

# DOUGLAS DIGEST

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PTO: <http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org>

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## Douglas Digest

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

**Next issue: October 14.**

We welcome article ideas and feedback. Please email Sharon at [sharon.metzger@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.metzger@gmail.com).

## From the PTO

Welcome back! We hope you were able to pack a whole host of adventures into those 77 glorious days of summer. It's going to be a wonderful year here at 21 Elm Street, and we're ready to dive right in.

The PTO strives to enhance the school experiences of Douglas students and

families by sponsoring dozens of activities and programs, both academic and social. Our success is directly linked to the generosity of parents and grandparents, and the continued support of our school's staff. Thank you to everyone who filled out the volunteer survey when you updated your emergency contact information in PowerSchool. (If you haven't filled it out, it's not too late! Please do so before September 15.) We use this information to find ways to engage our impressive collection of creative and talented parents, grandparents, and guardians. Based on your answers, you may hear from one of our committee chairs soon. We also post volunteer openings as needed on the PTO website (and via our emails, a.k.a., "The Eagle Eye"). We appreciate all the time and effort you devote to nurturing a rich environment where our children learn and grow!

To best serve you, we invite you to register for our essential "Eagle Eye" email bulletin, which includes Sunday weekly emails and occasional timely messages. To find out more and to register, please visit the "Communications" tab on the PTO website or email the technology team at [technology.secretary@DouglasSchoolPTO.org](mailto:technology.secretary@DouglasSchoolPTO.org).

Another great way to stay on top of Douglas developments and updates from Acton/Boxborough schools is to come to the PTO meetings. Our first general meeting is **Tuesday, September 23, 7:30pm**, in the Douglas cafeteria. A full schedule for this year's meetings is on the PTO website under the "About Us" tab. Our meetings are informal, and all are welcome! As always, please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

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2014-2015 PTO Cochairs

## *If School Was Like This All of the Time, I'd Come All Summer!*

There were many times that I've known that the teachers and I were on the right track, but when a student yelled out the sentence that titles this month's essay, it sealed the deal for me. A new school year is finally here and I know exactly what I want the students to feel all year long!

*If school was like this all of the time, I'd come all summer!*

The model to encourage this feeling is the one that we are calling Expeditionary Learning. This year all students, K-6, get to engage in this type of learning—and it's going to be amazing! In each classroom teachers will present students with at least three real-world problems throughout the year. They may be questions such as, "How can we design storage units for our classroom that are inexpensive and that we are able to sell to other schools?" Or, they may be more general, such as "What is a map?" They may be environmental—"What is happening to the Monarch Butterfly population and what can we do to help them?" Or it may be practical: "How do I predict the weather so I know how to dress on Friday?"

These are not simple questions with a right answer. They require brainstorming, asking questions, and conducting research and fieldwork. They require all of the skills that our curriculum demands, but now there's a reason for learning those skills! Each question will end with a very public exhibition of what the students have learned. There is a real possibility of failure, so we will need to learn some things and work together. There will be mentors who guide students and in the end there will be products that are meaningful and of which students can be proud. If we do this right, children will experience joy, bravery, wonder, and pride, and all will know that they are a valuable part of the class. They will all say:

*If school was like this all of the time, I'd come all summer!*

*C. Whitbeck*

## Snack Cart News

Snack Cart will continue to run every Thursday (early release *and full day*), beginning on **Thursday, October 2**. Snacks will still cost 25 cents; popcorn is 50 cents.

## There's an App for That

Event calendars, absence reporting, bus and walker passes (by 10am) and more. Download our free Douglas mobile app on the iTunes App Store or Google Play. (Search for C.T.Douglas with no spaces.) Be sure to enable push notifications.

## Notes from the Office— Policy and Process Quick Guide

**Absent/tardy:** Please use the **online form** at [www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org](http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org) or the new Douglas School app (available free from the iTunes and Google Play stores) if your child will be absent or late. You may also call **Safe Arrival** at **978.266.2566**. (Please use the online form, the app, or the Safe Arrival line—telling your child’s teacher is not sufficient.)

**Tardy:** When children are tardy, they need to come to the office to get a **Tardy Slip** *before* going to class. This allows the office to know the child is in school (and to remove their name from the “absent” list). It also shows the teacher that the student has checked in with the office. In order to avoid disturbing the classroom activities, please do not take your child to his/her class.

**Dismissed early:** If your child is being dismissed during the school day, come to the office to sign out your child; do *not* go to the classroom. Let the office know if your child will be gone for the remainder of the day or will return, and please sign your child out in the “Sign Out” logbook outside the office doorway.

