

Ben Franklin Elementary PTO

September 2021 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Wednesday, September 22, 2021

WHERE: BF All Purpose Room & on Zoom **Facilitator(s):** Bonne Giglio

PTO BOARD: Bonne Giglio, Sandy Cayo, Donna Erichsen, Nicole Bottrel, Kate Schumacher, and Megan Coopersmith

ATTENDEES: Principal Jay Billy, PTO Board, BF Teachers, Ben Franklin Parents/Guardians, Karen Faiman from LTEF

START TIME: 7:04 **END TIME:** 7:50pm

Topic and Spokesperson	Discussion Points
<p>Introductions Bonne Giglio</p>	<p>Board members introduced themselves Bonne Giglio-PTO President Sandy Cayo-Vice President 1 Donna Erichsen-Vice President 2 Kate Schumacher-Treasurer Nicole Bottrel- Corresponding Secretary (sends email newsletters) Megan Coopersmith-Recording Secretary (social media, website, meeting minutes)</p> <p>LTEF (Lawrence Township Education Foundation) -Karen Faiman from LTEF spoke -LTEF is in its 30th year of existence as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that raises money to give back to the Lawrence school system -LTEF gives around \$200,000 a year and a total of \$4.2 million dollars has been given over the last 30 years of its existence -How it works: Teachers and educators apply for projects and programs during a grant cycle. They can apply for a project that is a few hundred dollars or up to a few thousand dollars. Parents can also get involved and partner with educators or administrators if they have an idea for a project for a teacher to apply for during the cycle. -If anyone has questions on how to get involved, you can email Karen Faiman at Karen@ltefnj.org -For more information about LTEF, please visit their website at: https://www.ltefnj.org/ -To donate to LTEF: https://www.ltefnj.org/donate</p> <p>-Bonne Giglio is also on the LTEF board so you can contact her for questions as well: bfptorocks@gmail.com -Upcoming LTEF events:</p>

<p>Introductions Bonne Giglio cont.</p>	<p>Friday, Oct. 8th is “Let’s Get Trivial” which is a virtual event Handbag Bingo is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 25th at Rider</p> <p>LTEF links: Website: https://www.ltefnj.org/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/LTEFNJ/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/LTEFNJ?s=20 Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ltefnj/</p>
<p>PTO President’s Update Bonne Giglio</p>	<p>-The PTO board is mostly new this year (Megan Coopersmith, the Recording Secretary, is the only returning board member from last year)</p> <p>New this year: -every parent/guardian is now an automatic member of the PTO. There is no fee to join the BF PTO so everyone has a voice -every family will receive a free digital school directory so families can contact other parents in their child’s class -PTO is trying to eliminate waste and trying to cut down on papers so no more paper flyers will be sent home in students’ folders. Instead, our Corresponding Secretary, Nicole Bottrel, will be sending weekly email newsletters with important information. School information and PTO events can also be found on our website, Facebook, and Twitter.</p> <p>Homeroom Coordinator: -unlike in a typical year, Homeroom Coordinators will not be going into the classroom this year. There is a Zoom info session scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 29th at 7pm with information and ideas for how the Homeroom Coordinators can still have a fun-filled year for the students even without needing to enter the classroom! *For security purposes, Zoom links cannot be included in these meeting minutes. Zoom links can be found in the PTO weekly newsletter emails, as well as Mr. Billy’s newsletters.</p> <p>Survey of Families and Teachers: -a Google survey was sent out to families and teachers. The PTO got a ton of feedback and it is a goal for the PTO to try to fulfill some teacher and family requests this year</p> <p>Popsicles on the Playground events: The Popsicles of the Playground events in August went great and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves!</p> <p>Chalk the Walk: Chalk the Walk was held the night before school started. There was a great turnout and it was a nice start to the year. Spirit Wear clothing was sold at the event as well so many families got to take home shirts that night.</p>

