

Cougar Connect

January 19, 2024

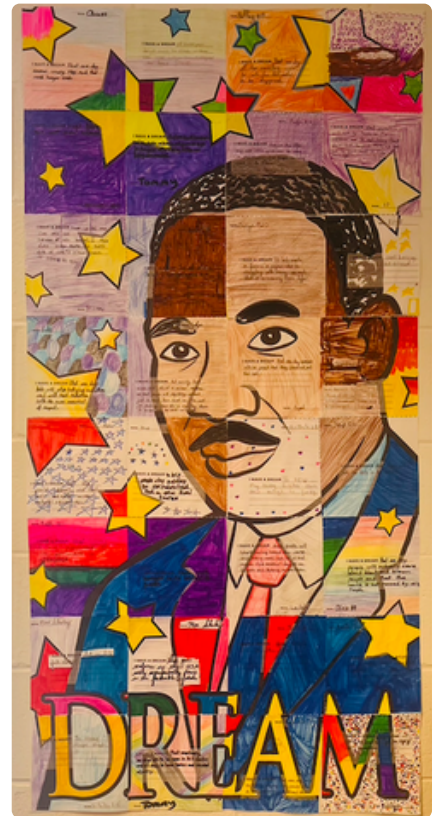


TABLE OF CONTENTS

STAY IN THE KNOW!

Newsletter Table of Contents

Recurring News:

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

Recent News:

- Major Saver Campaign
- Winter Conferences (updated information)

Repeat News:

- A Note from Mrs. McDonald, Principal
- Incoming Kindergarten Information
- Boundary and Neighborhood Changes for OTE
- OTE Volunteer Agreement
- Valentine's Day Celebrations
- Valentine's Day Celebration Donations
- New Assessment Tool Replaces Longtime MAP Tests
- Out of the Country Information
- 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. Anderson

Dear families,

This week, we acknowledged the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the impact his work had on our nation.

In addition, many students were awarded for showing respect at OTE and we kicked off our Major Saver Campaign.

Lastly, please continue to sign up for parent-teacher conferences.

Please refer to the information about Winter Conferences below, as well as information from Classroom Teachers, for sign up information.

I wish you a safe and relaxing weekend, families.

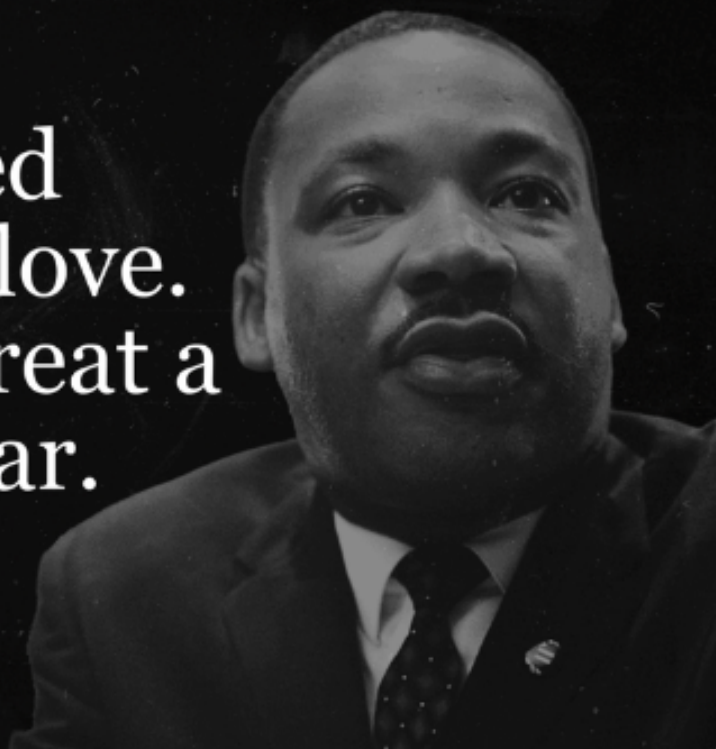
Sincerely,

Alicia Anderson

Assistant Principal

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.

- Martin Luther King Jr.



Save-the-Date

January

Friday, January 26: Skate Party at Skate City; 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

February

Friday, February 2: PTO Board Meeting; 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

Friday, February 2: PTO Family Fun Night Glow Party 6:30-8:30 PM

DATE CHANGE

Monday, February 5: BLT Meeting; 4:00 PM-5:00 PM

Tuesday, February 6: Winter Conferences (4:00 PM-7:40 PM; first conference at 4:00 PM; last conference at 7:20 PM).

Wednesday, February 7: Winter Conferences (4:00 PM-7:40 PM; first conference at 4:00 PM; last conference at 7:20 PM).

