

Independence PTO Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 14, 2025

Attendance: Kaye Fischer, Courtney Rinkenberger, Emily Gerde, Lora Stebleton, Anna Wischer, William Wischer, Jessica Offerman, Amanda Johnson, and Joe Ford

Meeting was called to order by Lora Stebleton at 6:04pm.

Motion to approve February meeting minutes Courtney R.; Anna W. seconded.

Meeting Timeline

Introductions

Kaye Fischer - Principal

- First Teacher Leader of the Pack this last month!
 - Conference meal options went over well!
 - Teachers enjoyed the grab and go sandwiches
 - Pizza was gone fast; order more upfront for next year
- Just finished up Military Week
- Administration Assistant Day coming up
 - Typically have not done anything special, but something to consider for future
- School Supply Box companies. We have been going through School Toolbox the last couple years and it seems to be going over well
- Lots of field trips coming up in May:
 - 2nd grade goes to the Library
 - 3rd grade will have Ag Day at the Red River Fair Grounds
 - 4th grade will go to Bonanzaville
 - K, 1st grade will get to experience the Firetruck
- Police Department was a field trip a few years ago. Something to revisit?
- Everyone, including the kids, seem to love the in-school experiences such as Author Visit and Day of Compassion. Would be great to be able to incorporate more of those in future years.
- May 9th is Grad Walking Day
 - Seniors come to walk the halls with the kids
- 5th Grade Graduation Day coming up
- Last week of NDSA testing!
 - Results wont be until fall
 - Couple glitches, but overall the new test went well
 - Everyone loved the mints; order more granola bars for next year

Joe Ford - Assistant Principle

- Nothing to report

Lora Stebleton - President

- Sent out an email to teachers missing from the My Favorite Things List. As soon as we hear back, an email will be sent out to families for Teacher Appreciation Week
- March Bingo was another success.
 - More families in the school have reached out to sponsor; Owner of Izumi & Mr. Wok
 - Add them to Acapulco for more gift cards to give away or substitute more gift cards in lieu of pies during the Thanksgiving Bingo
- By-Law review and revision
 - Revisions will be added to the end of these minutes
 - Added directors to the PTO Board
- 2025-2026 PTO Nominations made
 - Must be submitted via paper and voted on in May meeting. Nominations are:
 - *President: Courtney Rinkenberger*
 - *President Elect: Emily Gerde*
 - *Secretary: Jessica Offerman*

- *Treasurer: Anna Wischer*
- *Director: Kristi Blanc*

Courtney Rinkenberger - Vice President

- Yearbooks have been ordered
 - Ordered 300 and received 25 free; 325 total
 - Make sure all 5th graders receive a yearbook
 - Should be delivered in May
 - They will sell for \$20
- IRS Exemption Status
 - Paperwork is finished and submitted; waiting for approval
 - Venmo Account will only be established if approval is given
- Buster the Bulldog has been secured for the End of the Year Bash!

Anna Wischer - Treasurer

- Fieldtrip money is beginning to come out
- Bussing still needs to be taken care of
 - Bussing in the future should always be taken care of by PTO
- Create a checklist of fieldtrip necessities for future PTO
- IRS Filing was the biggest expense of the month
- At this point, although the fall and spring Bingo nights were big hits, we've lost money on them
 - Look deeper into our expenses to see where we can save a bit
 - Multiple Bingo nights? Every other month?
 - Fall Bingo did have an excess of pizza left over which could contribute to the deficit. If we eliminate food purchases and increase concessions for the future, we may come out on top again.

Emily Gerde - Secretary

- Slim Chickens Report
 - Big success!
 - Seemed to be very busy during our 2 hour window for donations
 - Total brought in to Slim Chickens was \$1,749.57. Kickback to the school was \$874.79
 - Check will be mailed to the PTO in the next 30 days

New Business

- Funds Request
 - None
- No Teacher Spotlight
- Reminder of Skate City next week
- Idea to create flyers from the PTO to hand out at the end of the year and the beginning of the year listing the specific items and events we sponsor. Letting families know exactly where their donations are going and what they are doing.
- End of Year Bash
 - Courtney will call to secure Bouncy Houses for Wednesday May 21st and Thursday May 22nd

Popcorn Party Drawing:

- Brooks Offerman - Mrs. Urbach
- Liam Gerde - Miss Heise

Adjourned at 6:57 pm.

Motion to adjourn by Jessica Offerman; William Wischer seconded

BY-LAWS
OF
WEST FARGO INDEPENDENCE ELEMENTARY PTO –
INDEPENDENCE PTO A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION

ARTICLE I.
ORGANIZATION

1.1 Name of Organization. The name of the organization shall be West Fargo Independence Elementary PTO – Independence PTO.

