

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: June 4.

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

From the PTO

We made it! That may have been one of the longest winters in our collective memory, yet here we are. The flowers are finally blooming, the sun is shining for a bit longer every day—it's spring! Leo Tolstoy wrote, "Spring is the time of plans and projects." Nowhere is that sentiment truer than at Douglas... Since our last issue, our community has been very busy with all kinds of activities:

- We rocked the night away at the Rock-n-Roll Social and Fundraiser on March 29. We raised more than \$30,000, which will help fund our classroom assistants. Well done to everyone involved! And a huge *thank you* to our outgoing auction chairs, Heather Lamme and Kate Bones.

- Our children dazzled us with their abilities in the annual talent shows. Our gifted music teacher Mr. Broggi worked with parents Joan Luciani, Rachel O'Connell, and Limin Gu to organize these fabulous shows on April 3 and 10. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to make them a success, including our master of ceremonies, Gregg Poulin!
- Did you travel the world without ever leaving Acton at our 16th Annual Festival of Cultures? Kristan Smith-Park and Maria Albarran worked with parents from Conant School and a bevy of volunteers to put together another incredible evening of food, crafts, music, and conversation. The Dragonfly Theater was sold out!
- And on a cold rainy morning, Hayley Reynolds, Tom Reynolds, and Tiffany Prunesti raked and pruned and spruced up our gardens at our annual spring cleanup. Thank you for making Douglas beautiful!

There are so many more wonderful events to look forward to before the end of the school year:

- Break out your lunch pails and calico! Our second graders travel back in time on May 7, as they participate in Old School Day, a treasured Douglas tradition.
- On May 21, we will show our appreciation for Douglas teachers and staff by hosting a delicious luncheon for them. If you'd like to volunteer an hour, please contact Candace Doncaster.
- The Douglas Memorial Day celebration is scheduled for Friday, May 23, 10am. The event includes a performance by the 5th and 6th grade band, a guest speaker, and a patriotic sing-along. Parents are welcome to attend!
- On May 29, we welcome Douglas graduates for an Alumni Reception, where they have the opportunity to gather with teachers and enjoy light refreshments as they wax nostalgic about their Douglas years.
- Douglas Day is fast approaching on Monday, June 2. All are welcome—and many are needed!—on this special day of games and revelry. See the Spotlight on page 2 for more details.
- On Saturday, June 14, Douglas takes its annual trip to see the Lowell Spinners play! The deadline for ordering tickets was May 1, but if you missed that date, you can contact Mary Lavene to ask about available seats.

Thank you to everyone who has helped and will help to make these events a wonderful success!

Eileen Matarese and Karen Jarsky
PTO Co-Chairs

Think Different

When Apple came out with the "Think Different" campaign, teachers around the world covered their classroom walls with the iconic images of scientists and artists who broke the molds of their professions. "Think Different," is one of the things that I am asking of teachers as we try to teach toward our new school vision.

At Douglas students feel *Joy*, feel *Valued*, feel *Brave*, are full of *Wonder*, and have a deep sense of *Pride*.

The staff and I come to school each day truly believing that we are here to help children feel this way. We truly believe that the academic work that students do must be rooted in creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial skills. We must Think Different, Teach Different, and Communicate in a Different way.

I've called for a revolution in education at Douglas School. Over the next year we are going to focus on academically rigorous experiences that present children with engaging, real-life problems to solve. Days will be filled developing critical thinking skills, collaborative skills, and effective communication skills, and building an academic mindset of success.

This is going to look and feel different. Over this next year, we will need to change our mindset and pedagogy, our use of technology, the schedule, report cards, CARES, and our daily teaching routines. This will be uncomfortably exciting!

I have a pretty clear vision of what this will look like when it works—but words can not capture this image. To help everyone understand what is clear to me, Jenna Larrenaga and I will be teaching in Sandy Hillman's class during the month of May. We will make a first attempt at creating the experiences that I've started to describe. We are calling this *First Attempts In Learning*—and we've created a blog to capture our work. We will post everything there—what we're thinking, what we do, videos of our work, and even our spectacular failures! We're even planning to reinvent the notion of failure—because when you *FAIL*, it really should be a *First Attempt In Learning*! You can follow us at:

firstattemptsinlearning.wordpress.com

And who knows, someday, maybe, teachers around the world will post iconic pictures of the Douglas School mold breakers.