Wednesday, February 7: PTO Community Service

Thursday, February 8: No School EC-8 | Winter Conferences (8:20 AM-3:00 PM; first conference at 8:20 AM; last conference at 2:40 PM).

Friday, February 9: No School | District-Wide Break

Wednesday, February 14: Valentine's Day Parties; 2:45 PM (setup); 3:00-3:25 PM (parties)

Friday, February 16: All Staff Meeting; 8:00 AM-8:20 AM

Friday, February 16: Birthday Book Lunch: January, February, and July Birthdays

Monday, February 19: No School | President's Day

Friday, February 23: Dental Screenings

Wednesday, February 28: PTO Restaurant Night | Papa Johns, All Day



PTO Events | January

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).



NOW OPEN – TRIVIA NIGHT REGISTRATION

Join us for the OTE PTO's first annual Trivia Night & Auction on April 6th. This will be one of the biggest fundraising events of the year, and its sure to be a fun one! Build your teams of 10 (adults only), which can include OTE and non-OTE friends, and grab a table. ***Our pre-registration was a success so only a limited number of tables remain.*** If you are pre-registered, you must submit payment to finalize your table reservation. Table prices will increase on February 3rd. Need more info? We've got you covered!

Click below to get all the details. [Overland Trail Elementary PTO - Trivia Night \(otepto.org\)](https://otepto.org).

OTE Skate Party – Friday, January 26th

Grab your friends and head to Skate City from 5-7:00 p.m. on 1/26 for OTE Skate Night. Adults are free to attend (if you don't skate) and dinner specials will be available too. A portion of OTE sales will come back to the PTO to support our school. Hope to see you there!



Glow Party – Friday, February 2nd

Our annual Glow Party is coming up! This is kid-favorite event. Join us in the OTE gym to glow crazy! We'll have a DJ, glow sticks and all the fun. This event is FREE for all OTE families. A perfect way to get out of the cold and glow party with friends!



OTE Code Ninjas Event – Saturday, February 3rd


A fun PTO fundraising event is coming up! Sign your student up for TWO HOURS of engaging STEM activities at Code Ninjas. 50% of the registration fee will be donated back to the PTO to support OTE. This is available for 2nd through 5th graders. Students may be dropped off at Code Ninjas for the duration of this event. Feel free to invite your kids' friends too, simply use this [link](#) for more info and to register! Registration is required to attend this event.

OTE PTO FUNDRAISING EVENT AT

 **CODE NINJAS**

Drop your kids off for 2 hours of STEM activities: build games, create robots & more. 50% of ticket sales come back to support OTE.

WHEN: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD, 1:00-3:00 P.M.
WHO: 2ND - 5TH GRADERS
WHERE: CODE NINJAS, 3622 W 135TH ST.
COST: \$39/STUDENT



Scan to register, or visit schoolspriterevents.com/overlandfeb3



★ DEI Spotlight


For December, various holidays are celebrated worldwide, and many are observed among our families here at Overland Trail Elementary. Seeing how the staff has planned to engage with students to embrace and honor our cultural differences is fun. We welcome families to share how they plan to celebrate this December-January with the team. If you would like to send pictures, food, artifacts, etc., we would love to allow students to share more about themselves.



DECEMBER 2023 HOLIDAYS
 Learn more about these holidays with PebbleGo and PebbleGo Next!

capstone
Education

Major Saver Campaign




MAJOR SAVER COMING SOON!

BVEF ensures that all students in the Blue Valley School District have the resources they need to succeed. Your child benefits from BVEF! Last year, nearly \$75,000 was raised from the Major Saver campaign. A portion of each card sold directly benefits your school.


2024 MAJOR SAVER CAMPAIGN
Blue Valley Educational Foundation
Campaign Kickoff:
Tuesday, January 16th
Campaign Collections:
Thursday, January 25th -
Thursday, February 1st

PURCHASE ONLINE
 Visit majorsaver.com and purchase cards online. Cards may be purchased from other areas. Participating students will receive credit for cards purchased online. All cards purchased online will be mailed directly to the customer. Prizes will be awarded the next scheduled collection day.




Get Thousands More REUSABLE Offers On Our App!

Download the "MS" Major Saver App on the App Store or Google Play. Register your Major Saver Card.




More Deals in More Places!

Enjoy customer savings with local, regional and national brands!
 Become a member and earn a \$10 Travel Credit! Member!
 Visit: majorsaver.com/brand
 Credit Code: MS10




MAJORSAVER.COM

Generate a custom link for your selling student and send to friends and family or use on social media!
 Those sales will automatically be credited to your student and you can track how many cards have been purchased benefiting your student!