1.2 Name Change. The organization may at its pleasure by a vote of the membership body change its name.

ARTICLE II.
PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Purposes of the Organization. The purpose of the corporation is exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. It shall also be to continually promote and provide assistance for a quality educational program at Independence Elementary.

2.2 Objectives of the Organization.

- a. To promote the educational welfare of the children in the home, school, and community.
- b. Provide the teachers, staff, and students with programs, events, and materials that enhance the curriculum and encourage school spirit.
- c. Provide financial assistance for activities and services beyond that provided by the school district, in accordance with current accepted school policy.
- d. Foster communication among parents/guardians, children, teachers, school officials, and the community.

ARTICLE III.

MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Membership. Membership in this organization shall be open to all who ascribe to the purposes and vision of this corporation or partner with it in support of the growth and vision of the corporation.

3.2 Dues. Membership dues shall be determined for the next school year at the Annual Meeting, by recommendation of the Board of Directors and with membership approval.

ARTICLE IV.

MEETINGS

4.1 Annual Meetings. The annual membership meeting of this organization shall be the last general meeting of the school year, every year. The Secretary will notify all members in the most efficient and least expensive manner, not less than seven days before the date of the meeting. Election of officers shall take place at the annual meeting.

4.2 General Meetings. General meetings of this organization shall be held at Independence Elementary School, 3700 54th Street South, Fargo, North Dakota, 58104. Meetings shall be held monthly, during the school year. The President may suspend meetings in the event there is no business to conduct. The most convenient time and day for meetings shall be determined at the beginning of each school year. The PTO meeting dates will be published in the school newsletter.

4.3 Agenda. The President will prepare the agenda for the general meeting. Anyone wishing to be on the agenda should contact the President.

4.4 Quorum. The presence of not less than six members, one of which must be an Executive officer, shall be considered a quorum and shall be necessary to conduct the business of this organization.

4.5 Special Meetings. Special meetings of this organization may be called by the president when he/she deems it for the best interest of the organization.

a. Notices. Notices of such meeting shall be given in the most efficient and least expensive manner to all members at least ten (10) days before the scheduled date set for such special meeting. Such notice shall state the reasons that such meeting

Commented [LS1]: There has been times we have only at 4 or 5. Attendance is not known until members arrive at the meeting. I recommend moving to down to 4 members.

has been called, the business to be transacted at such meeting and by whom it was called.

b. Request by Members. At the request of sixty-six and two-thirds (66 2/3%) percent of the members of the Board of Directors or fifteen members of the organization, the president shall cause a special meeting to be called but such request must be made in writing at least ten (10) days before the requested scheduled date. No other business but that specified in the notice may be transacted at such meeting without the unanimous consent of all present at such meeting.

ARTICLE V.

VOTING

5.1 Voting. At all meetings, except for the election of officers and directors, all votes shall be by voice or other clearly indicated manner. For election of officers, ballots shall be provided and there shall not appear any place on such ballot that might tend to indicate the person who cast such ballot. At any regular or special meeting, if a majority so requires, any question may be voted upon in the manner and style provided for election of officers and directors. At all votes by ballot the chairman of such meeting shall, prior to the commencement of balloting, appoint a committee of three who shall act as "Inspectors of Election" and who shall, at the conclusion of such balloting, certify in writing to the Chairman the results and the certified copy shall be physically affixed in the minute book to the minutes of that meeting. No inspector of election shall be a candidate for office or shall be personally interested in the question voted upon. The President shall cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

ARTICLE VI.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

6.1 Order of Business. The order of business at the regular meeting and, to the extent appropriate, at all other meetings of the members will, unless modified by the presiding officer, be:

- a. Roll Call.
- b. Reading of the Minutes of the preceding meeting
- c. Reports of Committees
- d. Reports of Officers
- e. Old and Unfinished Business
- f. New Business

Commented [LS2]: I recommend this is updated to 'Review' instead of 'Reading.' Since minutes are posted to the school webpage, reading ins not always necessary. 'Review' gives any member the ability to speak up and if necessary, request a 'Reading.'

- g. Open Forum
- h. Adjournments

ARTICLE VII.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

7.1. Number, Term and Qualifications. The business of this organization shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of the school principal or another member of the school staff, together with the president, president-elect, treasurer and secretary of this organization. At least one of the directors shall be a resident of the State of North Dakota and a citizen of the United States.

7.2. General Powers. The Board of Directors shall have the control and management of the affairs and business of this organization. Such Board of Directors shall only act in the name of the organization when it shall be regularly convened by its chairman after due notice to all the directors of such meeting. Sixty-six and two-thirds (66 2/3%) percent of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum and the meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held regularly at the last regular membership meeting of the school year. Each director shall have one vote and such voting may not be done by proxy. The Board of Directors may make such rules and regulations covering its meetings as it may in its discretion determine necessary.