C. Whitbeck

Dates to Remember

May 5, 6, and 7

MCAS testing, Grades 3, 4, 6

May 5, 6, 7, 12, and 13

MCAS testing, Grade 5

Wednesday, May 7

Grade 2 Field Trip, Old School Day

Friday, May 9

ADK Field Trip, Big Apple Circus

Sunday, May 11

Mother's Day

Wednesday, May 14

Grade 4 Field Trip, Connecticut

Thursday, May 15

APS School Committee Meeting

Monday, May 19

Grade 3 Field Trip, Lowell Mills

Wednesday, May 21

Staff Appreciation Luncheon

Thursday, May 22

Grade 3 Ethnic Luncheon

Friday, May 23

Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 26

Memorial Day, No School

Wednesday, May 28

Grades 3 and 4 Japanese Graduation

Thursday, May 29

Douglas Alumni Reception

Friday, May 30

Grades K-2 Japanese Graduation

Monday, June 2

Douglas Day (Rain Date, June 4)

Tuesday, June 3, 7:30 PM

PTO General Meeting

Thursday, June 5, 7 PM

Grades 5 and 6 Band Concert, ABRHS

Saturday, June 14, 5 PM

Douglas Night at Lowell Spinners

Monday, June 16

Grade 6 Portfolios

Wednesday, June 18

Last Day of School, Thursday Dismissal
Grade 6 Graduation

Thursday, June 19

APS School Committee Meeting

Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

May 8

Grades K and 6

May 15

Popcorn, Grade 5

May 22

Grades 3 and 4

May 29

Grades 1 and 2

June 5

Last day of snack cart
Pretzel Day

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Spotlight

Spotlight:

Douglas Day

Douglas Day is an annual tradition that signals the approaching end of another school year, and the beginning of summertime fun. This year, Douglas Day is

Monday, June 2, with a

rain date of Wednesday, June 4. The whole Douglas community—teachers, staff, students, and parents—will come out to play! What kid wouldn't want to dunk a parent in the dunk tank, race with classmates, and eat a picnic lunch with friends and family?

Each class divides into four color-coded teams for a morning of field events like scooter racing, catapults, bucket brigades, parachute games, and three-legged races. And everyone gets a chance to dunk a teacher or parent in the dunk tank! Students buy or bring a picnic lunch and sit outside on blankets to eat with family and friends. At the end of the day, thanks to our Cultural Enrichment team, the students enjoy a hit show—Bubbleology!

We need an army of volunteers to make this event happen. Parents (and grandparents!), please take a look at the opportunities and sign up online (<http://vols.pt/v1TQqS>). (Note: All volunteers and lunch guests must have valid CORI forms on file.) We need many adults to help set up and run the games. Volunteers are needed from approximately 9:15 AM-1:15 PM (including time to eat lunch with your child/children). If a full shift is too much, split a shift with a friend! Contact Katherine Lee (kwylee@yahoo.com) for more information.

Scrip Gift Cards

Thanks to everyone who has supported our school by participating in our fundraisers. Our last Scrip gift card drive for the year is coming up **May 21-June 4**. If you're in the mood for a little spring shopping, please splurge on a gift card. Plan ahead for your gifts for teachers, bus drivers, birthdays, etc., while also supporting our school. If you buy gift cards for employees, consider ordering through Scrip so our PTO can receive significant funding.

Look for forms and information coming home via backpack.

Order online at shopwithscrip.com.

Visit the scrip page on the PTO website: www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org/drupal/node/373.

Orders will be sent home via backpack the week of June 9.

Deb Cox and Linda Gower
PTO Scrip Co-chairs
scrip@douglasschoolpto.org

Thank You!

On any given day, visitors to Douglas walk past our gardens and into our lobby and immediately feel welcomed. The flowering plants remind them that it's finally spring. Past the front doors, the bright striped benches offer them a place to sit. The bubbly fish tank gives them something fun to look at. The oversized Douglas calendar tells them what's going on in school this month. If they're lucky enough to visit on a Tuesday or a Friday morning, they can do a little shopping at the Eagle's Nest. On a Thursday morning they can indulge in a Snack Cart treat. If one of our visitors needs to get a special piece of mail to a student, she can drop it in the Douglas Mailbox. If another wants to make sure he hasn't missed a special friend's birthday, he can glance up at the Douglas Birthday Board.

And do you know what all of these things have in common? They are (or were) maintained by, coordinated by, overseen by, painted by, built by, updated by, or created by our wonderful community of volunteers. Our lobby is truly the centerpiece of our school, and our parent volunteers are the heart of that space. Our gratitude for everything our families do to make all of Douglas (not just the lobby!) a warm, welcoming, inviting space is indescribable. For every minute, every hour, every day that each of you spends helping to make our school the very special place that it is, we say *thank you*.

Planning for next year?

The Douglas PTO needs you!

As we think ahead to next year, we are beginning to fill some very exciting PTO roles, and we'd love to sign *you* up for one (or more!) of them. For example, the PTO needs a **Secretary** next year. This job involves attending our meetings and taking notes for distribution to the PTO Board. We need someone to coordinate our annual **Veterans Day** celebration in November—an event that will tug at your heartstrings and make you so proud to be part of the Douglas community. And we could use some assistance with layout and production of the **Douglas Digest**—the wonderful newsletter you are reading right now! If you are unable to make it to school because of work or other commitments, this could be the job for you.

The opportunities go on... **Auction Co-Chairs, Picture Day, Hospitality, Festival of Cultures, Assistant Treasurer, Staff Appreciation Luncheon, Post Office, Eagle's Nest**... You can look for your niche on the PTO web site (douglasschoolpto.org/drupal/get-involved/volunteer-roles). If you would like to get involved, please contact Karen Jarsky (ptokaren@gmail.com). We'd love to have you aboard!