\$20



PINSTRIPES

SWEET POTATOS


PRICE CHOPPER

KCCORNER

Buy One Pella Magazine, Get One FREE!
 At 80+ Locations


BUY ONE ALL ACCESS MEMBERSHIP, GET ONE FREE!
 ONLY AT 125TH ST OVERLAND PARK, KS 66202


\$5 OFF a Purchase of \$50 or More!



DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN?

Please call:
 816-554-7999 OR 1-800-320-1614
 Or email: info@majorsaver.com





DID YOU KNOW THAT MAJOR SAVER HAS A MASCOT?
 HE! I'M FRAISER.

Winter Conferences

Dear families,

It is time to begin signups for winter conferences. Please read the following details:

Dates:

- Tuesday, February 6 (in-person): 4:00 PM-7:40 PM
- **Wednesday, February 7 (virtual): 4:00 PM-7:40 PM**
 - **Wednesday virtual. You will receive a Zoom link from your teacher unless otherwise directed.**
- Thursday, February 8 (in-person) 8:20 AM-3:00 PM

You will select your child's classroom teacher using the link below to **schedule one block of time** for a conference. Additionally, if you'd like to meet with a specials teacher (i.e., Spanish, Art, P.E., and Music), you may select one time block to meet with that individual teacher.

Reminders:

- Remember to write down the date and time that you sign up.
- If you sign up for Wednesday, you are meeting on Zoom.
- Make sure to sign up for the correct teacher.
- If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or the front office at OTE-oteos@bluevalleyk12.org or (913) 239-7000.

Click <https://www.ptcfast.com/schools/OTE> to sign up for a conference this February.

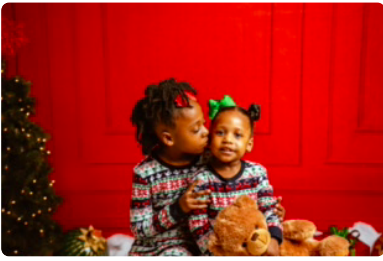
Erica McDonald

Community Celebrations and Observances - to promote awareness and appreciation of our Blue Valley families.

Some January Celebrations & Observances:

- **National Poverty Awareness Month** - While the United States is considered the richest country in the world, 37.9 million people live in poverty, including 12.5 million children. National Poverty Awareness Month works to bring awareness to issues of poverty and increase access to resources and services. To help and or find support, visit Johnson County Outreach Services.
- **Maghi** - January 13 - a Sikh celebration. Some Sikh families will celebrate with a recitation of the holy Guru Granth Sahib and religious rituals in Gurdwaras - a Sikh place of assembly and worship meaning "Gateway to the Guru".
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** - January 15 - a day that honors the life and legacy of the civil rights leader. Some families will participate in a day of service to their communities.
- **World Religion Day** - January 21 - established by the Bahá'í Faith community in 1950. Now observed by people around the world, it seeks to find common values shared by different faiths, encourage tolerance and dialogue, and foster cooperation among religious communities.
- **International Holocaust Remembrance Day** - January 27 - an annual day of commemorating the six million Jewish victims and millions of other victims of the Holocaust and Nazism.





A Note from Mrs. McDonald, Principal

Overland Trail Elementary families,

If you have seen me recently, you know I am expecting a baby soon! The McDonald family is excited to add our third child later this month. Therefore, I will begin my maternity leave in the next

few weeks. Mrs. Debbie Kelly and Dr. Cathy Austin will step into my principal role during my absence. This placement will be a shared leadership role coupled with daily support from our Assistant Principal, Mrs. Alicia Anderson. Mrs. Kelly and Dr. Austin are seasoned Blue Valley administrators who served as long-time principals in the district and have a combined 80 years in education. We are excited for Mrs. Kelly and Dr. Austin to join us, with an anticipated start date of February 1.

Thank you for welcoming both leaders to the OTE family!

Erica McDonald

Incoming Kindergarten Information

Dear families,

We are excited to start welcoming our kindergarten families for Fall 2024. Children who reside in Blue Valley Schools and turn five by August 31 can attend kindergarten that school year. If you live within the Overland Trail Elementary boundaries and will have an incoming kindergarten student next fall, please complete the form below to begin receiving communication directly through email and text from Overland Trail Elementary. **Please be mindful that this form is not a completion of registration but an opportunity for us to open communication and begin preparing for official registration at the end of February.**

[Overland Trail Elementary Kindergarten Pre-registration Form](#)

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 message and link on to neighbors who might not have a student in our system and still need to receive our weekly emails.

Our team is ready to support you; please don't hesitate to call the office at (913) 239-7000 or email OTEOS@bluevalleyk12.org for questions.

