



Meeting Minutes

Douglas Elementary PTO

October 16th, 2025 DES Media Center 3:30 pm

Raechel Hardin, President—Becky Starring, Vice President—Renee Russell,
Treasurer—Alison Mixan, Secretary—Deb Wall, Member-at-Large—Michaelle
Gust, Principal

Meeting called to order by: Raechel Hardin, President

Others in Attendance: 5 Board Members not present: Becky Starring

I. President Update (Raechel Hardin)

- A. Becky Starring was appointed as the new vice president since Nicole Portman stepped down from the position. We would like to appoint a new member-at-large now that Becky is VP.
- B. We still need to find a lead for Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4th-May 8th). It was suggested to reach out to parents of younger kids to step up for leads. Also, we should emphasize that even if a parent is unable to attend PTO meetings, it doesn't mean they can't be a lead. Raechel plans to set up a table at the school Halloween parade on October 31st and provide updated calendars and a willing-to-help signup.
- C. Students who earned lunch with the principal will have lunch catered by New Holland Brewery on October 27th.
- D. Raechel floated the idea of including a Boys and Girls Club snack line item. Renee confirmed that we may be able to add this based on the bylaws. We agreed that Boys and Girls Club should continue to promote snack donations to parents, and perhaps we can revisit to see what the PTO can contribute if needed.

II. Safety Update (Brett Ensfield)

- A. Brett has conducted several safety inspections at DES and was pleased with his overall findings. He did note that the Douglas Police Department recommended adding a camera for the front office. A lock has been added to the entrance for Boys and Girls Club to improve school safety during after school hours. Outside of the building we can continue to find ways to improve safety around the school, roads and crosswalks, especially during drop-off and pick-up.
- B. Staff at DES participated in a Strategos active shooter drill conducted by the sheriff's department. Strategos International is a firm that provides security consulting and training to different organizations including schools.
- C. All AEDs in the district have paperwork in them and meet state mandates.
- D. On October 29th, the high school will host a parent night focusing on school safety and the OK to Say Program with Brett and Mark Neidlinger.



- E. Brett pointed out a strength at DES is that kids are supervised at all times. One of our teachers in attendance added that the officers who conducted the training were impressed by the safety protocol at DES.

III. Treasurer Update (Renee Russell)

- A. Renee provided an updated treasurer's report as of September 30, 2025. Walk-a-thon donations have not been included in this report, but they will show up in the next one.
- B. Since the walk-a-thon goal was met, the all-school movie has been added as a line item. It was also noted that the reading month extra money has been rolled over from last year although it doesn't show up in the report.
- C. We agreed on a final budget, so Amendment 1 will be submitted to the auditor now that the walk-a-thon is done. All information for the audit is needed by October 29th. The audit should be completed by December.
- D. Renee proposed a flexible budget, starting with a clean slate each year rather than having a rolling budget.

IV. Principal Update (Michaelle Gust)

- A. Michaelle appreciated the meals donated by families for parent/teacher conferences.
- B. She made note of several upcoming dates:
 - 1. October 24th: Popcorn Friday
 - 2. October 28th: Picture Retake Day
 - 3. October 31st: Halloween Parade (Parents can get in the front door at 1:15 and head to the gym, followed by classroom parties if they choose to stop by.
 - 4. November 14th: Half day
 - 5. Game days are coming up in November, and parents can sign up to volunteer through SignUp Genius

V. Teacher Update (Alaina Hale and Nicole Robb)

- A. Alaina and Nicole reported the teacher feedback they heard was that the walkathon was one of the best we've done. They felt the in-school outdoor event went well; however, one recommendation was to add a few more interactive activities. They liked the jellybean treat since all kids got something, and they liked that most of the prizes were handed out discreetly. The raffle prizes were a hit because more kids felt like they had a chance to win.
- B. Perhaps one thing we can fine tune next year is reducing the number of reminders regarding walk-a-thon that teachers send—maybe send one a week? Also, we may need to clarify that parents are welcome to attend the in-school event. Another idea to revisit is to do a parade around the circle drive and then walk down to the field for the in-school event.



- C. The teachers liked being at Beery Field for the evening walk-a-thon event and felt like it was more community-oriented. One suggestion was to recruit more people to hand out tickets or more monitors to make sure kids aren't cheating (several were caught getting more tickets than they earned). Maybe only have 5th grade and under earn tickets? We can reevaluate this for next year.