**Returning to school:** If your child returns later in the day, he or she needs to come to the office to obtain a **Dismissed/Returned Slip** before going to the classroom. *Please do not take your child directly to the classroom.* (If your child is out of school, he or she is considered absent while gone. If we don’t know your child has returned to school, your child will be listed as out from the time they left.)

**Parking:** Do not park in or drive through the bus area during arrival or dismissal times. Also, please do not park in the circular area near the dumpsters. This is for quick pick-up/drop-off only.

If your child’s class is having a special function first thing in the morning, please park on Agawam Road or at the Elm Street tennis courts to leave parking spaces for staff.

When you park on Agawam, please park on one side only. The Acton Police will ticket if cars are parked on both sides of the street.

**Dismissal changes:** If your child is taking a different bus, use a **bus pass**. (Kindergarten students are not allowed to use a bus pass.) If your child is not taking a bus, use a **walker pass**. Sign out your children at the Douglas office if they are using walker passes. Bus and walker passes are available at the school office, under “Forms” on the school and PTO websites, or on the Douglas School app.

**CORI forms:** If you will come into contact with children as a volunteer at school or school events, you must have a valid CORI form on file with the district office. We are in the third year of our three-year cycle. If you did not fill out a CORI between 2012–2014, please stop by the office to fill out a form and show a photo ID before you want to volunteer. You must turn in your form in person. CORIs can take a week or more to process. Please visit the “Get Involved” tab on the PTO website, and click on “Resources” for more information.

Please call the office (978.266.2560) to ask any questions about these procedures.

## PTO and School Email Announcements

The PTO and Douglas School communicate through the following methods:

- Paper: backpack flyers and the Douglas Digest
- Websites: PTO website ([www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org](http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org)) and Douglas School website ([douglas.abschools.org](http://douglas.abschools.org))
- Email: Eagle Eye Weekly and the Blackboard Connect system

Please make sure you are receiving each kind of email, so that you don’t miss important and useful information.

**EAGLE EYE WEEKLY:** PTO technology team sends weekly emails on Sundays. Each message includes important information about what is happening that week at school. (These email messages are from “Douglas PTO Technology Secretary” via Constant Contact.) New items appear at the top of the email, with reminders following. When possible, we include a link to the PTO website for more details. These weekly email messages, with other midweek messages on a minimal as-needed basis, are the PTO’s primary communication channel.

**Are you getting it?** Please check your Spam/Bulk folder and computer settings to make sure the weekly emails aren’t being blocked for delivery to your inbox, as occasionally happens.

You have to opt into receiving emails from the PTO; we do not automatically use email addresses from the PowerSchool emergency contact database or any other source. Thus, it is important for Douglas families to alert the technology team:

- To join the PTO email list if you are new to Douglas.
- To change an email address.

Please email the technology team if you need an old email address removed from the list, and provide your new address and your children’s grade levels so that you may receive grade-specific announcements. If at any time you would prefer not to receive the weekly emails, you may use the “opt out” choice at the bottom of the messages. Contact the technology team at [technology,secretary@douglasschoolpto.org](mailto:technology,secretary@douglasschoolpto.org).

**BLACKBOARD CONNECT (Not from PTO):** Dr. Whitbeck sends email occasionally with news of special interest. (These email messages are from Douglas Elementary School via Blackboard Connect.) These messages are related to the school or community. These communications are meant to help families feel connected and informed.

*Karen Jarsky and Abigail Vargus, PTO Cochairs  
Sharon Metzger and Kara Letourneau  
PTO Technology Team,  
[technology.secretary@douglasschoolpto.org](mailto:technology.secretary@douglasschoolpto.org)*



Douglas Elementary  
School



## **Eagle Shopping Rewards: Fundraising Made Simple!**

Did you know that you can easily raise funds for Douglas just by shopping? And your grandparents, friends, neighbors, and fellow countrymen can help collect labels too. Everything can be sent via Backpack Express or dropped in the collection center outside the office.

**Tyson (New!):** Wherever you see the Project A+ chalkboard on your Tyson's bag/box, cut out the entire area and send it in. We earn 24 cents per label!

**Box Tops for Education:** Found on products including General Mills, Kleenex, Land O'Lakes, and Progresso soups. Each is worth 10 cents to Douglas. Last year, we earned over \$1,200.

**Labels for Education:** Found on brands including Campbell's and Pepperidge Farm. They range in value from 1-100 points. We've used them to obtain iPads, cameras, school supplies, gym equipment, and other wonderful things.

