trail Elementary



## **Major Saver**

Major Saver packets went home this week. Don't forget that a portion of each card sold comes directly back to OTE. For more details, please see the flyer below.



**SPECIAL NEEDS  
RESOURCE  
FAIR**

**2023 | BLUE  
VALLEY**

**BLUE VALLEY  
SCHOOLS**  
Education Beyond Expectations

**13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**

If you are a parent, teacher  
or caregiver of an individual with  
special needs, or a self advocate,  
**PLEASE JOIN US!**

**EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN  
TO THE PUBLIC**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023  
5:00-8:00PM**

**Hilltop Conference Center  
7700 W 143rd St. Overland Park, KS 66223**  
*(Entrance is on the WEST side of the campus)*

Visit **IN-PERSON** with service providers in the Kansas City area representing various disabilities,  
information on camps and other recreational opportunities, therapies, equipment, adult/transition services,  
financial/legal, health & wellness, and much more!

There will be **NO CHILD CARE** this year due to COVID-19 precautions.

Sponsored by the Blue Valley School District and the Blue Valley Special Education Advisory Council (BVSEAC)

## Incoming Kindergarten Information

We are so excited to start the process to welcome our Kindergarten families for the Fall of 2023. Children who reside in Blue Valley Schools and turn 5 years of age by August 31 are eligible to attend kindergarten that school year. If you live in the Overland Trail Elementary boundaries and will have an incoming Kindergarten student next fall, **please click on this link to pre-register:** Click [Here](#) More information will be shared with you at the end of February, including welcome videos, online registration instructions, and information about Kindergarten Round Up in April. **Please pass this link on to neighbors that might not have a student in our system and might not yet receive our weekly emails!**



## PTO News

Hi, Cougar Families! We hope you all had so much fun at our Glow Party! Thank you to our Social Chair Chrissy Bailey for planning such a fun, free family fun night! We also wanted to extend a big thank you to all who donated and cooked for the Staff Appreciation Chili/Soup Cook-off! Our OTE Cougar community really likes to "fill our teachers buckets" (or, in this case, bowls) so it was great to hear from so many teachers and staff that this was a big hit! A very special thank you to our Staff Appreciation team for all of their hard work making this happen!

We have so many fun PTO activities coming up, so please make sure you read all of the details below!

**SAVE THE DATES (Please see below for more details).**

- **Friday, January 27th** = Skate Party @ Skate City (5-7PM)
- **Wednesday, February 8th** = Community Service
- **Friday, March 3rd** = PTO Spring Auction @ The Brass Onion (6:30-9:30 PM)

### **SPRING AUCTION**

Our committee chairs are hard at work planning our PTO Spring Auction, which will be held on Friday Night, March 3rd (6:30-9:30 PM) at The Brass Onion (5500 W 135th Street). The auction is not only a super fun, adults-only social event, it's also one of our biggest fundraisers of the year and we'd love your help! If you're a business owner and/or your family would like to donate an item to the auction (sports memorabilia, products/services, event tickets, unique Kansas City experiences, gift cards, etc), please reach out to Crystalyn at [crystalyn.ellis@gmail.com](mailto:crystalyn.ellis@gmail.com). All of the money that will be raised will go to support the students, teachers, staff, and families of our OTE community!



## Spiritwear and Yearbook

### SPIRITWEAR

PTO is working with Blue Valley North High School students to get our spirit wear! Click [HERE](#) to purchase your spirit wear, support OTE and support BVN students who are running the online store!

### YEARBOOK PHOTO HELP!

Have a fun picture of your students you'd like us to add to the yearbook? Please submit photos (especially group photos) from Carnival, Book Fair, Class Parties, School Activities, Sports, Community Service activities, Veterans Day Assembly, etc to the following link (please make sure to label and tag with which event and kids the pictures include!): <https://picbooks.com/go/QFW7XB>

Connect with the PTO:

[Facebook](#) @OverlandTrailPTO

[Twitter](#) @OTECougarsPTO

Website: [otepto.membershiptoolkit.com](https://otepto.membershiptoolkit.com)

District Calendar (2022-2023)

Overland Trail Elementary's Homepage

Parent/Guardian Handbook

## Nut Safe Approved List

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.

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



## 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**, which is included on page 14 of the OTE Parent Handbook [here](#). Essentially, we must remember that sending food home is a risk for children as they transition between school and home while also putting our families in an undesirable position when a child 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.

## Important Travel Outside of the USA Information


This important message is for any family or staff traveling **out of the United States** during the school year. Please [click here](#) to read the restrictions and recommendations for Out of 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**.



### Office Staff

 @OTECougars

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

 oteos@bluevalleyk12.org

 (913) 239-7000

 bluevalleyk12.org/ote