Thank you,
Erica McDonald
Principal

Alicia Anderson
Assistant Principal



INCOMING KINDERGARTEN DATES

2024-2025

Kindergarten Online Registration Begins

February 20

Kindergarten Round-Up Sessions

April 12

Kindergarten Orientation Sessions

August 13

First full day of school for Kindergarten

August 14

Contact your neighborhood school
for more information.



Boundary and Neighborhood Changes for OTE

Our OTE community will be impacted by some neighborhood boundary changes. We will be welcoming some amazing, new families to our school this year. At the June 2023 Board of Education meeting, the board adopted boundary adjustments that address elementary school enrollment and building capacity issues. These will begin for the 2024-25 school year. The following neighborhoods are impacted:

- Autumn Park (Arcadia), Villages of Overland View and Executive Hills boundaries will be adjusted to attend Indian Valley Elementary. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Oxford Middle and Blue Valley Northwest.
- Deer Creek boundaries will be adjusted to attend Overland Trail Elementary.
- Sandstone Creek, Savoy and Plaza Gardens boundaries would be adjusted to attend Harmony Elementary. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Harmony Middle and Blue Valley Northwest.
- Villas of Carrington Square Area boundaries will be adjusted to attend Heartland Elementary
- Glen Abbey & Villas of Chapel Green, and Highland Villas and Highlands Creek boundaries will be adjusted to attend **Prairie Star Elementary**. This adjustment will also include a change in feeder pattern to Prairie Star Middle and Blue Valley High.

OTE Volunteer Agreement

In order to ensure the safety of our students and staff, the admin team, in collaboration with the office staff, has devised a volunteer agreement that all volunteers must acknowledge and sign in the front office prior to volunteering in the building. Effective immediately, this volunteer agreement



School Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for offering to volunteer at Overland Trail Elementary in the Blue Valley School District. We value having parents and caregivers in the building to support our students, staff, and school community.

The following agreement establishes an understanding of the role of a volunteer and ensures and understanding of the volunteering guidelines and school culture.

As a volunteer at Overland Trail Elementary, my initials below indicate that I understand and agree with the following:

- _____ 1. I must have my driver's license present at arrival to access the building.
- _____ 2. I will sign in at the office and acquire a volunteer sticker to wear visibly.
- _____ 3. I will report to my designated place of support and attend to my requested task.
- _____ 4. I will stay in my designated place of work and will not transition to places where my support is not requested.
- _____ 5. I understand volunteering is a complimentary service to Overland Trail Elementary.
- _____ 6. I will respect student confidentiality and not discuss my observations or experiences with other individuals.
- _____ 7. I understand that transporting or instructing students is not a volunteer's role.
- _____ 8. I will inform the school's administrators of any issue that may impact my service as a volunteer.
- _____ 9. I will adhere to the Blue Valley School District board policy **CIVILITY TOWARD STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES, 63H1** (see opposite page)
- _____ 10. Upon conclusion of my volunteering, I will sign out in the front office.

I understand this agreement and will follow the guidelines set forth:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Volunteers need to fill out this agreement once per school year.



Valentine's Day Celebrations

Dear families,

Please look forward to information from room parents regarding volunteers. Similar to the Winter Celebration, participation on this day will only be open to room parents and the assigned

volunteers. Per guidelines, younger and older siblings are not permitted to attend OTE's classroom celebrations.

Valentine's Day Celebration Date and Time:

- Wednesday, February 14, 2024
- 2:45 PM-3:25 PM (at 3:25 celebrations will wrap up and classes will prepare for dismissal)

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Erica McDonald
Principal

Valentine's Day Celebration Donations

Dear families,

Students will be making their Valentine's boxes in Art with Mr. Van Leeuwen this year. If you would like to help out we would love to have some supplies donated.



- Metallic/glitter markers
- Fun heart stickers
- Red/Pink/heart tissue paper
- Anything heart related that could be used for a valentine box.
- Kindergarten – Shoe Box
- 4th-5th – Shoe Box

Kale Van Leeuwen
Art Teacher

New Assessment Tool Released! Springtime MAP Tests

A new assessment taking the place of MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) testing has made evaluating data easier for teachers and decreased testing time for students, allowing for more focused instruction time.

The district's goal for the school year is to have 84% of students who take the assessment score in the low-risk or college-ready category – or the 40th percentile.

To learn more about Fastbridge, read [this Learning Connection story](#).

Out of the Country Information

☞ ➔ This important message is for any family or staff that will **travel out of the United States** during school breaks. [Click here](#) to read the restrictions and recommendations for out of the country travel. Canvas, Classlink, and email are not accessible out of the country unless you have a **personal device** with a VPN on it.



We do not recommend BV Devices leave the country.



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.

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

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](#)



Erica McDonald

Erica is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters