Independence Elementary PTO

Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Attendance: Anna Wischer (Board VP), Courtney Rinkenberger (Board President), Jessica Offerman (Board Treasurer), Emily Gerde (Board President), Lacey Williams (Board Member), Kaye Fischer (Principal), Kristi Blanc (Board Secretary), 1st grade teachers: Nicole Chaput, Ashley Nettleton, Kaitlin Urbach, Jerome Malone, Matt Evensen (Librarian), Justine Evanson, Katelin Schwanke, Kelsey Olson, Andrea Hein, Caitlin Mataic, Morgan Matzke, Obeet Johnson

1. **Call to order**
    a. Board President Emily Gerde called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

2. **Welcome and Introductions**
    a. All attendees introduced themselves.
3. **Guest Speakers: First Grade**
    Teachers shared the first two weeks were focused on procedures and getting to know students. Started curriculum after the second week. A new reading rotation is in place, providing more hands-on learning to help students succeed. CLI (collaborative literacy). Teachers shared that last year they requested flexible seating but this year they're focusing on STEM, STEAM, inside recess resources and materials for students prior to their academic work to prevent students from roaming the hallways, getting unnecessary things from their backpacks, ect. Helps encourage more science. Asked for $75/class. A total of $150 will be provided for teachers to use on materials.
    Kristi Blanc approved of $150 spending; Jessica Offerman seconded

4. **Board Reports**
    a. Principal Kaye Fischer
        i. Homecoming is next week. Will not participate in the HS dress up but student council members will come up with their own
        ii. School goals: 2-5 grade will be doing a math & reading assessments; 1st grade will be doing math assessment
        iii. Counselor is back; Student leader jobs are set to take place, providing older students (4-5 grades) to help out with younger grades, picking up trash throughout the school, lunch helpers, locating lost & found items, ect.
        iv. Focus as a whole school to be MORE visible with a focus on academic and wellness. Goal for school to be 85% growth in academics and 90% on safety. Teachers make sure students feel safe rather it is drop off/pick up routines, understanding rules and procedures. Measurements will be

done in different ways. Students will be measuring their own behavior goals along with academic goals.

b. President-Emily Gerde
    i. Reviews
        1. Thanked Courtney (previous president) with flowers
        2. BTS Bash Review: felt it went well. Successful drunk tank ending with $1250 total; estimating $200 from bulldog beanies (10 sold). Passed out roughly 430 tickets for pizza, double from last year. Students enjoyed the foam machine. Though it was more expensive than the balloon guy, the outcome was more successful. Pizza delivered prior to event starting, much smoother to not have to wait
        3. T-Shirts Review: a little chaotic in the beginning since not all shirts sizing were accounted for. Ended up being able to provide each student a new shirt to wear for school wide pictures along with a walkathon. Shared ideas of a better way to collect sizing for next year stating parents will be writing their child's name along with size when providing how their child will be getting home. This way teachers can physically see who provided their tshirt size. In future-4th grade students will do a drawing contest for the tshirt-1 winner will be chosen and that will be the drawing for the t-shirts for 2027-2028. The contest will take place at the same time as the year book cover contest.
        4. The Read-A-Thon Fundraiser idea was brought up. Felt like asking parents for too much money with all the fundraiser but collected info in case any changes occur in the future. Most felt keeping the walkathon and not do a read a thon

c. Anna Wischer-vice president
    i. No report

d. Kristi Blanc- secretary
    i. No report

e. Jessica Offerman-treasurer
    i. Shared starting budget. $3000 more than last year. No bounce house last year helped a lot with saving money for this year. Good standing point. Hoping to have a good turn up for this year's walkathon to do as much as possible for teachers, students and school.
    ii. Back to school bash, popsicle at the playground was a success.
    iii. Will review all the fundings and will know more after the walkathon

f. Courtney Rinkenberger & Lacey Williams: director
    i. No report

5. **Upcoming Business**
    a. Walk-a-thon will be held during students specials on September 17th. Parents are more welcomed and encouraged to volunteer to cheer on our learners. Flyers went home and 99 pledges are active and donations are already coming in. Goal: $2026 for 2026! PTO will provide small water bottles along with bracelets and snacks for students during the walk. TO DO: need to find a solution on outlet for the blowup arch
    b. Dine to Donate: none for this month. Skate city on september 30th-free for independence family pizza and water, but it is not free to skate. Changes with the new owner and now 75 people need to attend to make a profit for the school. Other months for dine to donate is being prep. Some ideas are NRG and Chucky Cheese (opening soon)
    c. School Pictures: September 29th. PTO members will be there to help. Kristi will call twisted J (coffee truck) to see if it can be available for teachers/parents to order during the morning for national coffee day.
    d. October upcoming: halloween dance/conferences: conferences will be held October 12-13th. PTO will provide meals for teachers. A page will be set up for parents to volunteer to provide drinks, snacks and desserts for teachers. Kristi will call some businesses asking for donations to provide meals for teachers. Halloween dance (october 29th)-PTO members will do inventory to see what other items will be needed.

6. **Old Business**
    a. No old business was discussed.

7. **Popcorn Party and Giftcard Drawing**
    a. Random drawings were held with those present:
        i. Popcorn parties were won by attendees for their students in Mrs. Trowbride and Johnson classrooms.
        ii. Target gift card was earned for Natalie Hines (Sano-sp class).
        iii. Popcorn will take place this Friday September 11th for the winners along with a walkathon class winner
8. **Adjourn**
    a. Courtney Rinkenberger motioned to adjourn the meeting, Anna Wischer seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Minutes submitted by Kristi Blanc, Board Secretary.