7.3. Vacancies. The President of the organization by virtue of his/her office shall be Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Secretary of the organization shall also be the secretary of the Board of Directors. A director may be removed when sufficient cause exists for such removal. The Board of Directors may entertain charges against any director. A director may be represented by counsel upon any removal hearing. The Board of Directors shall adopt such rules for this hearing as it may in its discretion consider necessary for the best interests of the organization.

Commented [LS3]: Adding her

ARTICLE VIII.

OFFICERS

8.1 Qualifications for Officers.

- a. An officer must be a member of the Independence PTO
- b. An officer must have a child currently enrolled at Independence Elementary or be a staff member at Independence Elementary.
- c. No officer may hold more than one board position at a time

Commented [LS4]: Adding that an officer could also be a staff member.

8.2 Number and Designation. The initial officers of the organization shall be as follows:

President: Cari-Ann Nostrum
President-Elect: Renee Belzer
Treasurer: Debbi Lopez
Secretary: Chrystal Holder

8.3 The President. The President shall preside at all membership meetings. He/she will prepare the agenda for the general meeting. He/she shall by virtue of his office be Chairman of the Board of Directors. He/she shall present at each annual meeting of the organization an annual report of the work of the organization. He/she shall appoint all committees, temporary or permanent. He/she shall see all books, reports and certificates required by law are properly kept or filed. He/she shall be one of the officers who may sign the checks or drafts of the organization. He/she shall have such powers as may be reasonably construed as belonging to the chief executive of any organization.

8.4 The Vice President. The Vice President shall assist the President, perform Presidential duties in the President's absence or inability to serve, and perform duties assigned by the President. He/she shall oversee the committees of this organization. After having served for one year, the Vice President shall automatically become the President. He/she shall be one of the officers who may sign the checks or drafts of the organization.

8.5 The Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes and records of the organization in appropriate books. Minutes shall be submitted electronically to the President for future approval, as well as possible publication in the school newsletter and website. He/she will maintain all membership data. He/she shall assist the President in handling any necessary correspondence. He/she shall be one of the officers who may sign the checks or drafts of the organization.

Commented [LS5]: Added the ability for the secretary to transact on behalf of the organization.

8.6 The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have the care and custody of all monies belonging to the organization and shall be solely responsible for such monies or securities of the organization. He/she shall cause to be deposited in a regular business bank or trust company and the balance of the funds of the organization shall be deposited in a savings bank except that the Board of Directors may cause such funds to be invested in such investments as shall be legal for a non-profit corporation in this state. He/she must be one of the officers who shall sign checks or drafts of the organization. No special fund may be set aside that shall make it unnecessary for the Treasurer to sign the checks issued upon it. He/she shall present a written financial report at each membership meeting and as requested. He/she shall be responsible for filing the appropriate tax forms and shall report this filing at the second general membership meeting of the school year. He/she shall be responsible for filing an annual report with the state of the organization and shall report this filing at the first general meeting of the new calendar year.

8.7 Non-Executive Directors. This board shall allow for up to four (4) Non-Executive Directors to serve on the Board of Directors. Non-Executive Directors shall participate in meetings and contribute to strategic decision-making. They shall serve on committees as assigned by the Board (excluding the Executive Committee) and act in the best interests of the organization. Non-Executive Directors do not have the ability to sign checks or drafts for the organization.

Commented [LS6]: Added section to allow for Directors to be nominated and voted into our Board of Directors.

8.8 Officers and Members. Officers shall by virtue of their office be members of the Board of Directors.

8.9 Compensation. No officer shall, for reason of his office, be entitled to receive any salary or compensation, but nothing herein shall be construed to prevent an officer or director from receiving any compensation from the organization for duties other than as a director or officer.

8.10 Terms. The officers shall be elected for a one-year term at the last general membership meeting of the school year, to take office August 1st. Officers may serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.

8.11 Vacancies. A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise may be filled by a Majority vote of the members for the unexpired portion of the term of his predecessor, except in the case of the President, where the position will automatically be filled by the Vice President.

Commented [LS7]: Adjusted numbers above 8.8-8.11 to accommodate for adding section 8.7

ARTICLE IX.

COMMITTEES

9.1 Appointment of Committees. The Independence PTO shall be comprised of any number of committees as deemed necessary by the Officers. Each committee chairperson shall be appointed by the Officers. These committees shall make initial decisions relating to their function; however no decision shall be acted upon without approval from the Officers or the general membership.

