



Defer Elementary PTO

Tuesday, January 13th, 2026

Defer Elementary School

7:00 PM

1. **Call to Order and Introductions** – JJ DeRosier called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.
2. **Review of the Previous Minutes** –Cara Rossi
 - a. Minutes are available on the Defer PTO website:
<https://mi01000971.schoolwires.net/domain/1223>
 - b. Lindsey motioned to motioned to approve the minutes, Kelsey second. Motion passes
3. **Treasurer's Report** - Emily Szymczak Smock and [Allison Keelean](#)
 - a. Review of Budget for November and December 2025
 - i. November is tracking on budget
 1. Main income was Haunted Garage
 2. Usual reimbursements
 3. Deposit for 4th grade field trip buses
 - ii. December is tracking to budget
 1. Received the dollars from the fun run
 2. Other income included Book Fair and Craft Fair
 3. Interest earned fell to 0% - they are not guaranteed and this is where rates are at currently
 4. Scholastic dollars are reflected in the budget. There is an ability to cash these out but it is at 50% which some schools do to use the dollars with other vendors.
 - iii. There are outstanding teacher and craft fair reimbursements. Laura to provide reminders to the teachers to submit.
 - b. Kelsey motioned to approve the November budget. Cara seconded. Motion passes.
 - c. Ted motioned to approve the December budget. Kelsey seconded. Motion passes.
4. **President's Report** – JJ DeRosier
 - a. December was very full of great events. Lots of great feedback received about the book fair, craft fair, teacher holiday lunch.
 - b. Met with a Dragon family who gave a donation to the school for the teacher's lounge.
5. **Vice President's Report** – Kelsey Howard
 - a. Next meeting is in February.
 - b. VP account was used to provide grocery gift cards for families in need and grant student wish lists across the district.
6. **Communications Report** – Lindsey Koczenasz
 - a. No major updates.
7. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Beautification- Lindsay Studders
 - i. Lindsay attended the Beautification Award ceremony with the city.
 - ii. Clean-up activities will start again in March
 - b. Inclusion committee - Kelsey Howard
 - i. Board is for MLK Jr. Day
 - ii. February 3rd - Detroit Historical Museum is doing a live storytelling event on the great fire of Detroit
 - c. Scholastic Bookfair- Ted Watts

- i. Thank you to the parents who helped!
- ii. Total sales \$10,934.19
- iii. Scholastic dollars used \$2,472.81
- iv. Added \$5467.10 Scholastic bucks
- v. Balance \$7402.98 in Scholastic dollars
 - 1. Ted will purchase bundles of books for each grade to fill the birthday book inventory as there is a current 50% coupon
- vi. Sent a box of 30 books that are instruction books that can be used by the library, birthday books, etc.
- vii. Stickers are only needed for classroom books, not birthday books.
- viii. Not all teachers completed a wish list for this book fair, Laura will provide reminders for the spring book fair.
- ix. Next book fair is 3/18 - 3/20 during conferences. Need to announce early to ensure there are volunteers who sign up.
 - 1. Recommend messaging that the fair is great for family shopping to alleviate the concerns when kids don't have dollars.
 - 2. There is an opportunity to give out Dragon bookmarks. Will plan on this.
- x. Winter book fair will be 12/7 - 12/12.
- xi. Recommend a PTO officer attached to Scholastic to always have access to the numbers.
 - 1. Will add the Treasurer email and can add another
- xii. Also looking for a co-chair for the book fair to get ready for succession planning.
- xiii. Free book was really well received in winter. Will primarily used in Winter Fairs.
- d. Craft Fair- Cara Rossi
 - i. Next year will be better to do a set ticket price and people can come and do whatever crafts they'd like.
 - ii. Would also like to consider a larger craft for fourth graders.
 - iii. Next year craft fair is 12/12
- e. Lunchtime Enrichment- [Lindsey Koczenasz](#)
 - i. Streamlined the assignments and process for this year.
 - ii. Challenge to have adult volunteers and late add students.
 - iii. Lots of really cool classes with new topics this year.
 - iv. Over 300 kids are participating.
 - v. Will make some improvements to the Google form for next year.
- f. Spring Social - Thursday, May 14th.
 - i. Looking for volunteers.
 - ii. Will reach out to Dr. Rheume to have some GPPD presence to help prevent some of the issues from last year
 - iii. Open to feedback from last year.
 - iv. Already collected feedback:
 - 1. Using the parking lot was really beneficial.
 - 2. Recommend having water at the PTO table and not just free for pick-up.
 - 3. Buschemi's liked using the Little League window.

