

DOUGLAS DIGEST

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

June 8, 2016

Douglas Digest

Editors:

Sharon Metzger
Jill Maxwell

Distribution:

Michele Walsh
Robin Curley
Sarah Protopopov

The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest seven times each school year.

Next issue: September—have a great summer!

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

From the PTO

If you're like us, you're torn between denial (*no way is my baby old enough to be finishing first grade!*) and celebration (*sum-sum-summertime!*). But one emotion that we can't deny is gratitude. To every person who has generously contributed to Douglas—in the myriad ways that our amazing community has, from time to knowledge to all kinds of support—please accept our heartfelt thank you! Douglas wouldn't be the same without all you do.

Before you sign off for the summer, though, keep in mind that there's still more fun to be had! Make sure you save some time and Douglas spirit for these events:

- Start summer off with thrills and laughter by joining Douglas School Day at Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH, on Friday, June 24. Douglas community members have a special \$26 rate that day. Thank you to Rachel Meehan for coordinating!
- Take me out to the ball game! We are looking forward to seeing many of you at Douglas School night at the Lowell Spinners game, Monday, June 27, 7pm. Thanks to Mary Lavene and Barbara Green for organizing!

Please also check our Summertime column on p. 3 and Dates to Remember on p. 4. And don't forget to keep an eye on the Douglas Facebook page for any summer happenings!

—Abigail Vargus and Annie Hamill
PTO Chairs, 2015–2016

If You Want to Serve the Age, Betray It

In 2004 Bono asked the graduates of The University of Pennsylvania, "What are you willing to spend your moral capital, your intellectual capital, your cash, [and] your sweat equity in pursuing?" For me the answer has always rung true and clear. I will spend all of my capital working to ensure that every student loves school!

Bono's countryman, the poet Brendan Kennelly, "If you want to serve the age, betray it." To me that means exposing foibles and phony moral certitudes. It means facing the secrets of the age and facing harsher truths. And the truth that I see, for many students, even at Douglas, is that, in Massachusetts and probably most of the U.S., we have a school system designed to educate joy and creativity out of children.

Why do I say that? Educators across the state agree that education is often based on conformity—everyone must complete the same task using the same template, many times filling out worksheets with multiple problems that become more low-grade clerical work than higher level thinking. We do this knowing that humans are inherently different and diverse and that no two people learn in exactly the same way.

We live in a dominant culture where educational success is testing success. Schools are not building a culture of curiosity but rather a culture of compliance. One of the roles of education is to awaken creativity and instead what we have is standardization. Children are natural learners and education based on compliance and standardization snuffs out that ability. Changing this course is not a cause—it's an emergency. Students need to engage their curiosity and their creativity. That's how you get them to learn!

Acton-Boxborough district leadership is beginning to realize the need for a change. This year we have worked on new Vision, Values, and Mission statements that explain *why* we are here as a district, *how* we work and make decisions, and *what* we will produce. We have drafts of the Vision and Values and will soon have a Mission. I am encouraged by the drafts that we have crafted.

Vision (Why): To inspire a community of learners.

Values (How): We make decisions based on student needs including safety, equitable access to education, well being, and joy.

When Bono asks what are you willing to do, he makes us admit that we *can* do something. That is very frightening because when we admit that we *can* do something, we *have* to do something. Each year we move closer to realizing a new vision for our school filled with deep thinking, rigorous achievement, and joy. I can't wait to see what next year brings!

C. Whitbeck

Thank You...Merci...Gracias! ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳು 谢谢

Sometimes, the sheer volume of what Douglas parents do is awe-inspiring. Our parents stay busy organizing, gardening, scheduling, overseeing, selling, clipping, popping, purchasing, recruiting, delivering, baking, welcoming, printing, calling, guiding, encouraging, teaching, scrubbing, inflating, sweet-talking, feeding, decorating, filing, taping, cooking, serving, painting, scouting, photographing, playing, announcing, scooping, translating, typing, copying, reshelving, eating, driving, computing, filming, accounting, arranging, transcribing, designing, listening, reading, and simply caring. Thank you to each and every one of you for your time, your energy, and your enthusiasm. We hope it has been as rewarding to you as it was to Douglas School. We also want to thank a few people for some recent events and programs:

