



Douglas Elementary PTO Meeting Minutes

August 24, 2026 DES Media Center 9:15am

Board Members: Raechel Hardin, President/Becky Starring, Vice President/Renee Russell, Treasurer/Alison Mixan, Secretary/Deb Wall, Member-at-Large/Michaelle Gust, DES Principal

Others in Attendance: 11

Board Members Not Present: Deb Wall

I. President's Update (Raechel Hardin)

- A. The meeting was called to order by Raechel Hardin at 9:15am; she then introduced board members to attendees.
- B. Raechel stated for this year's SPS Community Night, DES PTO plans to set up a tent to engage with parents/community members. We will provide information on how to stay connected, including the DES PTO Facebook page, a signup sheet for volunteering along with the chance to win a gift card, and how to register kids for the walkathon. QR codes will be available for easier access.
- C. Raechel noted that the walkathon will look different this year by combining the daytime and evening events into one event during school hours. All students will be able to participate this way, and parents are still encouraged to attend.

II. Treasurer's Update (Renee Russell)

- A. Renee distributed copies of the treasurer's report (7/1/26-7/31/26) and the proposed budget that board members agreed upon at the July budget meeting. She noted there was little activity in July's report due to school not being in session.
- B. Renee acknowledged we have a large sum of money to spend because of good fundraising. She expressed that we could do something meaningful with the money. One idea on the table is covering a portion of the new soccer field that will be constructed on the land next to DES.
- C. An upcoming audit with Heidi Hunt will be scheduled (likely in October). Also, our 990 IRS tax form is due by 11/15/26.
- D. DES PTO now has a PayPal QR code shared with Friends of SMHS for business fundraising.
- E. A couple of line items were discussed to amend in the proposed budget.
 - 1. Kayla Bosch, the new lead of the outdoor experience committee, inquired about her budget line since it wasn't included in the proposed budget. Renee clarified that an incoming grant from Miller Knoll will add \$1000 to Kayla's budget.
 - 2. Becky Starring requested an extra \$500 for walkathon classroom incentives.
- F. Renee made the motion to pass the proposed budget with these amendments along with the flexibility of changing it as needed. The motion passed, and the updated proposed budget stands at \$85,550.



III. Principal's Update (Michaelle Gust)

- A. Michaelle highlighted several upcoming dates of note.
 - 1. The back-to-school assembly takes place on September 2nd, followed by the first cross-level grade team meetings.
 - 2. September 4th-7th: No school
 - 3. September 9th: Art-a-Loan at the SCA
 - 4. September 11th: Community Night at SHS
 - 5. September 14th: Walkathon kickoff event
 - 6. September 17th: Constitution Day
 - 7. September 25th: No school
 - 8. October 1st: Picture Day
 - 9. October 2nd: Walkathon

IV. Teacher's Report (Alaina Hale/Nicole Robb)

- A. No updates at this time.

V. Committee Reports

- A. Walkathon Update
 - 1. Student Fundraising (Becky Starring) Becky is in the process of organizing incentives and ordering raffle prizes.
 - a. She mentioned she would like to focus on giving students more experiences rather than tangible items as rewards. One incentive discussed is a pizza party for classes who meet their goals.
 - b. An upcoming walkathon meeting is scheduled to finalize these details. A kickoff letter outlining the incentives will be sent home in mid September.
 - 2. Kick-off Event (Kayla Bosch)
 - a. The kick-off event is scheduled on September 14th at 2:15pm. Raechel and Kayla will meet to iron out the details.
 - 3. Main Event (Miri Kakon, Kelly Schloss, Jennifer Forsythe)
 - a. The subcommittee has selected "World Tour" as the walkathon theme to tie in with the school year theme of "Learning Takes You Places".
 - b. Miri provided a detailed draft of the event and how it will be executed; however, there may be a few additions as the event develops.
 - c. Miri will also be making walkathon shirts. She noted that for business sponsors to have their names on the shirts, she will need to know by September 16th. Raechel can get the sizes of students and teachers from Stephanie Allen.
 - 4. Business Fundraising (Raechel Hardin/Miri Kakon)
 - a. Raechel and Miri have been working on business donations in conjunction with Birdie Holley, so donations can be split between the elementary and SMHS.

VI. Recaps

- A. Bye Bye Breakfast (Michaelle Gust)



1. The breakfast is a great way to start the year by welcoming kindergarten families. A parent in attendance at the PTO meeting suggested clarifying that the breakfast is for parents only, not students.
- B. Welcome Night (Kate Ure)
 1. Kate reported that Welcome Night was a well-attended, successful event. There were 12 tables stationed with representatives who distributed information from various organizations including Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Club, and the Saugatuck/Douglas Library. Steve's Twisted Balloons provided the Trailblazer colored balloon arch, and Steve was on hand to make balloon creations for the kids. It seemed to work having all vendors in the same hallway; however, a couple noted it created a bottleneck in a few areas for participants.
 2. The availability of administrative staff near the entrance was extremely helpful in directing new families unfamiliar with the school's layout. She felt Mrs. Gust greeting everyone at the door made students/parents feel welcomed.
 3. Kate purchased an ice cream freezer (a big hit) with part of her funds. It will be a great addition for future school events involving ice cream.

VII. Additional Comments

- A. Becky Starring is looking for additional help with the Scholastic Bookfair. This also will be her last year since her son will be graduating from DES. Jenna Maisonville, who was in attendance, expressed interest in helping and taking over the lead next year.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02am Minutes compiled by Alison Mixan, Secretary