

Independence Elementary PTO Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025

Attendance: Aissata Diabate, Alexis Olerud, Anna Wischer, Caitlin Mataic, Carrie Clemens, Courtney Rinkenberger, Eileen Stewart, Emily Gerde, Jamie Isaiah (sp.?), Jennifer Simmons, Jessica Offerman, Joe Ford, Kaye Fischer, Kelsey Freborg, Kristi Blanc, Michele Norris, Peyton Gale, Tennille Altepeter, Tom Clemens, William Wischer

1. Call to order

- a. Board President Courtney Rinkenberger called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.
- b. The meeting minutes from the most recent meeting held in May 2025 were reviewed. Anna Wischer moved to approve the minutes, William Wischer seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

2. Welcome and Introductions

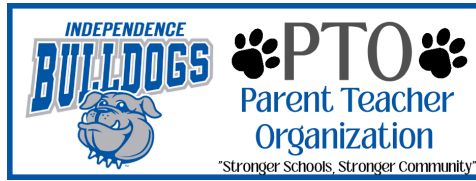
- a. All attendees introduced themselves

3. Guest Speakers

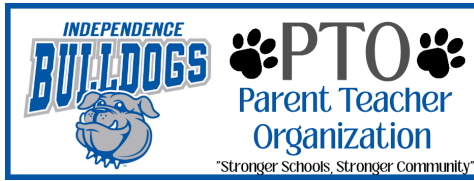
- a. Independence's Special Education Team provided an overview of their department, including the different roles on their team, number of learners served, and department goals.
- b. The Special Education Team thanked the PTO for the financial support in the previous school year that allowed them to purchase program supplies.

4. Board Reports

- a. Principal Kaye Fischer
 - i. Shared that this week is Homecoming Week, with Sheyenne's Homecoming Court visiting the school earlier in the day.
 - ii. The monthly Leader of the Pack awards will continue, with a focus on a different word each year.
 - iii. Distributed and reviewed the district and school goals for 2025-2026 so the PTO can connect to them when possible, will continue to review progress made toward these goals throughout the year.
- b. President Courtney Rinkenberger
 - i. Past events
 1. The Back to School Bash was well-attended with 244 pizza tickets distributed. Experimented with charging for the dunk tank and this was well-received by attendees, which helped offset that expense.
 - ii. Upcoming events
 1. Walk-a-Thon
 - a. Scheduled Sept. 18, with a back-up date of Sept. 25. This year, the event will be held in the evening to see if this allows more families to attend.
 - b. Reviewed progress toward the school goal of \$25,000. Discussed highlighting individual things that the Walk-a-Thon funds go toward on the Independence PTO Facebook page to build awareness for the purpose.



- c. Asked attendees for any connections to food trucks to be part of the event, and thoughts on best place to set up the foam party. An ice cream truck is confirmed.
 - d. To-dos: Send out volunteer sign-up link, order more bracelets, confirm dinner option, recruit volunteers (parents and potentially Sheyenne or NDSU student athletes), order Sign Gypsies display, and arrange finish line set-up.
 - 2. Parent/Teacher Conferences
 - a. The PTO will provide grab-and-go meals for teachers.
 - b. To-dos: Order sandwiches for the first night and pizza for the second night, to be delivered at 3:00 PM both days.
 - 3. School Picture Day
 - a. The PTO will assist with helping students through the school picture process.
 - b. To-do: Confirm 3-4 PTO volunteers to help from 7:45 AM through end of lunchtime on Sept. 30.
 - 4. Book Fair
 - a. The PTO serves as a the pass-through organization for funds raised at the book fair.
 - b. To-do: Confirm if PTO volunteers are needed for book fair.
 - 5. Halloween Dance
 - a. Discussed changes to the event for this year, including adjusting the time to be 6-7:30 PM, opening the doors the same time as the event starts, setting up a selfie photo station, and no longer doing a cake walk or face painting.
 - b. The PTO will plan to sell pizza, light-up novelties, and potentially candy as concessions. The idea to give out a small amount of candy to each learner was suggested for consideration.
 - c. To-dos: Create and send out event flyers, confirm volunteers, order pizza, purchase light-up items and candy.
- c. Vice President Emily Gerde
 - i. Nothing to report this month.
- d. Treasurer Anna Wischer
 - i. Reviewed the income and expenses from the 2024-2025 school year, including profit/loss from the Family Halloween Dance Night, Bingo nights, and Year-End Celebration.
 - ii. Emphasized the need for Walk-a-Thon fundraising to maintain current ability to pay for field trips, supplies, events, and teacher requests.
- e. Secretary Jessica Offerman
 - i. Nothing to report this month.



- f. Director William Wischer
 - i. Shared the dine-to-donate opportunities he has researched and identified, with three in particular identified as worth continuing to pursue after conversations with the restaurants' contacts.
 - ii. Asked for any additional ideas or connections of restaurants to approach.
 - iii. Discussed having a goal of one dine-to-donate option per month.
- 5. New Business**
 - a. Fund Requests
 - i. Tenille Altepeter attended to provide an overview of her request for PTO funds to go toward postage for her fourth grade class's penpal program with an Arizona classroom. Ms. Altepeter described the benefits of the program to learners.
 - 1. Kristi Blanc motioned to approve the funding request, Emily Gerde seconded. **MOTION PASSED**
 - ii. Courtney Rinkenberger shared a potential proposal for funding from teacher Nicole Plaschko for service learning project ideas for her second grade class. Feedback from the group suggested the ideas could potentially be approved at a future meeting, pending more information and a formal request.
- 6. Old Business**
 - a. No old business was brought forward to discuss.
- 7. Popcorn Party & Bulldog Beanie Drawing**
 - a. Random drawings were held for those present:
 - i. Popcorn parties won for Graham Clemens (Heise's class) and Gage Stewart (Peterson's class), scheduled for Friday, Sept. 12 with PTO board members to prepare the popcorn.
 - ii. A Bulldog beanie hat was won for Conner Norris.
- 8. Adjourn**
 - a. William Wischer motioned to adjourn the meeting, Anna Wischer seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM.

Minutes submitted by Jessica Offerman, Independence Elementary PTO Board Secretary.