

Ben Franklin Elementary PTO

March 2024 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Thursday, March 21, 2024

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: 7:04 pm **END TIME:** 7:54pm

Topic and Spokesperson	Discussion Points
<p>Introductions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Megan Coopersmith</p>	<p>- 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>
<p>Principal Update</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mr. Hewitt</p>	<p>- St. Baldrick's took place this month. This was Team Ben Franklin's 14th year participating in this fundraising event for childhood cancer research. A number of students, teachers and staff raised money and went bald to raise awareness. The fundraising continued with the Color Run that took place on Mar. 9th and Pie in the Face event on Mar. 14th. As a school, approx. \$12643 was raised and donated to the St. Baldrick's organization. Mr. Hewitt expressed being super proud of this achievement.</p> <p>- LTEF is hosting the first Lawrence Has Talent event. It will take place on Thursday, Apr. 11th. Two BF students, Bianca Agosto and Kyleigh Brennan, are finalists. Tickets are presently on sale.</p> <p>- Summer programs will be taking place at BF this year. ESY (a program for special education students) and FLIGHT (formerly Destinations, a program for general education students who need Math and ELA support) will take place from Jul. 8th to Aug. 1st. Jumpstart for incoming kindergartners will be taking place in August; this is a half day program. 3rd grade students moving up to LIS will also be offered a Jumpstart program at LIS in the month of August. All summer programs run on a Monday to Thursday schedule.</p> <p>- A math webinar organized by Kristin Burke and Sarah Foster took place on Mar. 20th from 6 to 7pm. The webinar focused on how families can support their child's math skills and integrate math into daily life. It was presented by Liesl McChonchie. The recording of this webinar will be available on the LTPS website for the next month, if families are interested in viewing it.</p>

	<p>- Kindergarten registration for the 2024-2025 school year is now open. Registration is online and closes on Aug. 2, 2024.</p> <p>- Mr. Hewitt thanked the PTO for organizing the teacher appreciation luncheons sponsored by 1st and 2nd grade families. There was tons of good food and the teachers and staff appreciated these lunches.</p> <p>- Report cards are to be posted on Genesis after Spring Break.</p> <p>- On Apr. 23rd, all 3rd graders will be going on their field trip. While on this trip, students will be able to release the trout. More clarity is needed on how these students will be selected; caring for trout is primarily the responsibility of Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Basmagy's class.</p> <p>- Approx. a week after the trout are released, the chicks are expected to arrive. This is a learning opportunity particularly for kindergarteners.</p> <p>- Mr. Hewitt noted that during the BF's Community Conversation with the district administration, that took place on Mar. 6th, he received feedback that newsletters were sent out too early on Saturday mornings. To address this concern, Mr. Hewitt will now be sending out newsletters at a later time on Saturdays. He will also be using Blackboard only, as the program has language translation, to send out these newsletters. He won't be using Talking Points for this to avoid annoying parents with text message alerts.</p>
<p>PTO President Update</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p>	<p>- Planetarium Assembly took place on Tuesday, Feb. 20th. A dome was put up in the gymnasium for students to enter. Students were able to view different constellations and planets while inside.</p> <p>- A teacher request was granted for an Earth Day themed assembly. It will take place on, Wed., Apr. 24th. Similar to the concert assembly that happened two years ago, students will be able to view a concert that will have Earth Day centered music.</p>
<p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by 1st Grade</u></p> <p>- Megan Coopersmith spoke.</p> <p>- The 1st grade sponsored lunch took place on Feb. 14th. It was organized by 1st grade parent, Krista Gervon. Teachers and staff enjoyed a heart healthy themed meal. They really enjoyed it. There was lots of food. Special thank you to one parent who personally cooked lots of food for this event; it was a sweet gesture.</p> <p><u>Dine to Donate - Fedora's</u></p> <p>- Petra Crevier spoke.</p>

- The Dine To Donate event for the month of February took place on Feb. 21st. 20% of the proceeds were to be donated to the BF PTO.
- It is uncertain how much money is going to be donated from this event. The check will be picked up soon; there was a delay in the owner getting back to Petra.

