

# DOUGLAS DIGEST

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## Douglas Digest

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The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest seven times each school year. **Next issue: November 30.**

We welcome article ideas and feedback. Please email Sharon at [sharon.metzger@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.metzger@gmail.com).

## From the PTO

Congratulations! You've survived September! Hopefully, you've settled into the swing of things now—which means you've got time to think about all the amazing things that the PTO is doing. (See what we did there?) A few of our favorite and most important programs are already underway, and we want to make sure you have a chance to participate. Check out [www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org](http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org) for more detail on these events and everything the PTO does.

**Annual Giving Campaign:** The PTO spends approximately \$200 (and more than four volunteer hours) per child each year. Every fall, we give families the opportunity to offset that with direct giving—donations directly to the PTO that mean we can support your child's educational journey without interrupting your life with tedious fundraisers. We're not competitive or anything, but wouldn't it be awesome if we blew last year's participation rate out of the water? No amount is too small (or too large!), and every donor gets entered into our remaining drawings for superfantastic Douglas prizes. Click the purple button at [www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org](http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org) for details. (Already donated? Thanks!)

## Improv

Improv is a form of theatrical art where most or all of what is performed is created in the moment—neither scripted nor rehearsed. In its purest form, the dialogue, action, story, and characters are created collaboratively by the players as the improvisation unfolds. At the heart of improv is the unknown, the unpredictable, and all those things over which we have little or no control. So it invites actors into a world of surprise and adventure as a response to the status quo.

There are basic improv strategies that work to advance the action. A single actor usually addresses another. For example, "I sometimes think of myself as a large rubber duck."

The actor being addressed must:

1. Listen carefully—pay attention to the actor over there.
2. Accept and get into the mental space of the first actor.
3. Agree on the premise and say, "Yes... and?"
4. Not block the flow of the idea or change topic.
5. Encourage the expansion of the premise.
6. Include other actors onstage to participate—foster collaboration.
7. Focus on the relationship of the actors.
8. Not ask questions, but make suggestions.
9. Include action as well as dialogue.
10. Stay in character, but be willing to change no matter where the story goes.

It takes courage, imagination, and mental nimbleness on the part of actors.

When I think about it, it seems that improv is a metaphor for what life should be like in school. There's never a script. You never know from one day to another what's going to happen. You're always having to deal with people whose behavior is unpredictable. People are always saying things to you that don't make sense. And you never know exactly how it's going to end. You have to work with, expect, and appreciate everlasting surprise.

If you're a good teacher, most of what you do involves improvisation. You take whatever comes at you and make the best of it, knowing that what worked yesterday won't always work today or tomorrow. A teacher's job is to say "Yes... and..." whenever you can, to get into the space students offer and to ride the adventure wherever it goes. When we are lucky, we work with others who reply in the same fashion, offering "Yes... and..." in return. These people are those with light hearts, good will, and an understanding that change is the essence of existence.

Only those who can change can continue.



*C. Whitbeck*

**Ice Cream Social:** Save the date for **Friday, October 23**, when the Douglas hallways ring with laughter and fun, the cafeteria overflows with ice cream and pizza, and the gym and stage transform into old-fashioned cakewalks. It's one of our favorite nights of the year! Order food tickets and game wristbands in advance to avoid lines. Bring extra quarters for the cake walk, and don't forget to donate a cake or two!

**Book Fair:** It'll sneak up before you know it: The annual book fair takes place **December 2-4**. Lots of books, lots of volunteer opportunities, and lots of fun!

Everything we do happens because of parents like you, who step up and volunteer. Whether you want to scoop ice cream, organize a spreadsheet, or take advantage of another amazing talent you have, please get in touch! Go to the "Get Involved" section of the [www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org](http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org) for information. Or come to our next PTO general meeting on **Tuesday, October 27, 7:30pm**, in the Douglas cafeteria to hear more. At this meeting, we'll find out about the Spring Social & Auction. We'd love to see you there!

*Abigail Vargus and Annie Hamill, PTO Cochairs*

## Dates to Remember

### Thursday, October 15

EARLY DISMISSAL (elementary only)  
AB School Committee, RJ Grey, 7pm

### Wednesday, October 21

Unity Day—wear orange!

### Thursday, October 22

EARLY DISMISSAL (elementary only)

### Friday, October 23

Ice Cream Social, 6pm

### Tuesday, October 27

PTO General Meeting, Douglas Cafeteria,  
7:30pm

### Thursday, October 29

EARLY DISMISSAL (elementary only)

### Friday, October 30

Halloween Parade, 2:15pm

### Sunday, November 1

Daylight Savings Time ends—Fall back!

