

Ben Franklin Elementary PTO

September 2023 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Monday, September 18, 2023

WHERE: BF Library **Facilitator(s):** Megan Coopersmith

PTO BOARD: Megan Coopersmith, Petra Crevier, Rachele Picarello, Nicole Bottrel, Ilana Hernandez, and Kristen Paladino

ATTENDEES: Principal Geoff Hewitt, PTO Board, Ben Franklin Parents and Guardians

START TIME: 7:03pm **END TIME:** 8:09pm

Topic and Spokesperson	Discussion Points
<p>Introductions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Megan Coopersmith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome to new families and Welcome Back to returning families! - Megan is the new PTO president this year. It is her 5th year on the board. - Board introduced themselves: Megan Coopersmith - PTO President, Petra Crevier - 1st VP, Rachele Picarello - 2nd VP, Nicole Bottrel - Corresponding Secretary, Ilana Hernandez - Recording Secretary, Kristen Paladino - Treasurer
<p>Principal Update</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mr. Hewitt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great turnout to the first PTO meeting of the year. - It is Mr. Hewitt's first year at BF. It has been a smooth opening to the year. He has been getting to know staff, building, and students, and he's enjoying it - Amazing how involved the PTO is at the school; the home/school connection is important. - Back to School Night is this Thurs. Sept. 21 from 6pm to 8pm. It'll be an open house format to give families the chance to see a day in the life of BF students.
<p>PTO President Update</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Megan Coopersmith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PTO is a non-profit and exclusively run by parent volunteers. - The purpose of the PTO is to provide activities and enrichment to students and families to enjoy. This includes putting on events on the weekends and after school and helping the staff get what they need (i.e. supplies, homeroom coordinators/helpers). - The PTO is also responsible for raising money, which is vital for funding the things we do (i.e. free events, assemblies, field trips, busing for field trips, etc.).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every year we spend around \$25k on these activities. Examples include: \$1600 on free events, \$2000 on assemblies, money is spent on teacher grants, educational programs (chicken hatchings, trout), \$4000 on busing for field trips (already paid for this year), \$3.5k for field trips, \$5k on books, and more
<p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Popsicles on the Playground</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Took place last week of August - There was a big turnout; lots of people were present. Most of the Kindergarten teachers were there. It might be because Mr. Hewitt was present. <p><u>Chalk the Walk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Took place the day before the first day of school - The event was fun. Kids got to make drawings on the pavement. <p><u>Welcome Back Baskets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Baskets were distributed to each classroom with items like first aid kit, disinfecting wipes, crayons, markers, etc. to stock classroom for beginning of the year - The teachers' lounge was also restocked with food and snacks for the staff - Pictures can be found on social media and newsletter <p><u>Welcome Back Gift for Students</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Erasers were given to each student as a gift for the first day of school. - A token to let them know we're thinking of them.
<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Coin Wars</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicole Bottrel spoke. - Event is taking place between Sept. 18 and Oct. 6 - Buckets for each grade are set out in front of the all purpose room at the main entrance of the school - The kids can bring in any loose change or bills to put in the bucket assigned to their grade - The winning grade gets an extra recess, popsicles and pajama day. <p><u>Dine to Donate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - Explained that the Dine to Donate is a fundraising event where restaurants in the community (usually in Lawrence) agree to give a percentage of their proceeds to our PTO on a specific day. It brings these restaurants business and allows for the school to build community outside of the school building.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First Dine to Donate is at Candela Brothers on Sept. 26 from 11am to 9pm - The owners are nice and excited. They loved the event last year. - Remember to bring your flyer; not all places require it but have it handy just in case. <p><u>Ice Cream Social</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The event is taking place Sept. 27 from 6pm to 7:30pm in the All Purpose Room at BF. - This year, it will be a FREE event. It was \$2 last year but local businesses donated ice cream and water ice this time around. - Flyers are coming home this week. It can also be found in the newsletter and FB page. - Mr. Hewitt and other teachers will come and serve. <p><u>Fall Fest</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Fall Fest is Sunday, Oct. 15. - There will be lots of pumpkins, classic games (can knockdown), prizes and crafts. There will possibly be a Magic Show and mummy wrapping the principal, which is still to be determined. - Typically, the event is in front of the school (BF loop) if the weather is nice; however, if there is bad weather, it'll take place inside. - Entry fee: approx. \$5 per child; free for adults <p><u>Trunk or Treat</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicole Bottrel spoke. - Trunk or Treat is Friday, Oct. 27 in the BF parking lot. - It is a free event for BF families and siblings. - Looking for volunteers to decorate trunks and distribute candy and non-candy to children. - Signup Genius will be created; volunteers are welcome to signup early via the volunteer request that was posted on Facebook page. - There will be a freeze dance inside to allow for kids to get energy out. - Rain Date will be for Oct. 28.
<p style="text-align: center;">Updates</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Volunteer Request for Help</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - A goal has been set to get a lot of volunteers this year as it has been difficult recruiting volunteers over the past year. For events to happen, the PTO needs an increase in volunteers. It's a great opportunity to have families partake in the school community and the kids enjoy being a part of the events. - Online link is posted on Facebook to volunteer for specific events; paper form is available as well. - Few events are still in need of parents to volunteer as chairs. - Signup Genius is used to arrange events; volunteers can sign up for time slots. There isn't a requirement to stay the whole time. Volunteers are welcome to bring their children.

