

# DOUGLAS DIGEST

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## Douglas Digest

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The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest three times each school year. **Next issue: January 21, 2020.**

We welcome ideas and feedback at [jillmaxwell@gmail.com](mailto:jillmaxwell@gmail.com).

## From the PTO

Welcome back! We are still enjoying the last warmth of summer but are excited to see the students and staff return for another great school year.

First things first: If you don't receive the Eagle Eye Weekly email (EEW), please sign up. This weekly missive arrives each Sunday filled with helpful, timely announcements. Find out on how to

subscribe under "PTO and School Announcements" on page 2.

To make this year the best it can be, we hope that you will find a way to be involved at Douglas. It takes about four volunteer hours per child to run all the school and PTO programs. Check out all the ways you can pitch in at <http://douglasschoolpto.org/volunteer-roles/>. We truly appreciate all the time and effort that goes into making Douglas such a wonderful place for our children to learn and grow! Thank you for doing what you can!

We also hope that you'll come to our PTO meetings. The first one is Thursday, September 26, at 7:30pm. You'll find a full schedule of PTO meetings at [www.douglasschoolpto.org/about](http://www.douglasschoolpto.org/about). Our meetings are informal, and everyone is welcome! It is a great chance to learn what's happening and what's coming up at Douglas.

Most of all, please don't hesitate to contact us, the co-chairs, with any questions, ideas, or suggestions. We're excited to spend the year with you!

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2019-2020 PTO Co-Chairs

## Snack Cart Demystified

Every Thursday the lobby is abuzz with kids lining up to buy two snacks for a quarter each. That's because Thursday is Snack Cart day! Every week, parents donate snacks by grade level on a rotating basis throughout the year. Healthy snacks such as cheese sticks, squeeze yogurts, milk boxes and fresh fruit are encouraged, and parents are also welcome to donate baked goods, which are always a top seller. *Please ensure that all snacks are nut free.*

The first and third Thursdays of the month are even more exciting as these are popcorn days. The halls fill with tantalizing aromas as parent volunteers meet the demand. Popcorn, a nut-free option, is popped using only salt and canola oil and costs 50 cents for a small bag and 75 cents for a large bag (large bags are available only to students in grades 3-6). We need volunteers to help pop corn! It's a minimal time commitment and a lot of fun. Please email Tina Leonard at [leonard.tina@gmail.com](mailto:leonard.tina@gmail.com) to join the parent poppers.

Here's the best part: proceeds go directly to support cultural enrichment programs! This year, Snack Cart begins **Thursday, October 3.**

## The College Goodbye

This is the college goodbye I've heard so much about. I close in and hug him; he turns on his heels and strides away. I know he won't turn to look back. I watch him until I can't see him anymore—until he's swallowed up by his new life.

Driving home I'm trying to remember when I felt like this before. My throat is so tight I can barely breathe, all the water in my eyes straining to spill down my face. I'm trying to remember: When was the last time my heart was breaking?

When I was a boy, I had to leave my family for summer camp. I had to say goodbye to my first girlfriend when she moved towns. I had my own separation from parents for college. The memories return, a feeling that I'm about to be left out of important events, separated from life as I know it, the world as I love it—this encompassing, exhausting sadness I had mostly forgotten, or buried, until now. All my sadness, loss, and longing to hold on to things as they used to be are back, sweeping over me as they did when I was a child.

I have been emotionally blindsided. I know that this is a rite many have been through, that this is nothing unique. I know that this is all good news; my son will go to a great school, something we as a family have worked hard at for many years. But I am replaying the memories of wrapping him in his favorite blanket like a burrito, the times we lay among the covers reading, first me to him, *Goodnight Moon* and *The Giving Tree*, and then him to me, *Harry Potter* and just this summer reading *Educated* together.

One of the great gifts of my life has been having my two boys and, through them, exploring the mysterious, complicated, and charged relationship between fathers and sons. Our youngest will be staying behind and entering high school. Now what will happen to their loving rivalry? Life is breaking up the team that kept me in loving consternation. I am a boy again as I wonder: What will become of my two closest friends?

I drove him the four-hour trip to college. My wife and son took the train so that we could fit all of his belongings in the car. I think Arctic explorers brought less! I'm not surprised at how little we say to each other, nor how good that feels. There is nothing we are withholding, and I know that this is a result of years spent in each other's company. If I have any advice for Douglas parents, it lies here. We made time to eat together most nights of the week, even if it was 9pm. There was time coaching his teams, being in the stands, on fishing boats, in the water, telling stupid jokes, being home on nights when he was with his friends and laughing with them. We put in the time together; we built this thing we have of comfort and love. And now, as we both prepare to let go of each other, it is paying off.

This is the college goodbye I've heard so much about. We lock eyes for the tiniest beat, hug, we both say "I love you." Then he turns on his heels and strides away. I know he won't turn to look back; he doesn't need to and I'm glad. I watch him until I can't see him anymore—until he's swallowed up by his new life.

*C. Whitbeck*

## Notes from the Office—

### Policy and Process Quick Guide

**Absent/tardy:** Please use the online form at (<http://douglasschoolpto.org/safe-arrival-absence-notification/>) if your child will be absent or late. You may also call Safe Arrival at 978.266.2566. Please remember the online form and the Safe Arrival line are the methods of informing the school if your child will be absent or late—telling your child's teacher is not sufficient.

**Late arrivals:** When children arrive after school start time, they need to get a late slip from the office 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 or 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, they need to come to the office to obtain a dismissed/returned slip before going to their 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 that your child has returned to school, your child will be listed as out from the time they left.)

**Parking: Very important!** Do not park in or drive through the bus area—the oval near the front door—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 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. Please refer to the updated bus pass policies at [www.ABSchools.org](http://www.ABSchools.org). (Kindergarten and first-grade students are not allowed to use a bus pass.) If your child is not taking a bus, use a walker pass. Sign out your child(ren) at the Douglas office if they are using a walker pass. Bus and walker passes are available at the school office and under "Forms" on the school and PTO websites.

**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 year two of a three-year cycle. If you have not yet filled out a CORI for the current cycle, or are unsure about your CORI status, 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, and CORIs can take two weeks or more to process. Please call the office (978.266.2560) to ask any questions about these procedures.

### Food Service Tidbits

The AB district will offer breakfast this year beginning at 8:30am (20 minutes before school starts). The cost for breakfast is \$1.75.

Lunch (entree, milk, fruit, and vegetable) 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 on the Food Services page at [abschools.org](http://abschools.org).

AB schools use a prepayment system for school lunch purchases. All students have their own lunch account and enter the number at the register to purchase food or milk. If you don't know your child's lunch ID, log into PowerSchool, where the lunch ID appears 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 SchoolCafé (<https://www.schoolcafe.com/ABRSD>) and use a credit card. Free and reduced lunches are available to families who qualify. Apply online (or find the form) via the AB District website ([abschools.org](http://abschools.org) < District < Food Services < Free and Reduced Meals).

### 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 the Douglas School website ([douglas.abschools.org](http://douglas.abschools.org))
- Email: The Eagle Eye Weekly and the PowerSchool BrightArrow System

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

**Eagle Eye Weekly:** The PTO technology team sends weekly emails on Sundays. Each message includes important information about what is happening that week at school. New items appear at the top of the email, with reminders following. These weekly email messages are the PTO's primary communication channel.

**Are you getting it?** Kindergarten and newcomer families have been automatically enrolled. If you aren't, or you would like to subscribe a different email address, alert the technology team at [technology.secretary@douglasschoolpto.org](mailto:technology.secretary@douglasschoolpto.org) with your new address and your children's grade levels. If at any time you would prefer not to receive the weekly emails, you may use the "Safe Unsubscribe" choice at the bottom of the messages.

**Emails from Douglas School or the District (Not From PTO):** Emails occasionally get sent out with news of special interest related to the school or community. These messages are meant to keep families connected and informed. Please be sure your email addresses are up to date in your children's accounts on the PowerSchool system.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us!

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## Spotlight: What Is the PTO?

Have you been thinking about ways to get involved with the Douglas community, but you're not sure how? Or are afraid to commit? The PTO is a great way to get involved in a small (or big!) way to help Douglas in various events and activities throughout the year.

### What does PTO actually stand for?

Parent Teacher Organization.

### Who is in the PTO?

The PTO is comprised of parents and teachers from Douglas. The PTO board is simply a group of parent volunteers who meet regularly throughout the school year to help facilitate all the activities the PTO organizes. Each year two volunteers serve as co-chairs to manage the various committees and act as a liaison between the teachers and the parents.

### What does the PTO do?

Officially, the PTO works with the teachers at Douglas to enhance the educational experience of students and families through the facilitation of parent and faculty communication, encouragement of parent involvement, and programs and funds that support the school.

### Why does the PTO ask for money?

Primarily, we need funds to help support the classroom assistants at Douglas. We also underwrite cultural enrichment activities for students and provide financial assistance for classroom trips and activities, among other things.

### How can I join the PTO?

A great way to get involved is by coming to the general PTO meetings. Additionally, we are always looking for new ideas and new volunteers. Send a note to [cochairs@douglaschoolpto.org](mailto:cochairs@douglaschoolpto.org) for more information or to ask questions about the various volunteer roles. It's that easy!



## Staffing Changes

This year we are happy to announce some exciting changes to the Douglas Staff! We welcome back **Dr. Fitzpatrick** to our third section of kindergarten. **Mrs. Johnston** is our new fifth-grade teacher and **Mr. Henke** has moved up to teach our sixth-grade students. **Mrs. Martineau** has joined us in the special education classroom. We are also grateful for our new assistants that help the teachers on a daily basis. It's a super staff for a super new school year!

