Independence Elementary PTO

Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Attendance: Anna Wischer (Board Treasurer), Courtney Rinkenberger (Board President), Emily Gerde (Board Vice President), Jessica Offerman (Board Member), Kaye Fischer (Principal), Kristi Blanc (Board Member), Mr. Svor (Independence Staff), Ms. Ellison (Independence Staff), Ms. Thorson (Independence Staff)

1. **Call to order**
    a. Board President Courtney Rinkenberger called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.
    b. The meeting minutes from the most recent meeting held March 17, 2026 were reviewed.
        i. Kristi Blanc moved to approve the minutes, Anna Wischer seconded. **MOTION PASSED**
2. **Guest Speakers: Specialists**
    a. Ms. Ellison, Mr. Svor and Ms. Thorson provided updates on specials including current and upcoming events and curriculum for library, art, music, and physical education.
    b. The staff shared plans for the last day of school, to be called “Play Day” with different stations that will be supervised by school staff and potentially some parent volunteers. Some new supplies that would be needed for this event could be used year-over-year, with Mrs. Fischer sharing that there is adequate space in the school to store these supplies.
    c. The PTO will create a flyer and parent volunteer sign-up for the Play Day event.
3. **Board Reports**
    a. Principal’s Report
        i. Mrs. Fischer provided an update on the new elementary school boundaries that were approved for the 2026-2027 school year due to school capacity constraints. The new boundaries will decrease the overall Independence student and teacher number.
        ii. State student testing was recently completed.
        iii. Some remaining end-of-year field trips are planned in April and May for a few grades.
        iv. The school talent show and final assembly are planned for May.
    b. President-Courtney Rinkenberger
        i. Past Events
            1. Spring book fair
                a. An online book fair was held for spring conferences due to limited staff capacity to host an in-person one. The book fair company wasn’t able to provide information on how many books were purchased by school parents, so PTO

doesn't know how many were purchased other than orders forwarded by parents.
    b. In-person book fairs will be planned instead of online book fairs moving forward, with the group discussing the potential need for volunteers if school staff identifies this as a need for future in-person book fairs.
    c. The PTO provided the slushy party incentive for the class with the most confirmed orders to Ms. Plaschko's second grade class on April 10.
2. Yearbooks
    a. Yearbooks were ordered, with 20 extras ordered to be purchased on a first-come, first-served basis.
    b. A yearbook was purchased for all fifth grade students.
3. Spring fever bingo
    a. Spring fever bingo was cancelled due to a conflict with the school's gym space use. A new system for tracking events and gym space has since been implemented.
    b. The event will not be rescheduled and instead, supplies ordered and donated gift certificates will be utilized at the end-of-year event or other future events.

ii. Upcoming Events
1. Skate City
    a. The next Skate City event is scheduled and flyers were sent home with students.
2. Staff appreciation week
    a. The week is being planned by the PTO with a 90's theme for each day's items.
        i. Monday: donuts
        ii. Tuesday: dirty soda bar
        iii. Wednesday: salad bar
        iv. Thursday: staff tab at Twisted J'z coffee/beverage truck scheduled to be parked in school lot
        v. Friday: snack bar
3. End-of-year event
    a. The group decided to change the end-of-year event from previous years, due to a ~$2,000 cost increase for the bouncy house rentals that have been utilized previously.
    b. The group decided to plan a spring dance instead for the night before the last day of school, which will also prevent the need to cancel in the event of inclement weather. This

will also allow the PTO to use most of the supplies purchased for the cancelled Spring Fever Bingo event.

c. Vice President-Emily Gerde
    i. Nothing to report this month.
d. Treasurer-Anna Wischer
    i. Reviewed expenses since last month's meeting. Field trip expenses have been lower than budgeted, meaning compared to a year ago at this time, there is a greater amount of funds available to be spent.
e. Secretary-Jessica Offerman
    i. Nothing to report this month.
f. Director William Wischer
    i. Not able to attend; the group noted that the Slim Chickens dine-to-donate event organized by William was scheduled for April 14.
g. Director Kristi Blanc
    i. Nothing to report this month.

4. New Business

a. 2026-2027 PTO Board Applications
    i. Applications for PTO board members will be sent out in May. Jessica will create a form that interested individuals can complete.
b. The following funds requests were reviewed:
        1. A request for design materials for choir t-shirts was approved up to $250.
        2. A request for snacks and water for 5th grade students attending a new track day event at Sheyenne High School with other Sheyenne-feeder elementary schools was approved up to $50.
        3. The need for updated gaga ball pit flooring was discussed, with the original flooring being designed for a grass set-up yet the pit ultimately needed to be placed on cement. It is now separating and creating a hazard for players. A request for updated gaga ball pit flooring designed for a cement surface was approved up to $3,000.
        4. A request for class reward store prizes from Ms. Plaschko was approved up to $100.
        5. Play Day supplies were approved up to $500.
    ii. After discussion, Jessica Offerman motioned to approve the five funds requests, Anna Wischer seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

5. Old Business

a. No old business was discussed.

6. Popcorn Party and Bulldog Beanie Drawing

a. Random drawings were held with those present:

i. Popcorn parties were won by attendees with learners in Ms. Nettleton and Ms. O'Neil's classrooms.
ii. A bulldog beanie hat was earned by an attendee with a learner in Ms. Plaschko's class.

7. **Adjourn**
    a. The next PTO meeting is scheduled Tuesday, May 12 at 6:00 PM.
    b. Anna Wishcer motioned to adjourn the meeting, Jessica Offerman seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 PM.

Minutes submitted by Jessica Offerman, Board Secretary.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Create flyer with parent volunteer sign-up link to share with parents (Emily Gerde)
2. Create PTO board member application form (Jessica Offerman)