

# DOUGLAS DIGEST

office: 978.266.2560  
principal: Dr. Christopher Whitbeck  
school: <http://douglas.abschools.org>  
PTO: <http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org>

January 11, 2016

## Douglas Digest

Editors:  
Sharon Metzger  
Jill Maxwell  
Distributors:  
Michele Walsh  
Sarah Protopopov  
Robin Curley

The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest seven times each school year. **Next issue: March 7.**

## From the PTO

*"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're doing something." —Neil Gaiman*

Our next general meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 26, at 7:30pm. This includes our annual speaker event, and we are delighted to welcome Nadine Briggs, who will present "Kindness Counts and Manners Matter." Ms. Briggs is managing partner of How to Make and Keep Friends and an accomplished, certified social educator whose presentations have been well-received throughout the area. It's sure to be a fascinating night that will shine light on how to help your student understand social interactions and conflict resolution.

Our Spring Social and Auction will take place on Saturday, April 2, at 6pm. This is our largest fundraiser of the year, and it takes many volunteers and auction donations from parents and our business community to make this event a success. We need your help! Here's how:

- **Buy your tickets early.** It helps us plan. Keep an eye out for your invitation and instructions on how to purchase.
- **Share your coveted babysitter list with a friend.** Don't let a shortage of sitters stop anyone in the Douglas community from getting to the event!
- **Share your donation ideas.** Can you provide a service that others might find useful? Have an unused gift card collecting dust somewhere? A favorite restaurant that would donate a dinner? A great idea for a gift basket full of goodies? No idea is too big or too small!
- **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 or to share an idea, contact Tiffany Petranto and Paige Johnson at [auction@douglasschoolpto.org](mailto:auction@douglasschoolpto.org).

A few other things to keep in mind:

- **Movie Night is on the horizon!** Grades K-2 take over the gym on Friday, January 22, 6:30pm (Looney Tunes starting at 6:15pm), and the Grades 3-4 Movie Night is Friday, February 5, 6:30/6:15pm. The kids love watching the movie, eating free popcorn, and meeting friends. See the PTO website for the link to RSVP.
- **Kindergarten tours are coming up, too!** If you've volunteered to help out, thank you! If you haven't, but you'd like to be a parent greeter, email [cochairs@douglasschoolpto.org](mailto:cochairs@douglasschoolpto.org).
- **Finally, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your contributions to our Annual Giving Campaign.** We are celebrating 35% participation by our Douglas families. To date, we have raised over \$17,000! Those funds will go a long way to support so many incredible programs!

*Abigail Vargus and Annie Hamill*  
PTO Cochairs

## #DouglasPride

I've been thinking about what we do at Douglas and why we do it. When asked, I say, "We teach so that children feel joy, valued, brave, and full of wonder, and experience a deep sense of pride." We ask our students to apply what they learn to solving real-world problems. Along the way, we work to build passion for learning.

That's a lot of words that may not mean much if you don't live in the school. Can I paint a picture? Well, as I write this, the school is buzzing with excitement. Kindergarten students are designing ways to teach others empathy, fourth graders are thinking about identity, transformation, and climate change, and fifth graders are working with Amazon to publish original books. Every student in every classroom is working on a real-world problem.

There is joy, risk-taking requiring bravery, wonder and worry about getting the work done, an urgent sense that each member of a team is valued, and deep pride in the work taking place. We have gone much deeper than the Common Core skills and knowledge; we have used these to arouse and are now reveling in our children's creativity. However, I still don't believe I've captured the depth of learning, excitement and pride that fill the Douglas halls. My writing is drab in comparison to what life is like here. Let me share an email from a teacher and her students in hopes of bringing our work to life.

"Hey Chris and Jenna,

My kids are working on the final stages of their exhibition! Our goal is to complete all the work on our end in the next eight days!!! It looks like it might actually happen! Two of the students took on the responsibility to interview classmates about the exhibition... and this was my favorite comment from today!

"This exhibition is phenomenal! I hope it will bring more joy to learning for other people."

Does that capture the Douglas vision or what? (I'm so proud!)"

I get goosebumps every time I read this email. Yes, it captures our vision and I too am so proud! What we really want is to help our students know that they can do amazing things that make a difference in the world. I think we're on our way! Happy New Year and see you at exhibitions on February 3rd & 4th!