Science Night (Feb. 29th)

- Ilana Hernandez spoke.
- Our annual science night took place on Leap Day, Feb. 29th. It was a space themed event where all families were welcome to take part in space themed activities and experiments that commemorated Leap Day.
- The 3rd Grade Science Fair took place at science night. A total of 27 3rd grade students participated. There was an array of experiment presentations regarding slime, volcanoes, electric currents, paper planes, etc. All participants received a certificate and ribbon. Photos from this event are posted on Facebook.
- Thanks to all the volunteers that assisted with set-up, activities and clean up! Thanks to all the 3rd graders who participated. Science Night would not have been possible without you all.

Book Exchange

- Rachelle Picarello and Petra Crevier spoke.
- Our annual book exchange in celebration of Read Across America week took place on Mar. 1st. Each child was able to go home with 5 books for them to keep. The kids were super excited to get free books.
- The BF PTO was able to give over 300 books from our collection to Slackwood for their Read Across America event.
- Books are being collected all year round. Families are welcome to donate any books they may have for the following year.
- A big thanks to all the families who donated books for this year's event. There were lots of brand new books that students were able to take home.

Dine to Donate - Villa Maria

- Petra Crevier spoke.
- The Dine to Donate event for the month of March took place on Mar. 13th at Villa Maria. 15% of the proceeds were to be donated to BF PTO.
- The check for this event is ready and waiting for pick up. An update on the amount will be disclosed at our next meeting.

Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by 2nd Grade (Mar. 18th)

- Megan Coopersmith spoke.
- The 2nd grade sponsored lunch took place on Mar. 18th. It was organized by 2nd grade parent, Katie Milford, who went with a beach bash theme. Teachers and staff were super appreciative of all of the effort that went into the lunch. They often commented on how creative the theme was. Photos of the event can be found on social media.

<p>Ongoing Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Spring Teacher Clubs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Spring teacher clubs will be starting after spring break. - There is space still available. If you would like to register your child, do so before the end of the week. <p><u>Spring Spirit Wear</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith and Rachelle Picarello spoke. - Orders for the Spring Spirit Wear sale were due yesterday, Mar. 20th. - The official order will be placed tomorrow. These items are made to order. - 153 individual items were ordered this time around. This is a bit more than was ordered last spring, which is great as the fall season usually has a bigger sale. - Once the order is placed with Aztec, it will take approx. 2 to 3 weeks for the order to come in.
<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Dine to Donate - Chuck E. Cheese (Apr. 5th)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The Dine to Donate for the month of April will be at Chuck E. Cheese on Friday, Apr. 5th. It is an all day event and a family favorite. - There are coupons on the flyer. A physical flyer must be presented when placing your order. 20% of the proceeds will go to BF PTO. <p><u>Book Fair</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The spring Scholastic book fair is taking place from Apr. 15 to 20th. It will be Candyland (board game) themed. - Packets with more information are expected to go out to students after spring break. - Preview day will take place on Apr. 16th. Sales will take place from Apr. 17 to 20th during school hours. Adults are welcome to shop while in the school for conferences. - There will be a family event on Saturday, Apr. 20th. More information to follow. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by 3rd Grade (Apr. 18th)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The last teacher appreciation luncheon of the school year is sponsored by 3rd grade families. Petra Crevier, a 3rd grade parent, will be organizing this luncheon. It will be “picnic in the park” themed. - A signup genius was sent out to 3rd grade families to contribute. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Week</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Teacher appreciation week at BF will take place from Apr. 29 to May 3rd. Keep in mind that the dates are not in line with the official teacher appreciation week. The PTO decided to move the week due to the 3rd grade NJSLA testing schedule to limit distractions.