ARTICLE X.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

10.1 Nominating Committee. Nominations for officers shall be made by a Nominating Committee of three members, appointed by the Officers in March. The Executive

Committee can also serve in place of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall seek nominations for a Vice President, a Treasurer, a Secretary and up to four (4) Non-Executive Directors. The Nominating committee shall present the nominations at the April PTO meeting and the President will also call for nominations from the floor. Elections will take place at the May meeting, which is also the Annual meeting. The consent of all nominees must be obtained.

Commented [LS8]: Added that the Executive Committee can serve in place of the Nominating Committee. This happens more often than not anyway based on who is present at meetings.

Commented [LS9]: Added Non-Executive Directors

10.2 Elections. Elections shall be held at the last annual meeting of the year and shall follow the procedure outlines in Article 5 of these bylaws.

ARTICLE XI.

FINANCES

11.1 Budget. A tentative budget shall be drafted in the ahead of the first general membership meeting, with a final budget discussed and voted on at the second general membership meeting of the school year.

Commented [LS10]: Was previously listed as Spring, but more realistically, this happens during at the beginning of the year.

11.2 Fiscal year. The Independence PTO fiscal year shall end on July 31. The PTO shall end the fiscal year with a minimum of 5 percent and a maximum of 10 percent of the total income for the year, unless a specific long-term goal has been approved, then additional funds may be carried over to the next school year.

Commented [LS11]: I would like feedback from the Board on this.

11.3 Reimbursements. Reimbursements for approved and budgeted expenses will be made only after receipts have been provided. Receipts should be submitted to the treasurer within 30 days. Requests made without receipts will not be processed for reimbursement.

Commented [LS12]: Corrected spelling of word.

11.4 Fundraisers. All fundraisers expected to generate over \$5000 in income shall be approved by the general membership.

Commented [LS13]: Removed the language regarding the use of the reimbursement form as it's no longer used.

11.5 Allowed purchases. The officers of the PTO may make a single purchase for up to \$25 without Board approval. Any expenditure that has not been approved in the budget or at membership meeting must be brought before the Officers for approval.

Commented [LS14]: Added 'or at a membership meeting' to accommodate for approval of purchases made during a meeting.

~~11.6 Checks. All checks written by the Independence PTO must have two signatures.~~

Commented [LS15]: Removing this section as most purchase are now made via debit cards which do not allow for dual authorization. While checks will still be used, they will no longer require two signatures.

11.7 Conflict of interest. Independence Elementary Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) volunteers and officers must act at all times in the best interests of PTO and its members. The purpose of this policy is to help inform volunteers and executives about what constitutes a conflict of interest, assist volunteers in identifying and disclosing actual and potential conflicts, and help ensure the avoidance of conflicts of interest where necessary.

- a. Independence PTO volunteers and executive board have a fiduciary duty to conduct themselves without conflict to the interests of the PTO. In their capacity as volunteer and/or officer, they must subordinate personal, individual business, third-party, and other interests to the welfare and best interests of the PTO.
- b. A conflict of interest is a transaction or relationship, which presents or may present a conflict between a volunteer's and/or officer's obligations to the PTO and the volunteer's and/or officer's personal, business or other interests.
- c. All conflicts of interest are not necessarily prohibited or harmful to the PTO. However, full disclosure of all actual and potential conflicts and a determination by the Executive Board are required, with the interested volunteers and/or officers recused from participating in debates and/or voting on the matter.
- d. All actual and potential conflicts of interests shall be disclosed by volunteers and/or officers to the Independence Elementary PTO Executive Board whenever a conflict arises. The disinterested members of the PTO Executive Board shall make a determination as to whether a conflict exists and what subsequent action is appropriate (if any). The PTO President (or other Executive Board member) shall inform the volunteer and/or officer of such determination and action. The volunteer and/or officer shall retain the right to modify or reverse such conflict of interest. Independence elementary PTO shall retain the ultimate enforcement authority with respect to the interpretation and application of this policy.

ARTICLE XII.

AMENDMENTS AND REVIEWS

12.1 Amendments. These bylaws may be amended at any general meeting of the organization by a majority vote of the members present, provided notice of the proposed amendments: was given at a previous meeting, or thirty days written notice has been given to the general membership.

12.2 Reviews. These bylaws shall be reviewed by the PTO Board every two (2) years to ensure the adherence of the organization to the bylaws and, if necessary, to make reviews.

ARTICLE XIII.

DISSOLUTION STATEMENT

13.1 Dissolution Statement. Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or

shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

These Bylaws were duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Organization on November 13, 2014. These Bylaws were revised on September 7, 2022.

Commented [LS16]: Will update once voted upon in May.