

DOUGLAS DIGEST

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Douglas Digest

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The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest every six weeks during the school year.
Next issue: March 10.

We welcome article ideas and feedback. Please email Lori at lori@fassman.com.

From the PTO

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year." The new year brings new energy, new hope, and new beginnings. We wish you all that and more as you enter 2014.

Our sincere appreciation to the volunteers who made our holiday sales programs a big success this year, including the Book Fair, Spiritwear, Scrip gift cards, the Target Red-Card program, and Box Tops and Donelan's collections. Every time you support one of these programs, you make a difference!

Our next **PTO General Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, January 28, 7:30 PM**. Please come hear Dr. Whitbeck share his insights on the school vision.

The **Spring Social and Auction** team continues to work hard organizing Douglas' largest annual fundraiser, which will take place on **Saturday, March 29**. It takes many volunteers and auction donations from parents and our business community to make this event a success. Here are some ways you can help:

- ◆ *Buy your tickets early.* It helps the organizers plan. Purchase tickets online at www.DouglasSchoolAuction.com.
- ◆ *Share your coveted babysitter list with a friend.* We know those names and phone numbers are like gold, but we can't let a shortage of sitters stop anyone in the Douglas community from getting to the event!
- ◆ *Think of donation ideas.* Can you provide a service that others might find useful? Do you have an unused gift card collecting dust somewhere? Do you know an author who would sign a copy of a book? Or an artist who would donate a piece? A favorite restaurant that would donate a dinner? Put on your thinking caps, and contact Heather and Kate.
- ◆ *Volunteer!* Help on a committee before the auction or during the event. Enjoy socializing while you're helping raise funds for our school. To find out more, contact Heather or Kate (auction@DouglasSchoolPTO.org).

A few final notes:

- ◆ **Grade 4-6 Movie Night** is on the horizon, on **Friday, January 24, 6:30 PM** (Looney Tunes starting at 6 PM). The kids love watching the movie, eating free popcorn, and meeting friends. See the PTO website for the link to vote for the movie and RSVP.
- ◆ Keep in mind our fantastic **Scrip Gift Card** program. Purchase gift cards for yourself or others, and Douglas receives a percentage of each card's value. Order with this week's forms to get cards in time for Valentine's Day. Shop at Roche Bros regularly? Need a new coat from LL Bean? Need gear for February break or a new appliance? With a little advance planning, Douglas can benefit from your purchases. There are nearly 750 retailers available, and purchasing cards has never been easier!
- ◆ Keep adding change to your **Purposeful Change** box. The Free the Children Leadership Team will collect the boxes in March, so there's still time to reach the goal of \$20 per family. The funds will help build another school for our adopted village of Osenetoi, Kenya.
- ◆ The Acton Public **School Committee meeting is February 13**. There are many important discussions happening this year—regionalization details such as schedules and buses, and the superintendent search. Stay informed and be heard!

(Continued on page 2)

A Vision of Creativity

We've been thinking about our school vision and considering what the Douglas community values, and here's what we've come up with: We have no idea what the future brings! Our current kindergarteners will graduate high school in 2026, four years of college in 2030. It is a challenge to consider what to teach for an unknown future. We need a new paradigm.

Our children must think flexibly, choose tools that solve problems, and generate ideas that produce the future. We need to teach children to have original ideas that have value! Their school experience must be different. Why go to school? We believe that children can only be creative when they feel joyful, valued, wondrous, and brave, and when they experience a deep sense of pride. Douglas School exists to forge individual creativity.

How do we do this? To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, we must think anew. We must *disenthral* ourselves of the ideals of education that we hold dear but which do not prepare our children to compete and create. What our school must do is nurture four conditions under which children and their creativity—their ability to have original ideas that have value—will flourish.

1. Students prosper best with a broad curriculum that celebrates, accommodates, and nurtures their academic and individual diversity.
2. Curiosity—Children are natural learners and education needs to foster this—school should not demand a culture of academic compliance.
3. Humans are inherently creative—education must arouse and revel in children's' creativity.
4. Mistakes—The job market is flooded with adults holding degrees that have taught them that it is dangerous to make mistakes. If you're not prepared to be wrong, you will never come up with anything original!

Individual differences, creativity, curiosity, and passion must not be forced through the sausage grinder of an educational system designed to produce cookie cutter skills that were employable for 2013. Douglas will model a paradigm that values student autonomy—that helps students create authentic products and share them in a global market, and that prepares them for 2030 and beyond.

We do not yet know exactly what this paradigm will look like, but to rephrase Yeats, children come to our buildings with their dreams spread across our feet—we must tread softly on our children's dreams, we must embrace them, and we must recognize that each dream is different, valuable and, when nurtured, will lead children to do amazing things that make a difference in the world.

