

Independence Elementary PTO

Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Attendance: Jessica Offerman (Board Treasurer), Courtney Rinkenberger (Board Member), Emily Gerde (Board President), Kristi Blanc (Board Secretary), Anna Wischer (Board Vice President), Kaye Fischer (Principal), Tori Dosch, Justin Evanson, Andrea Hein, Trisha Moe, Courtney Lepisto, Amina Sharifm, Kelsey Olson, Gloria Ibanzez Malone, Hannah Kranz, Gabby Johnson,

1. Call to order

- a. Meeting led by president Emily Gerde at 6:03 pm

2. Welcome and Introductions

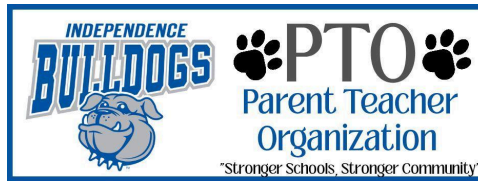
- a. Welcome message and introductions of attendees

3. Guest Speakers: Fourth grade teachers plus Leposito (5th grade)

- a. ELA: students are participating in book clubs and reading mysteries
- b. Focus on working collaboratively in small groups
- c. MATH: working on standards involving addition and subtraction
- d. Fact fluency and comparison skills
- e. SCIENCE: Friday's science focus
- f. Current topics include plants and animals
- g. WRITING: text structure, compare/contrast, research based writing
- h. Compassion and Team building:
 - i. Focus on team building and togetherness
 - ii. Students are reflecting on themselves and their experiences
 - iii. A campfire activity is planned at the end with a special message
- i. Discussion of upcoming speaker/paying for volunteer students lunch
 - i. Discussion of approximately \$2,000 for speaker to come to the school
 - ii. Speaker name is Drew and Sheyenne HS lunch for students was also discussed
 - iii. More information to come about the event
 - iv. A request will be submitted when additional details are available.

4. Principal Report: Kay Fischer

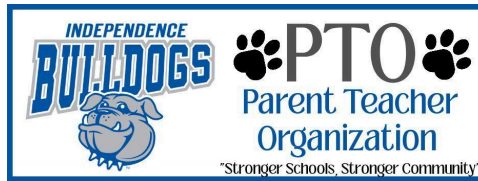
- a. parent/teacher conferences are upcoming (next week)
- b. No school Thursday and Friday
- c. Book fair is being set up for conferences
- d. Shared school's vision: who/what are we at Independence.
 - i. What makes school safe & how can we make it safer. For example, keeping it ordering and students off roaming the hallways
 - ii. Classroom buddies: older/younger, once a month meet up. Buddy meeting was met



- iii. Surveys were sent to parents. Homelife & school life could be different; asking for feedback and teaching students to understand rule changes and making those connections with students.
- iv. Discussed moving away from BOTB. The goal is to bring more enrichment and diversity to the books offered.

5. Board Reports

- a. President-Emily Gerde
 - i. Walkathon Review & stated it went very well
 - 1. New arch and music were a great addition
 - 2. Bracelets ran out again; 5th graders donated theirs and more have already been ordered for next year
 - 3. Some students received multiple bracelets from different volunteers
 - 4. Snacks for the walkathon went well
 - 5. Moving forward: bring bracelets helper number down, increase cheering/encouragement from volunteers, encourage students to ring water bottles
 - a. Prize school wide drawings will be held at intervals, with the top two winners announced a day/two later
 - 6. Reached our goal for the walkathon
 - a. Prizes went well; all but 5 classes got popcorn for meeting \$1000 request
 - b. PTO will pay for milk for the winners
 - c. Slushy party planned for the 8th of october
 - d. Walkathon shirts were a hit!
 - ii. Pizza/Skate night: skate city promoted free pizza and soda
 - 1. Approximately 50 students attended/75 were expected to meet kick back criterias
 - iii. School Photos Review: went well. Using the classroom was smooth and photographers were quick
 - iv. National Custodian Day: October 2nd. PTO gave them a small gift as a small thank you. They appreciated them
- b. Vice President-Anna Wischer: no report
- c. Treasurer-Jessica Offerman
 - 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.
 - ii. Idea about raising the charge for yearbook
 - iii. Kaye (principal) suggested reaching out to the music teacher for help.
- d. Secretary-Kristi Blanc



- i. Able to get Deeks pizza to donate 23 pizzas for conference night
- ii. Planning to create a decorative photo “selfie station” for the Halloween family dance.

e. Director Courtney Rinkenberger: no report

6. Upcoming Business/Events:

1. Conferences:

- a. Conference meals will be provided both nights for staff, including Pizza (donated from Deeks), Olive Garden soup and salad. 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 and we have almost all items covered.
- b. Dine to Donate: Slim Chickens will be Tuesday during the conference. We get 50% kickback

2. Upcoming Events

- a. Halloween Family Dance scheduled Oct 29th from 6-7:30. Volunteers are all set
 - i. Will order Deeks pizza (approx 30. Kristi and Courtney will assist) , candies and glow items(anna will order items). Discussed checking concession/candy policies and potentially cutting down on candy.
 - 1. Sell bulldog buddies \$20/dog
 - 2. Kristi will order and create a backdrop for picture opportunity during the night

3. Turkey Bingo is planned for November 10. No school November 11

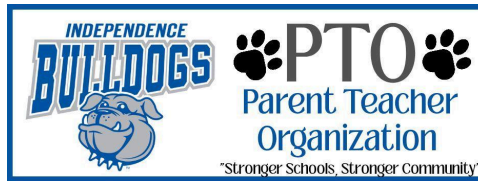
- a. Discussed selling pumpkin pie squares, popcorn, water, bulldog
- b. giftcards , turkeys, and pies for winner prizes
- c. *To-dos: Reach out to the previous turkey sponsor to inquire about donating turkeys again for the event (Kristi) purchase pies from costco (Anna)*

4. 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: Jessica will work with Kaye for the list that staff filled out regarding their favorites*

5. PTO technology: digital payment

- a. Discussed getting wifi for the card payment options



- b. Digital payment is convenience discussed
- 6. Parent voice question and concern regarding student council. Teachers shared that approximately 80 students are interested; student leaders selected. Everyone who applied receive a position

7. New Business

- a. Funds requests
 - i. Speech Pathologist requisitions vocab bundles and adaptive books in a form of \$90 and \$127
 - 1. Jessica Offerman motioned to approve Courtney Rinkenberger seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**
 - ii. 5th grade Leposito requested headphones due to new ipad and headphone from home is not compatible
 - 1. Discussed sending home a message to parents about the headphone issues. Discussed most parents probably does not realize that their headphone from home does not have the right piece to connect to ipads
 - 2. Shared perhaps PTO purchasing the attachments for those who does not have it verse buying the headphones for all
 - 3. Jessica Offerman motion to approve if message to parents does not work. Anna Wischer second

8. Popcorn Party and Giftcard Drawing

- a. Random drawings were held with those present:
 - i. Popcorn parties won for Dosch (4th grade) & Sanow
 - ii. A giftcard won for a student in Trowbridge class

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.

Minutes submitted by Kristi Blanc, Board Secretary.