- **Joan Luciani, Maria Albarran, and Carol Buysse** for taking us around the world in our own backyard at the Festival of Cultures. Attendance, business donations, and ambassador tables all increased this year—an amazing feat at this busy time!
- **Major Adam Rickenbach**, for speaking at our Memorial Day celebration, and **Peter Broggi**, for leading our student band through the wonderful patriotic music.
- **Kathy McCullen and Sarah Wilfert** for organizing the marvelous Douglas Day all-school performance by Bryson Long, comedian and bubble master extraordinaire, on top of all the other events they brought to Douglas all year long that truly enriched—and entertained.
- **TJ Quirk, Beth Spazek, and Heather Murphy**, together with our wonderful gym teacher **Kathleen Ammendolia**, for organizing the massive (and massively fun) Douglas Day! We hope you were able to come, participate, and picnic with your kids!
- **Meiyi Yin, Kathy McCullen, Anna McHargue, and Eileen Matarese** for organizing the Staff Appreciation Luncheon, which brightened the day for all Douglas staff. Thank you to all the parents who volunteered to help that day, and to **Melissa Callaghan** and the Baking Committee for the scrumptious sweets that day and throughout the year.
- **Megan Kivela** for managing the Scrip program, which continues to raise funds for Douglas School by helping us get our shopper on!
- The Eagle Rewards Shopping team of **Maria Parodos, Katherine Lee, SoYoung Chang, Marina Cronin, and Caitlin Ryan** for their enthusiasm and dedication in their coordination of Box Tops, Labels for Education, Amazon Smile, Donelan's register tapes, and Target REDCard programs, and to everyone who supported the program by sending in receipts, labels, and coupons, as well as those who clicked and shopped their way to rewards.
- **Cydney Cotter** and all the Safe Arrivals volunteers for never letting a day go by without making sure all Douglas students were accounted for.
- **Karen Pierce and Jackie Karess** for ensuring many were warmly welcomed to so many meetings and events.
- **Sandy Munger and Sheri Palazzo** for their dedication and organizational expertise on SpiritWear.
- **Darlene Crowley, Karen Pierce, and Nancy Stillman** for running the fantabulous Nature Walks, along with all the parents who volunteered.
- **Sharon Metzger, Bill Hekking, Joe Walsh, and Lori Fassman** for their amazing array of technological, editorial, and organizational skills that appear effortless to the many families who depend on the emails and website for information.

Thanks to School Staff

Thank you, too, to all of the Douglas teachers, assistants, specialists, SPED teachers, and staff for the support you give to the PTO. Without each and every one of you, Douglas would not be the special place that we love. Thank you to **Chris Whitbeck** and **Jenna Larrenaga** for your kindness and enthusiastic devotion to Douglas, and to **Sharen Crooks, Laurie Maylander, and Barbara Losier** for support and assistance at keeping everything humming at Douglas.

A great big thanks to **Aaron Foley** and **Stylianous Kounalakis**, our crack custodial team that makes Douglas shine and our children smile; to **Kathie Clifford** and the kitchen staff, who make sure our kids have healthy food all year long; to **Diann Oster** and **Tory Reierson**, the nurses who bandage, console, and care for the students at Douglas; and to **Sasha Opel** and **Sue Stewart**, who keep our children captivated by stories and take them to outer space and back, ensuring they have adventures that the children treasure and enjoy. We can't voice our appreciation enough to all of you!

Last but not the very opposite of least, a personal thank-you from Annie: A year ago, I wondered what I had gotten myself into, as my inbox continued to fill up with PTO-related messages. How would I remember everything and keep it all straight? Fortunately, I had Abigail to show me the ropes, help me navigate things, and become a friend along the way. And now, a note to Tracey, who is the one currently watching with trepidation as her inbox explodes... I am thrilled to welcome you as the incoming cochair! I already can tell that we are going to have a great year together and I am really looking forward to it.

See you all in the fall!

—Annie Hamill, Abigail Vargas, and Tracey Zachary

Spring Exhibitions

The end of the school year is right around the corner, so what better time to come in and see what your kids have been creating? The students have been hard at work and are excited to share with you! Please join us at the following times:

Tuesday, June 14

6:00–6:30pm Kindergarten & First Grade
6:30–7:00pm Second Grade
6:00–7:30pm Fifth Grade

Wednesday, June 15

6:00–6:30pm Third Grade
6:00–6:30pm Fourth Grade
6:30–7:00pm Sixth Grade



Summertime!