C. Whitbeck

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, January 21, 7 PM
Kindergarten Information Evening

Thursday, January 23
Half-day K begins meeting on Thursdays

Friday, January 24, 3 PM
Report Cards available on PowerSchool

Friday, January 24, 6:30 PM
Movie Night (Grades 4–6)

January 24 & 28 and February 3 & 5
Kindergarten Tours

Tuesday, January 28, 7:30 PM
PTO General Meeting

Friday, January 31, 9:45 AM
Winter Band Concert

Saturday, February 1, 9 AM–2 PM
Joint School Committee Budget Hearing,
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

Thursday, February 6, 7:30 PM
AB Regional School Committee Meeting,
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

Thursday, February 13, 7 PM
Acton School Committee Meeting, RJ
Grey Jr. High Library

February 17–21
Winter Break

Thursday, February 27
March Reading Challenge Kick-Off

Thursday, March 6, 7:30 PM
AB Regional School Committee Meeting,
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

Tuesday, March 11, 7:30 PM
PTO General Meeting (Speaker Series)

Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

January 23	Popcorn, Grades K and 2
January 30	Grades 5 and 6
February 6	Pretzel Day
February 13	Grades 3 and 4
February 20	No School
February 27	Popcorn, Grade 1
March 6	Pretzel Day

Save These Dates

March 17, 18, and 19
MCAS testing, Grades 3, 5, 6

March 17, 18, 19, and 21
MCAS testing, Grade 4

Saturday, March 29
Douglas Spring Social and Auction

Saturday, April 12
Festival of Cultures

May 5, 6, and 7
MCAS testing, Grades 3, 4, 6

May 5, 6, 7, 12, and 13
MCAS testing, Grade 5



Spotlight: Douglas Spring Social and Auction Save the date for a rockin' good time!

Get ready to rock at our 15th Annual Douglas School Rock-n-Roll Social and Auction taking place on **Saturday, March 29, 6–10:30 PM** at the Devens Common Center. The Spring Social is our biggest school fundraiser, supporting our teaching assistants and many educational programs that would otherwise not be available for our children.

This year's event will have something to help everyone rock out...including live music (the Acton Music Project with Dr. Whitbeck, Mr. Broggi, and other familiar faces), a delicious dinner buffet and dessert, over 200 silent auction items, an entertaining live auction, and fun games and giveaways throughout the evening. Devens is just 14 miles and 20 minutes on Route 2 West. Guest rooms are available at the attached Marriott Springhill Suites hotel for Douglas parents, teachers, and staff at a rate of \$129/night including breakfast.

New this year! Kids' movie night: This year, we are holding a kids' movie night to coincide with the Spring Social. While you are socializing, your children can have their own fun on site watching a movie, playing board games, and making crafts. Space is limited so reserve your spot quickly! Kids' movie night is \$20 per child (ages 5+).

thank-you noun \ˈθæŋk-, yū\

: something that you give or do to show thanks
: a polite expression of thanks : a polite expression of one's gratitude

Merriam-Webster, we couldn't agree more! Thank you to every single volunteer! If you have shared your time and energy with our students and staff, we thank you. If you baked, planned a class party, helped with movie night, did support work from home, purchased Scrip gift cards, collected box tops/receipts, volunteered in the computer lab, post office, school store, or snack cart, chaperoned a field trip, read aloud to your child's class or worked behind the scenes on a school play—thank you for making a difference at Douglas! Our gratitude is unwavering. We couldn't do any of these things without all of you.

If you read our Thank You column and think, "I wish I had the time," rest assured that you do. All of our volunteers juggle other responsibilities, from caregiving to employment to the elusive "me time." There are ways to help that take just a few minutes to a few hours, and we'd be happy to describe them all to you. We encourage you to take that first step, to find a way to pitch in that works with your lifestyle. If you are looking for opportunities to volunteer—even just an hour a week, consider helping with the Auction, our recycling efforts, or winter nature walks. Contact Eileen Matarese for more information (mrsematta@verizon.net).

Douglas Raffle-palooza! An important part of the Spring Social fundraiser is our big community-wide raffle. Each child will receive information about the raffle and six books of raffle tickets in their backpack. Sold tickets (ticket stubs) and the cash collected should be returned to the office or sent in via backpack. A PDF of additional tickets is on the Spring Social website. Raffle prizes are:

Grand Prize: Xbox One (\$500 value)
1st Prize: Bose Wave Radio (\$350 value)
2nd Prize: Keurig Coffee Maker (\$125 value)
3rd Prize: Fit Bit (\$100 value)

As an incentive to sell tickets, we will provide one lucky Douglas student a \$150 Amazon gift card! For every book of tickets sold to family, friends, and neighbors, the name of the Douglas student who sold the tickets will be placed in a drawing for this prize. The more sold, the better the chances of winning! The winner will be announced on Friday, March 21.

There are many ways to get involved and make the Douglas Rock-n-Roll Social and Fundraiser a success for the Douglas community. Donate a creative item for the auction, sell raffle tickets, and purchase tickets to attend! Are you unable to make the event but still want to contribute? Become a Douglas Family Sponsor!

More information on the Spring Social will be sent out via your child's backpack and is available at our event website: www.DouglasSchoolAuction.com. Contact the co-chairs at auction@DouglasSchoolPTO.org.

Raffle Winners!

Congratulations to the winners of the Annual Giving Campaign raffles. The **Liu/Cao** family won the auction tickets, and the **Hibbard** family won the Spiritwear basket. Thanks to all the participants!

Safe Arrival—Online or Phone

If your child will be absent or late, just let the school know online:

safe.DouglasSchoolPTO.org

Or you can still leave a message at 978-266-2566.

(Continued from page 1)

- ◆ Finally, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your contributions to our Annual Giving Campaign. We are celebrating 43% participation by our Douglas families. To date, we have raised over \$18,000 and brought in more than \$2,000 additional income through the rewards program including Ice Cream Social, Auction, and Spiritwear fundraisers!

WAY TO GO, DOUGLAS!

Eileen Matarese and Karen Jarsky
PTO Co-Chairs