Independence Elementary PTO

Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2025

Attendance: Anna Wischer (Board Treasurer), Caitlin Mataic, Courtney Rinkenberger (Board President), Emily Gerde (Board Vice President), Jessica Offerman (Board Secretary), Joe Ford, Kaitlin Urbach, Karen Livingston, Katie Budzielek, Kristi Blanc (Board Member), Lacey Williams, Lexi Olerud, Nicole Chaput, Paige Cermak

1. **Call to order**
    a. Board President Courtney Rinkenberger called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.
    b. The meeting minutes from the most recent meeting held in September 2025 were reviewed.
        i. Anna Wischer moved to approve the minutes, Emily Gerde seconded. **MOTION PASSED**
2. **Welcome and Introductions**
    a. All attendees introduced themselves.
3. **Guest Speakers:**
    a. Three first grade students presented about their data tracker binders used to track progress toward goals.
    b. The first-grade team provided an overview of how they have used PTO funds in the past to purchase prizes for the “getting caught” prize bucket to incentivize positive student behavior.
4. **Board Reports**
    a. Assistant Principal Joe Ford
        i. Mr. Ford thanked the PTO for the staff meals provided during parent-teacher conferences and described the recent Pizza with Principals lunches and Principal for a Day rewards earned by students through the Walk-a-thon held in September.
        ii. Mr. Ford shared that October’s assembly will award Leader of the Pack honors to learners based on this month’s value of collaboration.
        iii. A question about parent communication for school events such as Battle of the Books was discussed.
    b. President-Courtney Rinkenberger
        i. Past Events
            1. September’s walk-a-thon was well attended and was held in the evening for the first time. Ideas to enhance the event next year were shared.
            2. Conference meals were provided both nights of parent-teacher conference, including Which Wich and Domino’s pizza. The PTO emailed a sign-up for additional food and beverage items, and

several families volunteered to drop off items, which reduced the amount PTO spent on meals.

ii. Upcoming Events

1. The Halloween Family Dance is scheduled for Oct. 30. Volunteers have been confirmed to help with concessions, and glow sticks and concessions items have been purchased by the PTO to sell. A photo booth will be set up by a PTO member and Mr. Ford shared that the gym teachers have been teaching students different dances to do at the event.
2. Turkey Bingo will be held in November. The group discussed logistics for the canned food drive and rewarding donor students with a free additional bingo card. Additional details to be confirmed at November's PTO meeting.
    a. *To-dos: Reach out to the previous turkey sponsor to inquire about donating turkeys again for the event (Kristi Blanc), reach out to parents interested in donating about sponsoring pies for the event (Courtney Rinkenberger and Kaitlin Urbach).*
3. Staff appreciation and year-end celebration event ideas were discussed. A staff favorites list will be compiled and shared with parents in November.
    a. *To-do: Create form for staff to list their favorites, then share with staff (Jessica Offerman)*

c. Vice President-Emily Gerde
    i. Nothing to report this month.

d. Treasurer-Anna Wischer
    i. Shared the preliminary budget and recent expenses, highlighting proposed adjustments from the previous year's budget. The budget was reviewed and will be approved at November's meeting.

e. Secretary-Jessica Offerman
    i. Nothing to report this month.

f. Director William Wischer
    i. Anna Wischer provided an update that the Slim Chicken's dine-to-donate event was scheduled for Oct. 21, and a November dine-to-donate option is being explored with different local restaurants.

g. Director Kristi Blanc
    i. Planning to create a decorative photo "selfie station" for the Halloween family dance.

5. New Business

a. Funds requests

i. The first-grade team requested funds to purchase new book bags and prizes for their incentive prize boxes, providing an estimate on cost. The number of book bags proposed would be adequate if another section is added to the first grade in the future.
    1. Emily Gerde motioned to approve up to $600 for the first-grade team's request, Jessica Offerman seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

6. **Old Business**
    a. No old business was brought forward to discuss.
7. **Popcorn Party and Bulldog Beanie Drawing**
    a. Random drawings were held with those present:
        i. Popcorn parties won for Owen Gerde (Nettleton's class) and Liam Gerde (Altepeter's class).
        ii. A Bulldog beanie hat won for Zoa Blanc (O'Neil's class).
8. **Adjourn**
    a. The next PTO meeting is scheduled Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 6:00 PM.
    b. Emily Gerde motioned to adjourn the meeting, Anna Wischer seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

Minutes submitted by Jessica Offerman, Board Secretary.