Summer hasn't even started yet, and already we're telling you about things to keep in mind for fall? Yup, it's true. But this is great information, so please read on! (Most of these links are not active yet, but will be highlighted on the PTO website when they are.)

- Moving within Acton? New email address or cell number? Update emergency contact info in PowerSchool (<https://absis.ab.mec.edu/>).
- Complete the online Volunteer Survey when it is open in late August (the link will be available via email and PowerSchool, as well as on the PTO site).
- Mark your calendar! On Thursday, August 18, at 12 noon, your child's class placement will be available online via PowerSchool (https://absis.ab.mec.edu). Note that you need to create an account if you haven't already. After you complete the emergency forms and PTO survey, class placement should appear. Class lists will be available at noon on Thursday, August 25.
- Check the PTO website for the "Back to School Checklist" that will help you keep track of "parent homework" at the start of the school year.

Keep in touch: If you aren't receiving the Eagle Eye Weekly (weekly email announcements from the PTO), get on the list (or update your email address) by sending an email to technology.secretary@DouglasSchoolPTO.org. These emails are a great way to keep up with what's going on at school all year long. They include reminders of when school picture day is scheduled, whether Thursday is early release or all day, which current activities need volunteers, and much more. You can also join our Facebook page, which is a neat way to hear stories and see photos of what's going on at Douglas. Have a wonderful summer vacation!



Dedication That Goes Above and Beyond

We would be remiss if we did not take the time to thank several long-serving board members who will be moving on this year. Whether they are graduating out of Douglas or focusing their volunteer efforts elsewhere, our PTO and our school are better for their dedication and leadership. Thank you to:

- **Laurel Ghose**, our Health and Safety advocate (for 10 years!) and former Ice Cream Social Cake Room organizer.
- **Linda Gower**, our Playground and former Scrip co-chair, Eagle Shopping Rewards committee member, and Ice Cream Social games guru.
- **Corinne Hogseth**, former Assistant Treasurer and current Treasurer, who has put in eight years of service!
- **Kathy McCullen**, our Cultural Enrichment co-chair and Staff Appreciation Luncheon organizer, and former School Picture and Newcomer coordinator.
- **Sharon Metzger**, our Webmaster, Douglas Digest publisher and editor, and former Technology Secretary. (And one more year to produce her 8th Douglas Directory!)
- **Deanne O'Sullivan**, former PTO co-chair, Spiritwear chair, Newcomer coordinator and Graduation chair, and our current School Committee Liaison and School Store Coordinator, with eight years of service!
- **Liz Schaller**, our Snack Cart co-chair.
- **Joe Walsh**, our Technical Webmaster.
- **Sarah Wilfert**, our Cultural Enrichment co-chair.

Each of you have put in at least three (but in most cases, many more!) years of time and effort into Douglas. Thank you for your insight, your time, and your unbelievable commitment.



Capital Space Planning

To catch up on the district's plans for school building and infrastructure improvements, review the architectural summary of the condition of Douglas and other district buildings, and get a preview of possible projects for building repair and renovation, see www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning. And mark your calendar for Thursday, June 16. That's when Superintendent Brand, facilities director JD Head, and consultants from Dore & Whittier will present the district's school building needs and capital planning process. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Newcomer Orientation Aug. 25

Newcomer Orientation is a wonderful Douglas tradition where current parents and students introduce our newest community members to a little Douglas hospitality. If you would like to help out with this important event—especially if you were once a newcomer yourself!—or if you have a child who'd like to show a new Douglas student around, please contact Christina West (sistinasistina@gmail.com). Note that this event is for families with children in grades 1–6. The kindergarten orientation takes place separately.