Direct Appeal

- Kristen Paladino spoke.
- Started after COVID
- A letter is sent out to families asking for money to fund events.
- So far, PTO has collected half of what was collected last year; only 10 days into school

Teacher Clubs

- Megan Coopersmith spoke.
- Teacher Clubs signup begins Tuesday, Sept. 19
- PTO organizes after school clubs created by teachers each year. There is a fee. Teachers get part of the money collected; PTO gets the other portion.
- Email was sent out with [club offerings](#)
- 10 offerings this season; super popular clubs fill up very fast - website crashed last year
- Volunteer helpers (18+) are needed. Helpers are guaranteed a spot for their child in the club.
- Volunteers would have to arrive at the school at 3:10pm to get a list of kids, check in the kids and watch over them until teachers pick them up usually around 3:45pm. Volunteers will get a \$10 reimbursement at the end of the club cycle.
- If a club fills up before you can sign up your child, keep in mind that the club may be offered again at another time. Teacher clubs typically run 3x a year (fall, winter & spring).

Spirit Wear

- Rachelle Picarello spoke.
- Forms are now due Sept. 26; forms say Sept. 25 but there's no school
- Black and white forms were sent home. If you'd like to see the items in color, check the PTO [website](#).
- Keep in mind the sizing chart is provided by the manufacturer.
- Right now, we have 28 orders in total.

- Mr. Hewitt mentioned that students wear their spirit wear shirts often. Spirit wear can be worn at monthly assemblies. The first one of the year is Sept. 29. Students who don't have spirit wear can wear blue and white (school colors).

Homeroom Coordinator/Helper

- Rachelle Picarello spoke.
- Signup ended Sept. 11
- Most of the classes have been assigned their coordinators and helpers. Pre-K and self-contained classes don't have anyone assigned; however, teachers of these classes typically didn't want help in that way in the past. Rachelle will double check with them.
- The class directory will be sent to coordinators and helpers soon. It only has parent email addresses and will be distributed before the whole school directory.
- Families are able to opt out if they don't want their information in the directory. They can fill out this [opt out form](#) for the school wide one and email their homeroom coordinator to opt out of the class specific directory.

<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>Kristen Paladino</p>	<p>*Please scroll to the end of the Meeting Minutes for Kristen's Treasurer's Report</p>
<p>Questions or Comments</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Q: What is Signup Genius?</p> <p>A: Signup Genius is a website that people can use to create sign up sheets for time slots, events, or items needed for events.</p> <p>Q: How to donate for direct appeal?</p> <p>A: Direct appeal donations can be made by sending in cash or a check made out to BFPTO. Presently, the suggested amount is \$40; however, families are welcome to donate whatever amount they feel comfortable with.</p> <p>Q: When are field trips? Who decides where the children go?</p> <p>A: Every year each grade gets a field trip, usually in the spring. The teachers of each grade decide together.</p> <p>Q: When will the BF directory be available?</p> <p>A: The PTO has the directory that was last updated in August. Due to it being the start of the year, new students enroll often. Presently, we are waiting for the most updated BF directory. The directory shows the email address and phone number of the parents of each student. An opt out option is available. The PTO is waiting to give families the opportunity to make this choice before we can finalize the BF directory and make it available.</p> <p>Q: How much time do students get for recess?</p> <p>A: Students are only given 20 minutes for recess and 20 minutes for eating. This is because the school only has a two hour time period for all students to eat lunch. It provides enough time for students to transition in and out of the cafeteria and for tables to be wiped down.</p> <p>Q: Do we have to use the PaySchool Central app to fund our children's meal account?</p> <p>A: No, families are welcome to send in a check to school specifying that it is for lunch. Fees won't be applied.</p> <p>Q: Can we get more information on the attendance policy?</p> <p>A: The district mandates that there be 181 days of instructive time at school. If a child is absent for too many days, parents may receive warning letters. Most absences are</p>

	<p>unexcused; however, absences related to religious holidays and Take Your Child to Work Day are excused. More information can be found in the school handbook.</p> <p>Q: Are there programs that provide child care to working parents on the days that school isn't in session?</p> <p>A: The YMCA has a program that families can enroll their children into that provides this service.</p> <p>Thank you all for coming and we hope to see you again at the next meeting!</p>
Next Meeting	Monday, Oct. 16 at 7pm - in person & on Zoom