<p>PTO President's Update cont.</p> <p>Bonne Giglio</p>	<p>Spirit Wear Sales: The PTO has received a lot of orders for Spirit Wear!! It is exciting and it looks like most kids will have shirts to wear for the first Spirit Day on Oct 1st</p> <p>Coin Wars: -A lot of money is in the jars- especially paper bills! Keep the change/bills coming! -Coin Wars ends on September 30th. -The winning grade will receive extra recess and popsicles with Mr. Billy.</p>
<p>Principal Update Mr. Billy</p>	<p>-PTO meeting has 35 people on zoom and 15 people in person</p> <p>-Great start to the year and parents are doing a great job of keeping their kids home if they don't feel well and getting them tested before sending them back to school. So far we are doing well, but it is going to be a long year until the vaccine comes out for the kids. Some kids at Ben Franklin are quarantining right now because of close contacts with positive cases, but it isn't a lot of kids so far. Mr. Billy again repeated he appreciated that parents are keeping the kids home whenever they seem a little off or not feeling well and are getting them tested when needed before sending them back to school. He noted that soon the flu will start up as well.</p> <p>The school is trying its best to keep distance in classrooms. Kids have been great with masks and keeping them on. Some kids have needed reminders to lift the mask up to cover their noses, but it hasn't been due to disrespect, but rather the children focusing on the school activity and not realizing the mask slipped down.</p> <p>-check emails from the school. He understands that a lot of emails are sent, but most of the time the emails have the information a parent is seeking to find out. For instance, an explanation of what happens when there is a quarantine can be found in his weekly newsletter. Most of the time his newsletter has fun stuff, PTO stuff, and upcoming events so be sure to read it each week</p> <p>-Kindergarten parents and parents new to the school: please reach out to your child's teacher first to try to get a question answered.</p> <p>-School starts at 8:45 so please make sure your child arrives on time. 3 lates equals 1 absence. If your child is coming in late because of a doctor appointment, that's ok just please let the school know.</p> <p>-Mr. Billy thanked the PTO for the start of school year events and thanked the PTO for the decorations for the first day of school. He said it got everyone excited to start the year!</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Treasurer's Report</p> <p>Kate Schumacher</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Treasurer's Report: September 2021</p> <p>Beginning Checking Balance as of August 2021: \$10,015 Cashbox Balance: \$100 <u>Ending Checking Account Balance as of 9/18/21: \$12,499</u></p> <p><u>Withdrawals:</u></p> <p>Popsicles for Popsicles on Playground events \$100 Chalk for Chalk the Walk event \$100 Back to School & Teacher Appreciation (stock teacher fridge with food & drinks, decorations) \$500 Spirit Wear Initial Purchase (shirts,magnets,decals) \$1500 <u>Total Withdrawals: \$2,100</u></p> <p><u>Deposits:</u></p> <p>Spirit Wear Sales \$1500 Annual Appeal donations \$2900 <u>Total Deposits: \$4,400</u></p> <p>-Kate mentioned it is taking some time to get everything in order and accounts transferred and Quickbooks set up - People have been sending in donations and Kate is so proud and happy. She noted that the donations are at \$2,900 and she thanked everyone for donating</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Committee Reports</p> <p>Event chairs</p>	<p>Student Directory and Email Newsletter</p> <p>-Nicole Bottrel spoke -The school directory will be free for all families -There is a link in the PTO newsletter for anyone to opt-out of having their email address or phone number listed in the directory. The deadline to opt-out is September 30th. -So far two newsletters have been emailed this school year. Nicole is having a lot of issues with emails getting bounced back because she is emailing over 500 email addresses so sometimes she ends up sending emails from her personal account too. She apologized to anyone that has received duplicate newsletter emails. She is looking at options on how to fix these issues going forward. -If anyone is not receiving the weekly newsletters, please email Nicole at bfptocorrespondingsecretary@gmail.com or anyone else on the PTO board</p>

**Committee
Reports
cont.**

Event chairs

Spirit Wear

- Bonne Giglio spoke
- All orders should be delivered to teachers' mailboxes for distribution by 9/30
- There are 68 unique orders so far so it's taking time to distribute
- For this spirit wear sale, the PTO bought the items so they would be on hand for distribution. The plan for the next Spirit Wear order is to have a bunch of designs for families to order from and once all orders are received, the PTO will then place the orders with the company

Fall Fest

- Megan Coopersmith spoke
- Fall Fest is scheduled to take place outside on Sunday, October 17th in the afternoon

Book Fair

- Bonne Giglio spoke
- Book Fair is scheduled for October 27, 28, 29
- It will be set up in the side parking lot outside and will be open for sales during the day with children, as well as sales after school and evening

Trunk or Treat

- Nicole Bottrel spoke
- Trunk or Treat is scheduled for Friday, October 29th in the parking lot
- A flyer will be sent in coming weeks in newsletter asking for cars to decorate
- This event is open to BF families only