## 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 or infection. Your child should stay home if his or 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 without the aid of medications such as Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- **Cold, Cough, Sore Throat.** Most children can attend school with cold symptoms as long as they do not have a fever. If your child has a cold with a fever over 100 F, he or she should be kept at home and your healthcare provider should be consulted. Your child 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 strep. You should 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.** A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept at 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 or 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.
- **Pain, Earache:** Consult your doctor if your child complains of ear pain. **Toothache:** Consult your dentist. **Headache:** If headaches are frequent, you should consult your doctor. Dehydration, stress, and fatigue can cause a headache.
- **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 health policies, including forms (medication permission forms, asthma and EpiPen plans, etc.), click on the "Health Office" link at [Douglas.ABSchools.org](http://Douglas.ABSchools.org)'s Families menu, or go directly to the site at <https://sites.google.com/a/abschools.org/health-nursing-services/>.

*Please remember, a sick child belongs at home*

## ***Dates to Remember***

### **Tuesday, September 10**

Back to School Night  
6–6:45pm: Grades 3 & 4 and Kindergarten Room 3  
7–7:45pm: Grades 5 & 6

### **Wednesday, September 11**

Douglas Night at West Side Creamery

### **Monday, September 16**

Picture Day

### **Tuesday, September 17**

Back to School Night  
6–6:45pm: Kindergarten Rooms 1 & 2  
7–7:45pm: Grades 1 & 2

### **Wednesday, September 18**

Last Day to Order Douglas Directory

### **Thursday, September 19**

Walk for Peace, 9:30am  
AB Regional School Committee Meeting

### **Monday, September 23–Wednesday, September 25**

Nature's Classroom

### **Thursday, September 26**

Rain Date, Walk for Peace, 9:30am  
General PTO Meeting, 7:30pm, Douglas Cafetorium

### **Monday, September 30**

NO SCHOOL, Rosh Hashanah

### **Thursday, October 3**

First Day of Snack Cart  
AB Regional School Committee Meeting

### **Wednesday, October 9**

NO SCHOOL, Yom Kippur

### **Monday, October 14**

NO SCHOOL, Columbus Day

### **Tuesday, October 15**

Picture Retake Day

### **Thursday, October 17**

AB Regional School Committee Meeting

### **Friday, October 18**

Douglas Ice Cream Social

### **Thursday, October 31**

Halloween Parade, 11:30am

### **Tuesday, November 5**

NO SCHOOL, Professional Development  
AB Regional School Committee Meeting

### **Thursday, November 7**

Veterans Day Program

### **Monday, November 11**

NO SCHOOL, Veterans Day

### **Thursday, November 21**

AB Regional School Committee Meeting

### **Wednesday, November 27**

Early Release

### **Thursday, November 28–Friday, November 29**

Thanksgiving Recess

## ***Thanks from the PTO***

We want to send a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped at the end of the year last year and over the summer.

**Sixth-Grade Graduation**—Thank you to Stephanie Krantz and Caitlin Ryan for putting together a lovely reception on the lawn for all our graduates and their proud families.

**Canobie Lake**—Thank you to Rachel Meehan for coordinating the day. Due to the weather, the event did not take place, but we appreciate all the hard work done to organize tickets at a group rate.

**Lowell Spinners**—Mary Lavene made it possible for all of us to cheer on the Lowell Spinners at LeLacheur Park. Thanks!

**Volunteer Survey**—Thank you to Jason Fitzgerald for ensuring the survey is done so we can get as many volunteers as possible for the new school year!

**Campus Cleanup**—Thank you to Hayley Reynolds and the families that helped get the gardens cleaned up for the beginning of the year.

**Newcomer Orientation**—Thank you to Ashley Cook for making sure that all new families were warmly welcomed to Douglas School.

## ***Confidential Financial Assistance Available***

The PTO has funds set aside to ensure that no child or family ever feels unable to participate in a Douglas activity because of a financial barrier. This applies to everything from class field trips to the Ice Cream Social. To arrange for confidential financial assistance, please contact Dr. Whitbeck ([cwhitbeck@abschools.org](mailto:cwhitbeck@abschools.org)) or Hilary Bonnell ([hbonnell@abschools.org](mailto:hbonnell@abschools.org)).

## ***Special Thanks***

While we all enjoyed our summer months away from Douglas, Aaron Foley and Stylianos Kounalakis put in a lot of hard work at school! Thanks to them we have shiny floors, sparkling walls, and a fresh space for the kids to walk into this year!

## ***Verify Your Emergency Info***

You must verify emergency contact information for each of your children in PowerSchool, even if everything is the same as last year: <https://powerschool.abschools.org/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 Jason Fitzgerald ([fitz1j@gmail.com](mailto:fitz1j@gmail.com)).