<p>9/18/23 Meeting Summary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replenished Field Trip Bus Fund (\$4000) 2. Welcome Back Baskets & Stock Fridge for Teachers (\$502); Welcome Basket for Mr. Hewitt (\$45); Chalk the Walk & Popsicles on the Playground (\$150); Back to School Decorations (\$43) 3. Operating Expenses Include: Website Hosting (\$144), Supplies for Student Welcome Packets (\$44) and Zoom Paid Membership (\$160) 4. "Other Expenses" include Teacher Club payments from last year, \$75 for Kasun Retirement Basket 5. Deposits: \$1670 in donations, \$714 for Spirit Wear Sales @ Popsicles Event, \$100 from a Dine to Donate in June.
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BF PTO 2023-2024

Budget Categories

Income Categories	22-23 Actual	23-24 Recomme	Actual 2023-2024	Dif
Cash Donations	\$ 3,222.26	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,670.00	\$ (1,330.00)
Coin Wars Income	\$ 1,226.75	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ (1,000.00)
Color Run Income	\$ 3,246.30	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ (2,000.00)
Dine to Donate Income	\$ 1,750.58	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ (1,500.00)
End of Year Carnival Income	\$ 5,054.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -	\$ (4,500.00)
Fall Fest Income	\$ 1,454.50	\$ 1,250.00	\$ -	\$ (1,250.00)
Field Trip Offset Income	\$ 1,587.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ (1,500.00)
Fundraising Activity Income	\$ 3,629.61	\$ 2,600.00	\$ -	\$ (2,600.00)
Insurance Refund/Reimbursements	\$ 1,590.20		\$ -	\$ -
No-Cost Fundraisers	\$ 143.49	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ (150.00)
Other Income	\$ 440.05	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Raffle/Gaming Income	\$ 351.50	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ (300.00)
Scholastic Book Fair Income	\$ 8,869.06	\$ 8,800.00	\$ -	\$ (8,800.00)
Spirit Wear Income	\$ 9,643.41	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 714.40	\$ (8,285.60)
Teacher Clubs Income	\$ 36,808.55	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -	\$ (30,000.00)
Third Grade Party Fundraising	\$ 1,074.11	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ (1,000.00)
Trenton Thunder Income	\$ 2,895.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ -	\$ (2,750.00)
Winter Event Income		\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Expense Categories	Actual 2022-2023	Recommended	Actual 2023-2024	Dif
Assemblies	590	2000	0	2000
Bank Fees		\$ 160.00	\$ 18.60	
Coin Wars Expenses	\$ 46.77	\$ 50.00	\$ -	\$ 50.00
Color Run Expenses	\$ 712.90	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Day of Service	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
End of Year Carnival Expenses	\$ 2,944.42	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00
Fall Fest Expenses	\$ 1,175.39	\$ 1,250.00	\$ -	\$ 1,250.00
Field Trips	\$ 3,526.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Fundraising Activity Expenses	\$ 1,056.20	\$ 1,550.00	\$ -	\$ 1,550.00
Insurance Expenses	\$ 2,082.83	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Misc Family School Activities	\$ 426.95	\$ 700.00	\$ 149.39	\$ 550.61
Misc In-School Activities Expenses	\$ 87.36		\$ -	\$ -
Operating Expenses	\$ 593.22	\$ 825.00	\$ 348.02	\$ 476.98
Other Expenses	\$ 1,239.10		\$ 1,652.27	\$ (1,652.27)
PTO Gift to School		\$ 1,200.00	\$ -	\$ 1,200.00
Scholarships	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Scholastic Book Fair Expenses	\$ 6,865.49	\$ 7,400.00	\$ -	\$ 7,400.00
Screen Free Week Expenses	\$ 396.71	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Spirit Wear Expense	\$ 8,421.03	\$ 8,500.00	\$ -	\$ 8,500.00
Student Appreciation		\$ 500.00	\$ 42.96	\$ 457.04
Teacher Appreciation Activity	\$ 3,034.94	\$ 3,350.00	\$ 548.18	\$ 2,801.82
Teacher Club Expenses	\$ 21,417.81	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 191.94	\$ 21,808.06
Teacher Request Fund	\$ 1,495.24	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
Third Grade End of Year	\$ 5,073.06	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	\$ 4,000.00
Trenton Thunder Expenses	\$ 1,848.00	\$ 1,750.00	\$ -	\$ 1,750.00
Trunk or Treat	\$ 103.29	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00
Volunteer Appreciation	\$ 50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Winter Event	\$ 616.94	\$ 750.00	\$ -	\$ 750.00
Income Total	\$ 82,986.37	\$ 69,550.00	\$ 2,484.40	\$ (66,865.60)
Expenses Total	\$ 61,385.42	\$ 71,135.00	\$ 6,951.36	\$ 60,892.24
NET	\$ 21,600.95	\$ (1,585.00)	\$ (4,466.96)	\$ (127,757.84)

Teacher Appreciation Monthly		
September	\$ 45.30	Welcome Basket for Hewitt
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
Total	\$ 45.30	
Budget	\$ 1,000.00	
Remaining	\$ 954.70	