Teacher Appreciation

- Sandy Cayo spoke
- every year there is a meal for all the Teachers and Staff that is sponsored by each grade level
- The dates for the teacher appreciation meals sponsored by grades are as follows:
 - Pre K and K sponsored lunch for all teachers and staff: Nov. 18
 - 1st grade sponsored breakfast for all teachers and staff: Feb. 10
 - 2nd grade sponsored breakfast for all teachers and staff: March 18
 - 3rd Grade sponsored lunch for all teachers and staff: April 7
- Sandy will be looking for volunteers from each grade level to help plan the meals. She will reach out to Homeroom Coordinators first.
- There is also a Teacher Appreciation Week in May as well

Inclusion for Special Needs children and families

- Sandy Cayo spoke
- PTO is focusing on making sure events are inclusive by being mindful of having sensory appropriate areas for kids that have issues with loud noises. If you know of anything else that is needed to be more inclusive at our events, please reach out to Sandy at sandycayo27@gmail.com

<p>Committee Reports cont.</p> <p>Event chairs</p>	<p>-We want to be equitable and ensure all students have access to all the programs at Ben Franklin</p> <p>Homeroom Coordinators</p> <p>-Donna Erichsen spoke</p> <p>-Homeroom Coordinator emails will be going out soon</p> <p>-There is a Homeroom Coordinator Info Session Zoom meeting on Wednesday, September 29th at 7pm for anyone needing more information on what it will entail to be a Homeroom Coordinator this year, as well as some guidance and suggestions on things that Coordinators can do this year for the classroom.</p> <p>*For security purposes, Zoom links cannot be included in these meeting minutes. Zoom links can be found in the PTO weekly newsletter emails, as well as Mr. Billy's newsletters.</p> <p>-The plan is to have one or two Homeroom Coordinators per class with additional Helpers</p> <p>-Some classes still do not have any Homeroom Coordinator volunteers. Please reach out if you'd like to volunteer as a Homeroom Coordinator. The classes still in need of a Coordinator are:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Pesce, DiCuio, Vinch, Taglairino, Fredericks, Basmagy, Donohue/Grzesiak, and Brackett</p>
<p>New Business</p> <p>Bonne Giglio</p>	<p>Fall Fest: October 17th</p> <p>Scholastic Book Fair – October 27th-29th</p> <p>Truck or Treat – October 29th</p> <p>Dine to Donate -- need a volunteer to chair this event</p> <p>Dine to Donate:</p> <p>-This is a fun and easy volunteer position. Simply pick a date with a local restaurant and ask if they're willing to do a Dine to Donate. Sometimes they even provide the flyer to use!</p> <p>-Looking for a volunteer to chair this. Please contact Sandy at sandycayo27@gmail.com if interested</p>
<p>Questions or Comments</p> <p>All</p>	<p>-Mr. Billy said the Halloween parade this year will be done by grade level to keep the crowds smaller for social distancing. Therefore, there will be several smaller parades. Mr. Billy will send a schedule and it will run throughout the day on Friday, October 29th.</p> <p>SEPAG (Special Education Parent Advisory Group)</p> <p>-Margarita Baldeo, a fellow BF parent, spoke</p> <p>-SEPAG is a parent driven group that provides requests for the district to make changes to help support children and to make sure they are receiving services they need. It wants everyone to be success and not excluded and is working hard to make this happen</p> <p>-SEPAG is also educating parents on how to help students at home and will have parent series training monthly and will have presenters throughout the year. They are asking for input from parents in training topics they want to help their child be successful</p>

	<p>-SEPAG will be doing activities that are Special Ed friendly and will also have a table at the Main Street festival on October 9th.</p> <p>-If you have a specific question about your child, please email them privately, and not post it publicly in order to keep the matter private for your child.</p> <p>SEPAG links: Twitter: https://twitter.com/LTPS_SEPAG?s=20 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1470586423309379/</p>
<p>Announcements</p> <p>Bonne Giglio</p>	<p>Next PTO meeting: October 18th at 7pm</p> <p>Don't forget to set your AmazonSmile Account to benefit BF PTO! more information can be found at: http://bfpto.org/donate/</p>
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>Thank you all for coming!</p>

Next PTO Meeting is October 18th at 7pm

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Ben Franklin PTO Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BFLawrNj>

Ben Franklin PTO Twitter: [@bfpto](#)

Ben Franklin PTO website: <http://bfpto.org/>