**Donelan's/Crosby's Receipts for Education:** This program has benefited Douglas greatly. We collect register tapes, and then we receive points based on the totals on our receipts, which can then be used to shop for items in their catalog.

**Target:** Using your Target REDCard (debit & credit card), you earn 5% rewards at Target and Target.com and get free shipping too. Target then donates 1% on all your REDcard purchases to Douglas. Register your card today!

So grab your scissors and send in what you collect. Questions? Email EagleRewards@DouglasSchoolPTO.org.

P.S. Double your impact by purchasing Scrip cards and then using them on other rewards products. See "Shopping" on the PTO website. Many thanks, and start collecting!

## **Staffing Changes**

The new school year brings exciting changes to Douglas faculty and staff. **Mrs. Anne Corkery** will take Mrs. Hadfield's place in half-day kindergarten. In first grade, Mrs. Browne is on maternity leave (welcome Wyatt James!), and **Mrs. Kim Shamah** will take her place until she returns. Also in the first grade, **Ms. Jamie Lavin** joins us from Blanchard to take the place of **Mrs. Ingraham**, who moved to third grade to fill the spot left by **Mrs. Giannetto**, who moved to third grade when Mrs. Sharp retired. (Still with us?) In sixth grade, Mrs. Hubbell is also taking maternity leave; **Ms. Deborah Barolsky** will serve as her long-term substitute for the year. We also welcome five new assistants: **Susan Bartow, Andrea Keenan, Theodora Kounalakis, Judy Nolan, and Jennifer Patenaude.**

In Art, **Beth Warner** has returned this year following a leave of absence. Gail Dow in special education is taking a leave of absence; **Janice Martineau** will cover for her. Our reading specialist, Noel Powers, will be job sharing with **Maureen O'Brien.**

In the main office, we bid a very fond farewell to Mrs. Armistead last spring. We will miss her dearly, but we are thrilled that **Sharen Crooks** has accepted her position, and **Laurie Maylander** now holds Mrs. Crooks's former position of office assistant. **Barbara Losier**, a former sixth-grade assistant at Douglas, will take over the floating classroom assistant position.

Welcome to all who are joining the Douglas community!

## **Food Service News**

AB schools use a prepayment system for school lunch purchases. All students have their own lunch accounts and enter their numbers at the register to purchase food or milk. If you don't know your child's lunch ID, log into PowerSchool and find the lunch ID on the My Class Schedule page. (Younger students will receive help in the beginning, but we encourage students to know their lunch ID to expedite the process.) To prepay money to your child's lunch account, you can send cash or check to the cafeteria manager or log into ParentOnline and use a credit card. Forms and links are available at the Douglas PTO website. Lunch costs \$2.75; milk alone costs 50¢. Gluten-free lunches are available with advance notice. Menus are sent home monthly in backpacks and are available online. Detailed food service news: [www.abschools.org/departments/food-services](http://www.abschools.org/departments/food-services).

### **From the Health Office: Guidelines for Keeping Sick Children Home from School**

Each day many parents are faced with a decision: Should they keep their sick children at home or send them off to school? Often the way a child looks and acts can make the decision an obvious one. Please consider the following guidelines when deciding:

**Fever.** Fevers are generally a sign of illness/infection. Your child should stay home if his/her temperature is 100 F or above. A student should not return to school until their temperature has been normal (97-99 F) for at least 24 hours.

**Cold, Cough, Sore Throat.** Most children can attend school with cold symptoms as long as they do not have a fever. Children should also stay home if they have greenish nasal discharge or cough production. A sore throat with a fever, swollen glands, headache, stomachache, or rash may indicate a strep infection. Consult your child's doctor for evaluation. If strep is confirmed, your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotics, if he or she feels better.

**Stomachache, Vomiting, Diarrhea.** Keep a child with vomiting and/or diarrhea home until symptoms have resolved for at least 12 hours. Your child also needs to be able to eat and drink normally before returning. Consult your doctor if you suspect dehydration.

**Red Eyes.** Your child should stay home if he/she has red eyes that itch and/or have a crusty discharge. Consult your doctor for evaluation of possible conjunctivitis. Your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

**Rash.** A rash is usually a sign of a viral illness. It also may be a reaction to medication, plants, or chemicals such as soaps or detergents. If your child has an unusual rash or it is associated with a fever, contact your doctor.

A sick child cannot learn effectively and is unable to participate in classes in a meaningful way. Keeping a sick child home prevents the spread of illness in the school community and allows the child opportunity to rest and recover. For more information about the AB Schools' health policies, including forms (medication permission forms, asthma and Epipen plans, etc.), visit [douglas.abschools.org/health](http://douglas.abschools.org/health).