Dates to Remember

Thursday, June 9

Last day of Snack Cart
Band concert (Douglas/Gates), 7pm
School Committee meeting, 7pm

Friday, June 10

Chorus concert, 9:45am, Cafetorium

Tuesday-Wednesday, June 14-15

Exhibition Nights
See p.2 for specific grade schedules

Thursday, June 16

Community Info Session / Capital
Planning Meeting, ABRHS, 7-9pm

Friday, June 17

Last day to return library books
Last day to send mail via Douglas
Post Office

Wednesday, June 22

Last day of school! 1pm dismissal
6th-grade graduation, followed by
reception, 10am

Thursday, June 23

School Committee meeting, 7pm

Friday, June 24

Douglas Day at Canobie Lake Park

Monday, June 27

Douglas Night at Lowell Spinners,
7pm

Tuesdays, sprinkled throughout summer

Douglas free concert series, 6pm
(watch Facebook for details)

Thursday, August 18

Class placement available on
PowerSchool, [https://
absis.ab.mec.edu](https://absis.ab.mec.edu)

Monday-Friday, August 22-26

Douglas Vacation Program

Thursday, August 25

New family orientation, 1pm

Tuesday, August 30

Back to school staff luncheon
Kindergarten orientation

Wednesday, August 31

First day of school! (early schedule)

Tuesday, September 6

Back-to-School Night
6-6:45pm: Grades 3-4
7-7:45pm: Grades 5-6

Tuesday, September 13

Back-to-School Night
6-6:45pm: Kindergarten
7-7:45pm: Grades 1-2

Douglas PTO Board 2016-2017

Co-Chairs	Annie Hamill, Tracey Zachary
Secretary	Betsy Mercier, Karen Jarsky
Treasurer	Andrew Chase
Assistant Treasurer	Jen Spadano-Gasbarro
Cultural Enrichment	Jen Standley, Karyn Parker
Douglas Digest	Jill Maxwell, Abigail Vargus
Gardening	Hayley Reynolds
Health and Safety	Michelle Shoemaker
Hospitality	Karen Pierce, Jackie Karess
Interschool Council	Eileen Matarese
Playground	Tiffany Prunesti
PTO/School Committee Liaison	Karen Pierce
Snack Program	Tiffany Prunesti, Janice Yee, Tina Leonard
Technology Secretary	Bill Hekking
Volunteer Coordinator	Jason Fitzgerald, Anna McHargue
Webmaster	Jakki Eckmann, Holly Fitzgerald

Farewell and Fond Memories

It's hard to believe another school year is winding down. Before we part ways, we wanted to take this opportunity to bid a fond farewell to the 41 families who will be leaving the Douglas community once their children graduate this month. On behalf of the PTO, thank you for all of your support and participation over the many seasons we've shared. The entire Douglas family will miss you, but we hope we'll see you soon, whether at a summer concert, the Ice Cream Social, or the spring auction. You're always welcome here!

Zainas Naas & Khalid Aboushiwa
Coale Parker & Scott Anderson
Amy Austin & Ronald Albuquerque
Jill Davis & Michael Buonomo
Pam & Abraham Caliskan
Suzanne Giordano & Brett Campbell
Debra & David Cox
Amanda & Chris de Grandpre
Candace & Timothy Doncaster
Vera Platonova & Paul Dovnar
Casey & Gerald Eaton
Nashwa & Wajih Elsallal
Anya & Larry Fillion
Shannon & Mark Ford

Elizabeth Fraser & Domhnull
Granquist-Fraser
Ganapathi Santhana & Usha
Sudaresan
Laurel & Saelen Ghose
Teri & Bob Glenn
Linda & John Gower
Beatrix Gyimesine Gronas & Balint
Gyimesi
Neeza Thandi & Kirk Haller
Ping Luo & Bo Huang
Stephanie & Jim Ignazio
Sara & Mark Junghans
Amy & Venkat Krishnamurthy
Ying Ma & Pengyue Li
Haiyan Zhang & Bin Li
Xiaoyan Yu & Zuji Mao
Naomi & Mark Martin
Lisa & Mark Munson
Susan & Raymond Paradiso
Kelly & Jeffrey Reynolds
Karen Roehr
Renate & Chester Ruszczyk
Zhu Xiao & Zhenhua Shen
Ritsuko & Brian Sullivan
Michele & Joe Walsh
Yi Yao & Minghua Wang
Yiqiang Qiu & Hualiang Xiong
Danxia (Jessica) Kong & Yong Yang
Nancy & Gregory Young