

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 28.**

We welcome article ideas and feedback. Please email Jill at jillhmaxwell@gmail.com.

From the PTO

Congratulations! You've survived September! Hopefully, you've settled into the swing now—which means you've got time to think about all the amazing things happening at Douglas. 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 for more detail on these events and everything the PTO does.

Annual Giving Campaign: The PTO spends approximately \$140 (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 support your child's educational journey without interrupting your life with tedious fundraisers. No amount is too small (or too large!), and every donor gets entered into our remaining drawings for fabulous Douglas prizes. Click the purple button at www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org for details. (Already donated? Thank you!)

Ice Cream Social: Save the date for **Friday, October 28**, 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-

Cue Harry Chapin's "Cat's in the Cradle"

"Can you teach me to throw?"
I said, "Not today, I got a lot to do."
He said, "That's okay."
And he walked away, but his smile never dimmed...

We teach our children in every interaction: how to care for each other and be part of a healthy family; how to care about the world around us; how to take responsibility; how to do our best and seek challenges; how to love learning; and how to play. I found myself as the dad in Chapin's song several times this fall as the busy pressures of work competed with my son's question, "Will you play with me?" I had to stop, think, and then put everything else aside to play. Someday he won't ask anymore. Someday he won't want to play with me. I played.

There is so much more to that decision than Chapin's song guilted me into playing. As the school principal I have also asked teachers to only assign absolutely necessary homework. This creates much more leisure time for our children, including mine. My son has time to play. He often plays with friends, his brother, or by himself. But he invited me this time and I could be part of some new learning.

Our newfound time opens opportunities for us to teach our children at home. Families now have a little more family time to teach kids to wash the dishes; sweep the floor, help their siblings; exercise outside; make music, art, or another creation; and cuddle together with a good book. School assignments no longer shoulder out other types of learning. Our job as parents is to grow our kids. Grow them into who they are. It turns out that some freedom from structure is important to that growth.

The Finnish education system has found that planned breaks that have freedom from structure allow children to recharge, and when they return to the classroom, they're more attentive. This freedom is beneficial to teenagers, too, helping to develop independence and perseverance. It gives them opportunities to apply their skills on their own terms, to make decisions, experience the consequences, and learn from their choices. Play is our children's homework, essential in cultivating creativity, in growing strong and thoughtful minds. Playing hide-and-seek for a few minutes gives children's mind a chance to take the break that it needs to reset before more subject learning. This downtime is not only helpful for mental rest, but also helps to fight feelings of pressure or stress, aiding your child's academic success in the long run.

"So Dad, Can you teach me to throw?"
I Said, "What? Today? I got a lot to do
But, sure, OK."
And we walked away, and our smiles never dimmed
He said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah, you know I'm gonna be like him."



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 **November 30 - December 2**. Lots of books, lots of volunteer opportunities, and lots of fun! Check out the Spotlight article for more information.

Everything we do happens because of parents like you, who step up and volunteer. Whether you want to scoop ice cream, organize a spreadsheet, see the kids at school, or take advantage of another amazing talent you have, please get in touch! Go to the "Get Involved" section of the www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org for information. Or come to our next PTO general meeting on **Tuesday, November 1**, at 7:30 pm in the Douglas cafeteria to hear more about our programs. In addition to PTO business, we'll hear Dr. Brand give an update of the district plan at this meeting. We'd love to see you there!

Annie Hamill and Tracey Zachary, PTO Co-chairs

Dates to Remember

Wednesday, October 19

Unity Day—wear orange!

Thursday, October 20

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

Friday, October 28

Ice Cream Social, 6pm

Monday, October 31

Halloween Parade, 1:30pm

Tuesday, November 1

PTO General Meeting, Douglas Cafeteria,
7:30pm

Thursday, November 3

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

Tuesday, November 8

Family Learning Series, ABRHS, 7pm
Professional Day: NO SCHOOL

Wednesday, November 9

Presentation of Complete District Master
Plan, RJ Grey, 7pm

Thursday, November 10

Veterans Day Program, 9am
EARLY DISMISSAL (elementary only)

Friday, November 11

Veterans Day: NO SCHOOL

Monday, November 14–Wednesday, November 16

Nature's Classroom, Grade 6

Thursday, November 17

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

Wednesday, November 23

EARLY DISMISSAL
Faculty/Staff Thanksgiving Appreciation

November 24–27

Thanksgiving Break: NO SCHOOL

Save the Date!