VI. Walk-a-thon Recap (Becky Starring)

- A. Becky has renewed the FundHub platform for another year. However, we are considering using other platforms with lower fees. The middle school is researching another platform, so we can see if they find a more viable option.
- B. Becky also presented the walk-a-thon earnings:
 - 1. Total collected via FundHub \$76,295.76 (\$73,901.51 net profit after fees of \$2,394.25)
 - 2. Business donors contributed \$20,655
 - 3. Grant for \$10,000
 - 4. Total amount raised was \$106,950.76
- C. Incentive numbers: 2700 small raffle entries, 247 grand prize entries, 176 ice cream participants, 148 doughnuts with police participants, 87 lunch with Mrs. Gust participants and 70 entries to slime Mrs. Gust.
- D. Becky recommended forming an incentive subcommittee for next year as this job is an undertaking for one person. She felt the raffle was a success and thought we should continue with a similar setup for next year's incentives. We can explore adding other incentives that may be a hit with the kids.
- E. The doughnuts with the police incentive was a big draw-- maybe expand to a ride in a cop car? We were grateful to Deboer's Bakery for selling us doughnuts for half the price.
- F. Becky thought we had the best turnout this year for the evening event. However, she pointed out that Beery is smaller than the high school track. One issue if we were to return to the track is that we would not have as much time to set up.
- G. We will need leads for the daytime event and evening event for next year.

VII. Outdoor Garden Update (Dana Phillips)

- A. A fall cleanup is scheduled for Tuesday, November 4th from 9-12. Volunteers from Miller Knoll (through the Miller Knoll Global Day of Purpose \$1000 grant) will be helping; anyone else who would like to volunteer can also attend.

VIII. Book Fair Recap (Becky Starring)

- A. We will need a lead for the Book Fair next year.
- B. Sales were up from last year and totaled \$9,238.11. We spent \$1,376.40 and purchased 176 books for the book vending machine. We also had \$350 in share the fair funds. C.



- C. Staff selected 18-20 kids who they felt could benefit from a free book, and those kids got to choose a book of their choice. We didn't use all the money and will have \$90.41 roll over to next year's fair.
- D. Becky opted to take \$1852 in cash back and accrue \$662.50 in Scholastic dollars to use next year on books. We would rather not use Scholastic funds because the books aren't as up to date. Therefore, our goal is to use money earned from next year's book fair to purchase books for the vending machine. We've spent \$1000-\$1300 on vending machine books in the last few years, so Becky would like to get to a point where we are using Scholastic dollars rather than PTO funds to purchase.

IX. Parent/Teacher Conference Meals Recap (John Tolley)

- A. We will need a new lead for next year. Suggestions were made to scale back on SignUp Genius and to make the meals more portable/grab and go. We're considering using PTO funds to cover the main meals but maybe request snacks/drinks/dinnerware through SignUp Genius.

X. Holiday Workshop (Alison Mixan and Traci McFadden)

- A. Materials are being purchased and assembled in preparation for the holiday workshop.
- B. Alison and Traci will work with Stephanie Allen in the upcoming weeks to schedule time slots for classes. They will also create a SignUp Genius to recruit parent volunteers to assist with classes.

XI. March is Reading Month Update (Amanda Frank, Meghan Kelley and Amy McKee)

- A. The theme this year will be Get Your Paws on a Book. The committee is hoping to partner with Wishbone and/or Harbor Humane to connect out students with dogs through DES's ELA curriculum and March is Reading Month events.
- B. Author/illustrator Troy Cummings has committed to being the visiting author. The committee felt his books will not only sync up nicely with the theme, but they will reach every grade level. His upcoming visit is planned for April 17th.
- C. The committee has also found a custom doodle artist, Adrienne Michaels. They would like her to conduct assemblies to teach students how to create approachable dog portraits to support the teachers' classroom curriculum. Her quote was very reasonable for 3 hours of her time, and they would like to ask her to do some additional work, perhaps dog posters around the school or custom dog stickers/temporary tattoos.
- D. The committee would like to spend an additional \$1000 on other reading incentives/materials to support reading month programming. Their current estimated costs are \$5000 (including the cost of the two guests), which is well within the budget of \$8000.



XII. SCA Update (Whitney Valentine)

- A. October 29th the SCA will be hosting the FuturePrep'd 4th and 5th graders for a field trip.
- B. November 7, 6-9 pm: a free community event *Interwoven: The Art of Flourishing Together*
- C. The annual Mountainfilm for Students registration for classroom screenings will open in November.
- D. Elementary field trips to visit the exhibition *Flourish* are available and would cost \$7/student.

XIII. Member Comments None

Meeting adjourned at: 5:27 PM Minutes compiled by: Alison Mixan, Secretary