## Dates to Remember

The calendar on the Douglas website is regularly updated with important events, times, deadlines, and other details.

### Monday, September 8

Summer reading logs due

### Tuesday, September 9

Open House/Back to School Night

6–6:45pm: Grades 3–4

7–7:45pm: Grades 5–6

**Kindergarten screening;** Kindergartners do not have school on the day that their class is scheduled for screening.

Wednesday, September 10: Mrs. Corkery's class

Friday, September 12: Mrs. Smith's class

Tuesday, September 16: Dr. Fitzpatrick's class

### Monday, September 15

Photo Day (rain date Friday, October 17)

Deadline to submit info and order a directory

### Tuesday, September 16

Open House/Back to School Night

6–6:45pm: Kindergarten

7–7:45pm: Grades 1–2

### Thursday, September 18

AB School Committee Meeting, 7pm RJ Grey Jr High Library

### Monday, September 22

Walk for Peace, 9:15am (rain date Tuesday, September 23)

### Tuesday, September 23

General PTO Meeting, 7:30pm, Douglas cafeteria

### Thursday, September 25

Rosh Hashanah: NO SCHOOL

### Thursday, October 2

AB School Committee Meeting, 7pm RJ Grey Jr High Library

### October 6–9

Nature's Classroom (Grade 6)

### Monday, October 13

Columbus Day: NO SCHOOL

### Friday, October 24

Ice Cream Social (snow date Friday, November 7)

## Snack Cart Donations

Please send midday snacks with your child each day. Until snack cart starts on October 2, don't forget to send in a snack with your child on Thursdays, too.

See snack cart ideas and details online:  
[snackcart.douglaschoolpto.org](http://snackcart.douglaschoolpto.org)

### October 2 First donation day: Grades 5 and 6

October 9 Grades 3 and 4

October 16 Popcorn Day; Grades 1 and 2

SAVE THE DATE!  
**Saturday, March 21**  
Douglas Spring  
Social and Auction

## Thanks from the PTO

While the Douglas campus seemed quiet over the summer, PTO volunteers kept busy, and as a result, we owe thanks to dozens of people to start the new school year! Douglas is lucky to have such an involved community!

- **Canobie Lake**—Thank you Rachel Meehan for organizing another day of coasters, flumes, games, and fun!
- **Lowell Spinners**—Mary Lavene and Barbara Green made it possible for Douglas to cheer on the Spinners on a gorgeous evening at LeLacheur Park.
- **PTO Website**—Thanks to Sharon Metzger and Joe Walsh, the PTO website is now up-to-date and full of timely and useful back-to-school information.
- **Eagle Eye Weekly**—Thank you to Kara Letourneau and David Jarsky for spending some of their precious summer vacation time revamping our weekly email communications. Thanks for the gorgeous new look!
- **Volunteer Survey**—Christine Fox once again used her technological wizardry to help us find out how you would like to pitch in at Douglas throughout the year.
- **Campus Cleanup**—Lincoln Tree came out to prune, weed, mulch, and beautify our school before we even arrived. It made light work for all of the families who lent a hand, and now we all get to enjoy the results. A special thank you to Hayley Reynolds who joined us for the fall clean up with Suki and her brand new baby sister Gigi to lend a hand. Welcome to the crew, Gigi!
- **Back-to-School Luncheon**—Michele Walsh and Janice Yee coordinated a delicious potluck lunch for Douglas staff and faculty to welcome them back to work the day before school opens. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and/or a delicious dish!

## Special Thanks

Have you seen the way our school *sparkles*?! While we were all off doing our own summer things, Aaron Foley, Stylianos Kounalakis, and Jake Morin were hard at work completely dismantling Douglas, scrubbing it clean, and then putting it back together to ensure we all returned to a gleaming school campus. We are so lucky to benefit from their care, attention, and dedication. Douglas looks better than ever!

Fun fact: It took 110 gallons of floor wax to get that shine.

**Urgent  
Reminder**

You must verify emergency contact info for *each of your children* in PowerSchool, even if everything is the same as last year: <https://absis.ab.mec.edu/public/>. A link to the Douglas Volunteer Survey is available when you log into PowerSchool, along with the 5-digit family ID you need to enter into the survey. Complete the Volunteer Survey *once per family, not per child*. If you have questions about this process, contact Christine Fox ([cmfox1@gmail.com](mailto:cmfox1@gmail.com), 978.263.5242).