*C. Whitbeck*

## Dates to Remember

**Friday, January 15**

All School Pajama Day

**Monday, January 18**

No School

**January 19 & 27, February 1 & 2**

Kindergarten Tours

**Friday, January 22, 6:30pm**

Movie Night (Grades K-2)

**Saturday, January 23, 9am**

School Committee "Budget Saturday,"  
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

**Tuesday, January 26, 7:30pm**

PTO General Meeting/Speaker Event

**Thursday, January 28**

Half-day K begins meeting on Thursdays

**Thursday, February 4\***

School Committee Meeting,  
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

**Friday, February 5, 9:35am &**

**10:20am**

Winter Band Concert

**Friday, February 5, 6:30pm**

Movie Night (Grades 3-4)

**Thursday, February 11\***

School Committee Budget Hearing,  
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

**February 15-19**

Winter Break

**Tuesday, February 23, 7pm**

Douglas Kindergarten Information Night

**Tuesday, March 1**

March Reading Challenge Kick-Off

**Thursday, March 3\***

School Committee Meeting,  
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

**Friday, March 4**

Report cards issued

**Tuesday, March 8, 7:30pm**

PTO General Meeting

\*See <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee> for meeting times.

## Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

January 14	Grades 2 and 3
January 21	Popcorn Day; Grade 1
January 28	Grades K and 6
February 4	Popcorn Day; Grade 5
February 11	Grades 3 and 4
February 18	No School
February 25	Grades 1 and 2
March 3	Popcorn; Grade K
March 10	Grades 5 and 6



## Spotlight:

### Why We Keep Asking

The PTO raises almost \$60,000 each year. That seems like a lot, until you realize that for the last several years, we've been spending closer to \$90,000. The overage was funded by the generosity of previous families over several years when we underspent and over-budgeted—surplus funds that we have spent on a variety of programs and that are now depleted.

That depletion means that things will change next year. Right now, we're \$27,000 below what we'd need to continue everything from this year. That's a pretty big shortfall.

The bulk of our spending goes to classroom and specialty assistants like library and language instruction. For a few years, we've also covered grade-level field trips and magazines, plus many classroom and hygiene supplies. Cultural enrichment, social events, campus improvements, performing arts, and staff appreciation account for most of the rest of our spending.

It will be hard to cut any one of those things, let alone several. So what can you do? Simple: Support the PTO.

If you've given directly to the PTO via our annual campaign, thank you! If you haven't, or if you have and you'd like to increase your donation, please use the QR code here or visit [www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org](http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org) and click the purple button. Come to the auction, and have a blast while bidding on the amazing items there. Buy your gift cards through the Scrip Giftback Gift Card program. And if money's tight, then give your time—something that is just as necessary and sometimes priceless for the PTO.



Douglas School is amazing because of the small actions—buying a book at the book fair, donating a few dollars, taking time to say thank you to your teacher, and because of the big gestures—running an event, writing a check to cover the PTO spending per child (\$200), leading a committee. Some of these things happen without us asking, but often we all need a little push. So please expect a push from time to time as we rally together to try to save as much as we can of what makes Douglas so special.

## Thanks from the PTO

It's hard to believe we're halfway through the school year! Douglas has been bustling with activity since day one, and there's no end in sight. A few events have come and gone since our last issue:

**Book Fair:** If you only knew the logistical magic that goes into getting the Douglas Book Fair set up and broken down (and set up and broken down and set up and broken down...), you'd know why we owe a BIG THANK YOU to Betsy Mercier, Sandy Munger, and Jennifer Standley (and all their "heavies") for making it look like it's no big deal.

**Scrip Giftback Gift Cards:** A round of applause to Megan Kivela, who stepped in when we didn't know how we'd get our beloved Scrip gift cards. Now we can shop and say it's for a higher cause!

**Tech Team:** Did you ever notice how very many ways there are to find answers to your Douglas questions? From the Eagle Eye Weekly to Facebook to the PTO website, our technology team has things solidly under control. Thank you, Bill Hekking, Sharon Metzger, Joe Walsh, and Lori Fassman for keeping cyber-Douglas zipping along!

And, of course, we appreciate all of the hard work from those of you don't have an oh-so-fancy PTO title to go with it. Whether you shepherd students to computer lab, carefully collect Box Tops, donate time to the book fair, do your shopping through AmazonSmile, or give time and energy in any other way, we thank you. 2015 couldn't have happened without you, and 2016 will be better because of you.

Haven't yet found just the right way to volunteer at Douglas? Browse the "Get Involved" section of [www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org](http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org) or contact Anna McHargue for more information ([annackahn@hotmail.com](mailto:annackahn@hotmail.com)).

## ...Even More Special Dates

**Saturday, January 2, 2016**

The day Miss Hillman became Mrs. Sheridan. Best wishes, Sandy!

**Thursday, January 28, 5-8pm,**  
**Sargent Memorial Library, Boxborough**  
PIP Family Math Game Night, all ages

**Wednesday, February 3, 4:30-7:30pm,**  
**Roche Bros.**

PIP 5th Grade Market Math Night

**MCAS Testing Dates, Grades 3-6**  
March 28, 29, 30

**Saturday, April 2, 6pm**

Douglas Spring Social and Auction!