8. Teachers Report – Laura Tanniheimer/Jane Nugent

- a. Thank you for the holiday breakfast!
- b. Lunchtime Enrichment is very popular and well organized.
- c. Keurig Machine needs some work and is usually addressed by the Social Committee but this can be addressed with Staff Hospitality funding.
- d. Larry Trading Cards have been ordered and reimbursement will be submitted. Recommend using the PBIS line item to cover this.
- e. Free book cart - will have a sign up for parent volunteers for this.
- f. Leadership Loot - plan to ask for donations to the Leadership Loot raffle between mid-winter and spring break to help kids spend their tickets.

9. Principal's Report –Lisa Rheume

- a. Thank you for all the work this year! And all the lunchtime enrichment volunteers! And for breakfast! Tuesday treats have been a hit as well.
- b. Students are working on transitioning back after break which is going well.
- c. Pick-up and Drop-off reminders to ensure that the rules are followed.
- d. Semester ends 1/23. Report cards will go out 2/4.
- e. Spring Concert will be 3/10.
- f. Y5-K info night had a great turnout - about 50 families, lots of new families.
 - i. Enrollment just opened - Y5 is due 4/1, K 5/1.
- g. 5/11 will be the Transition event - will be beneficial to have PTO volunteers at this event.
 - i. Will determine if we need more shirts and bags in March.
- h. Reach out to Dr. Rheume with any questions or concerns.

10. Old Business

- a. Teachers Lounge update
 - i. *Thank you* for the generous donation
 - ii. Lindsay is working on finalizing the timeline.
 1. Everything needs to be cleaned out by the end of the school year.
 2. Demo, Electrical, Plumbing need to be completed by 7/30 to have cabinet installed in August.
 - iii. Only pending item is a quote on cabinet install and wall repair work.
- b. Foreign language book project
- c. Gaga Ball cover
 - i. This is dependent on a project that needs to be completed by the GPPSS building maintenance team so this will be addressed in the 2026-2027 school year.

11. New Business

- a. None.

12. Member Comment(s)

- a. As new board members are identified, will need to separate out Square payment and public website. Recommend having a Tech Coordinator separate from the communications secretary.
- b. Elections will be in April.
 - i. Only position that requires previous experience is the president.
- c. Co-Treasurer / Treasurer is a 2 year overlapping rotation with the Treasurer training the Co-Treasurer.
- d. Recommendations to increase awareness:
 - i. PTO flier for new parents in folders at the start of the year
 - ii. Can we add a QR code to the back of the Spring Concert program
 - iii. Have teachers add it to their newsletters to look for volunteers
 - iv. Email the Lunchtime Enrichment teachers to say thank you and ask if they'd be interested in joining us on the PTO
 - v. Have the next PTO meeting be a "Bring a Friend" meeting
- e. Strategic Planning Survey community meeting was today. Reminder to complete the survey - link in the newsletter.
- f. International Festival Committee meeting at Pierce tomorrow.

13. Adjournment - JJ DeRosier adjourned the meeting at 8:17pm.

Upcoming Meetings:

- **February 10, 2025**
- **Stay tuned for announcements on upcoming events via Smore news and our Defer PTO social channels**