Saturday, March 25, 2017

Spring Social & Auction

Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.
October 20 Popcorn Day and Grade 3
October 27 Grades 2 and 1
November 3 Popcorn Day and K
November 10 Grades 6 and 5
November 17 Popcorn Day and Grade 4
November 24 Thanksgiving
December 3 Popcorn Day and Grade 3

Did You Know?

Confidential financial assistance is always available for Douglas programs and events. Contact Dr. Whitbeck or Hilary Bonnell.



Scholastic Book Fair

It's mid-October, so that means that the Scholastic Book Fair is only a few weeks away—this year November 30–December 2! This multi-day event has so much going on and it's loads of fun. It's more than just the mad dash of breaking down the fair to get the cafeteria ready for lunch, then book-fair perfect again in time for afternoon visits. It's kids excited to pick out the perfect book, kids excited to read, kids excited to be the customers and pay for their books, kids learning about giving when they pick a book to donate

to their class or drop a dollar in the All for Books box. It's Douglas Joy at its best! Read on to find out more.

Teacher Preview / Wish Bags—The afternoon before the Book Fair opens to students and families, the teachers get a sneak peek! Not only does this help them get their classrooms excited to come visit the Book Fair, it also allows them time to browse the selection and choose some books they'd love to have at home or in their classrooms. They can build a "Wish Bag" and families are welcome to peruse the bags and purchase books for the classrooms—given directly to the teacher by the purchasing family, or the Book Fair committee.

All For Books—Help build the Douglas Library and bring books to families in need. Every dollar donated through the All for Books program is a dollar Ms. Opel can use to purchase library books from the book fair and Scholastic will match monetary donations to bring books to non-profit organizations dedicated to helping kids and families in need. It's a win-win!

Family/Author Night—One evening during the Book Fair, we invite a local author to teach us more about the writing process. This year, on December 1, 6:30–8:30pm, we are excited to have Josh Funk, author of "Sir Pancake and Lady French Toast," among other great books, speak with us.

After Hours—The Book Fair is open even after the school day ends! Families are invited to check out the selection every day after school, until 6pm, throughout the duration of the Book Fair. If it's impossible to make it to the fair before 6pm, don't worry, families are also welcome to peruse the selection during Family/Author Night when the fair is open until 8:30pm.

This event is one of the biggest of the year, and we look forward to seeing you and your family there!

Thanks from the PTO

Douglas families are full of awesome people, and we have so many of them to thank! Since the last issue of the Digest, here are some of the folks who have given their time and effort to ensure that our wonderful programs and events continue to run smoothly:

Photo Day: Thank you to Megan Kivela and her team of volunteers for coordinating another successful Douglas photo day!

Healthy Kiddos: Michelle Shoemaker 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!

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

School Safety

As of Tuesday, October 4, all elementary schools began locking front doors while the regular school day is in session. This decision is based on recommendations from the MA School Safety & Security Task Force Report (2014). To enter the school while students are in the building, please press the intercom **to the right of the main door** and wait to communicate with the office staff. Please sign in at the office and pick up a visitor sticker.

Snack Cart: If it's Thursday, it is now officially Snack Cart day! Thank you, Janice Yee, Tina Leonard, and Tiffany Prunesti, and your team of volunteers, for all you do to fund our Cultural Enrichment program.

Lobby Calendar: Thank you, Jenn Jaroch, for keeping us in the know!

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

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.

Parent Communication Map

Have a question about something at Douglas or in the District? Check out the Parent Communication Map to help you direct your questions or concerns: <http://www.abschools.org/departments/curriculum/parent-communication-map>