



Douglas Elementary PTO Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2026 DES Media Center 8:30am

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

Meeting called to order by: Raechel Hardin, President
Others in Attendance: 4 Board Members not present: Deb Wall

I. President's Update (Raechel Hardin)

1. No action needs to be taken on increasing the budget for the sunshine cart as enough money was allotted to Christina. However, Raechel suggested switching the offerings to coffee/donuts once a month to keep it simple.
2. Leadership is still needed for the evening walkathon event and book fair next year. Jennifer Forsythe volunteered to take over the walkathon lead and requested a co-lead if possible.
3. We discussed meals for parent/teacher conferences going forward. One idea was floated to have the main meal catered by a local restaurant; however, we decided to continue with the same format and have parent volunteers contribute dishes. Jessica Lombardi volunteered to be the organizer for conference meals starting next year.
4. Third Coast Community Church would like to become more involved at DES. One suggestion was made to partner with Boys and Girls Club and possibly help with after-school snacks since they often request snack donations.
5. Regarding an increase in teachers' budgets, Michaelle will ask teachers if there's a need for more. Based on their feedback, we can evaluate this area during our budget meeting in the summer.
6. Raechel proposed an idea for another committee that could be added to the budget. This committee would be based on community service and possibly student-led. It would emphasize giving back to the community where students could choose an organization and either make a donation or volunteer their time. One suggestion was to collaborate with student council. We recognized that this effort should benefit the kids in our community since the money raised is through walk-a-thon.

II. Principal's Update (Michaelle Gust)

1. Michaelle has an upcoming meeting with Velo City Bikes regarding bike lessons for the kindergarteners in the spring. First graders will not participate this year. The line item for Bike Lessons can be adjusted to reflect this change.
2. Michaelle also mentioned a few upcoming dates:
 - Report cards will be sent home on January 28th, prior to parent-teacher conferences. Conferences are on February 3rd-5th, with all three dates will be in person. There will be no school on Friday, February 6th.



- The whole school will be attending Alice in Wonderland presented by the Saugatuck Middle School/High School Drama Club.

III. Treasurer's Report (Renee Russell)

1. We had discussed the snack closet budget at the last meeting since there was concern that money was running low. After further discussion, Renee noted we have around \$2700 left to get through the year, which should be enough. If there is any remaining money, a suggestion was to buy dry goods to stock up for next year.
2. A debit card policy and financial policy are in progress; however, we will finalize later.
3. Renee pointed out that so far, we've earned \$692.17 in our earned interest account.
4. Renee provided the treasurer's report from 7/1/2025-12/31/2025 that showed our current spending trends. At this point, everything has been reconciled through December.

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

1. Nothing to report

V. Committee Reports

1. Garden Committee (Dana Phillips)
 - Dana mentioned she plans to schedule a spring cleanup day in either March or April. She would also like to know if teachers have any needs that would help them utilize the garden spaces with their students.
2. Holiday Workshop (Traci McFadden/Alison Mixan)
 - Alison and Traci appreciated the parent volunteers who helped the workshop run smoothly. They felt the changes they made to a couple of crafts were well-received by the students.
 - Alison mentioned that a few parents were interested in taking a more active role in helping with next year's workshop.
3. Family Dance (Kelli Bowman and Joelle Sanger)
 - Kelli and Joelle emailed Cristina with three potential themes, and one will be voted on. Once a theme is selected, they will order decorations and organize a Signup Genius to recruit volunteers. Food and beverages will be purchased the week before the dance.
4. March is Reading Month (Amy McKee/Meagan Kelley/Amanda Frank)
 - Amanda mentioned dates that will be included for this year's reading month theme "Get Your Paws on a Book". March 5th a dog doodler is visiting and on April 17th, Paws With a Cause plans to stop by DES.
5. Screen-Free Week (Leah Root)
 - Leah attended an event at ODC that centered on screen-free ideas, which she found to be beneficial.



- Screen-Free Week will take place May 4th-8th. It will overlap with Teacher Appreciation Week, which shouldn't be an issue.
- SCA has inquired about bringing a mobile art truck and/or hosting an after-school event with screen-free activities. It was also noted that the library will have after-school activities available that week.
- The school-wide book exchange has taken place during the color run at the end of screen-free week; however, we discussed moving the book exchange to the school and scheduling it during March is Reading Month.

VI. Eloquence Day (Karen Kerridge/Lisa Diaz)

1. A theme has been selected and planning is underway.

VII. SCA Update (Whitney Valentine)

1. Registration for youth summer camps will open on February 3rd. Descriptions of courses can be previewed online as of January 19th. Applications for scholarships are available (full and partial) on the SCA's website.
2. Grades 3-5 will attend Mountain Film for Students on March 18th and K-2 will attend on March 19th.
3. SCA 2026 Creative Fellow is Heather Winia. Maybe she could offer programming during Screen Free Week? This idea can be discussed with Leah.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15am Minutes compiled by: Alison Mixan, Secretary