### Tuesday, November 3

Professional Day: NO SCHOOL

### Wednesday, November 4

Apple Pie Making (fundraiser, Grades 5&6)  
3:30–5pm

### Thursday, November 5

EARLY DISMISSAL (elementary only)  
PE Night, 6:30–7:30pm  
AB School Committee, RJ Grey, 7pm

### Monday, November 9

Veterans Day Program, 9:45am

### Wednesday, November 11

Veterans Day: NO SCHOOL

### Thursday, November 12

Douglas Spirit Day

### Monday, November 16

Photo retake day

### Thursday, November 19

EARLY DISMISSAL (elementary only)  
AB School Committee, RJ Grey, 7pm

### Wednesday, November 25

EARLY DISMISSAL  
Faculty/Staff Thanksgiving Appreciation

### November 26–29

Thanksgiving Break: NO SCHOOL

## Save the Date!

### Saturday, April 2, 2016

Spring Social & Auction

## Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

October 15	Popcorn Day and Grade 3
October 22	Grades 1 and 2
October 29	Grades K and 6
November 5	Popcorn Day and Grade 5
November 12	Grades 3 and 4



## Meet the Office Staff!

We all know that the school could not run without the hard work of the office staff—but you're not alone if you keep wondering which is who, what each does, and how to address them. Here's a helpful introduction. Don't hesitate to drop in and say hi!



**Mrs. Barbara Losier** (right) is the Floating Assistant, and her desk is closest to the hallway. Her three children are Gates graduates. Mrs. Losier's favorite part of working at Douglas is getting to know all the students.

If you have questions about walker passes or need to deliver some forgotten shoes, Mrs. Maylander or Mrs. Losier will probably be the ones who help you out. But don't ever hesitate to ask any of them for whatever you might need. Know what else? They will all forgive you immediately if you accidentally use the wrong (first or last) name. They're that nice!

## Thanks from the PTO

Douglas families are full of awesome, and we have so many awesome people to thank. The start of the year is an overwhelmingly busy time, and the PTO (and school!) could never accomplish so much without the dedicated, friendly, helpful, awesome volunteers. Since the last issue of the Digest, here are some of the programs that owe their awesome to great Douglas volunteers:

**Photo Day:** Thank you to Paige Johnson and her team of volunteers for coordinating another successful Douglas photo day!

**Healthy Kiddos:** Laurel Ghose delivered piles of Purell and wipes to every classroom in the building. Make sure to thank her when your child comes home without a cold!

**Lobby Calendar:** Thank you, Meghan Giannetto, for keeping us in the know!

## Gift Cards Give Back!

Are you familiar with the Douglas Scrip Fundraising Program? This program allows you to support Douglas through your everyday purchases using gift cards. Going forward we are going to call this program Scrip Giftback! Look for a flyer in your child's backpack that will fully explain the Scrip Giftback program and your many options to purchase gift cards that allow families to easily raise money for our school.

Our first Scrip Giftback Drive this year will be held during the month of November in preparation for Black Friday shopping and holiday gifts. Your Scrip Giftback Coordinator this year is Megan Kivela; reach out to her (megankivela@gmail.com) with any questions!

**Mrs. Sharen Crooks** (right) is the Administrative Assistant to the principal. Her desk is closest to Dr. Whitbeck's office. She is a former Douglas mom and PTO cochair, with a senior at AB and another kid off at college. Mrs. Crooks enjoys gardening, cross stitch, and playing with her dog Hanna.



**Mrs. Laurie Maylander** (left) is the Office Assistant; her desk is smack in the middle. She's a Douglas graduate mom (three times over!). Mrs. Maylander has a beautiful yellow lab named Daisy.



**Nature Walks:** The fall walks are kicking off, thanks to Darlene Crowley, Karen Pierce, and Nancy Stillman, who coordinate dozens of volunteers and lessons plans, for making Nature Walks so successful.

**Snack Cart:** If it's Thursday, it is now officially Snack Cart day! Thank you, Janice Yee, Liz Schaller, Christina West, and your team of volunteers, for all you do to fund our Cultural Enrichment program.

**Spiritwear:** Don't you love the new fall styles? Thanks, Sheri Palazzo and Sandy Munger!

**Back-to-School Nights:** Thanks to our wonderful teachers for welcoming us into their classrooms last month.

**Walk for Peace:** Dr. Whitbeck and Mr. Broggi put together yet another moving ceremony, and our students again raised money for Free the Children.