	- Homeroom coordinators will be notified via email soon to coordinate class gifts.
<p>Updates</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>3rd Grade Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - Things are going well. The 3rd grade party is being planned. It will take place on Sat., Jun. 15th from 2 pm to 4 pm. The party will be held outside with good weather. This is a free event for 3rd graders only. 3rd grade parents can volunteer to chaperone. More information to come. - The yearbook is being worked on. An email will be sent out requesting photos from 3rd grade families. - Fundraising is going as planned. Direct contributions were received. <p><u>PTO Board Position Open for the 2024-2025 School Year</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Rachele Picarello, 2nd vice president, is leaving the board as her son is moving on to LIS. There will be a vacancy for her position. Petra Crevier, 1st vice president, and Kristen Paladino, treasurer, are running for reelection for a second term. - Nominations are being accepted beginning 10 days prior to the April PTO Meeting on Apr. 15, 2024. - Ben Franklin PTO bylaws: Prior to the April nomination meeting, the President will announce the potential open Executive Board positions for the next school year. Nominations for Executive Officer positions will be accepted beginning 10 days prior to the April PTO meeting. Nominations will be accepted by email to the Recording Secretary or in person at the April PTO meeting. Nominations will close at the end of the April PTO meeting. At the May meeting, the President shall present all candidates running for each office and an election will then take place for any position with more than one candidate.
<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: When will more information be released about the FLIGHT summer program? Will students be invited or have to sign up?</p> <p>A: A flyer with more information will be available soon. Students who are enrolled in ASI programs will be invited initially to take part in the summer program. There may possibly be room for other students who need the support to sign up after. The program will take place at Ben Franklin from Jul. 8 to Aug. 1st. It is a half day program that runs from Monday to Thursday (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p>

	<p>Q: The 3rd grade and Kindergarten field trips were scheduled for the same day this year. As a parent who would like to chaperone for both trips, is it possible to reschedule one of them?</p> <p>A: Typically, multiple grade wide field trips aren't scheduled for the same day. The Kindergarten field trip was scheduled way in advance. The 3rd grade trip was scheduled more recently and was based on limited dates available for the trout to be released. At this point, it is too late to reschedule these trips. Also, when it comes to choosing parent chaperones for events, typically, there are lotteries to choose who can chaperone to give all parents a chance to attend the trip (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Q: What happens if you're a parent helper for a teacher club and cannot help on a specific day due to an emergency? Who should be contacted if this happens?</p> <p>A: If a parent helper cannot make it, they can reach out to Megan Coopersmith directly (via email or phone) or call the BF main office and the message will get to Megan Coopersmith.</p> <p>Q: For the yearbook, when will the committee be collecting pictures?</p> <p>A: An email will be sent out to 3rd grade families in the next couple of weeks requesting photos. The yearbook is currently being formatted.</p> <p>Q: Will the next PTO meeting be on Zoom or in person?</p> <p>A: At this point, we are unsure. We will provide an update on social media and in our newsletter as we get closer to the date.</p> <p>Q: When is the sign-up for Kindergarten Jumpstart?</p> <p>A: Sign-up will possibly be available mid-April.</p> <p>Comment: The BF school student directory is being updated. Families who do not want their information in the directory should fill out the opt-out form prior to Apr. 1st.</p>
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Monday, April 15th at 7pm</p>

3/21/24 Meeting Summary

1. Paid \$600 for Assembly (What's Out There?)

2. Science Night Summary: Spent \$387 total (including \$247 this month)
Reimbursed \$74 for Multicultural Night

3. Spent \$238 on 3rd Grade Blanket Project, \$180 on Movie Night (see summary from last month's report), \$17 for Book Fair Prep, \$24 for Student Appreciation

4. Teacher Clubs: Paid Teachers \$4625, Paid Parents \$90 and Reimbursed for Expenses \$145 (total for Winter Clubs: \$4860)

5. Deposits: \$334 from Amalfi's; \$707 for Movie Night Admissions & Concessions; \$280 for early Spirit Wear Sales

Teacher Appreciation Monthly		
September	\$ 45.30	Welcome Basket for Hewitt
October		
November		
December	\$ 278.06	Gift Wrapping for Teachers/Staff
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
Total	\$ 323.36	
Budget	\$ 1,000.00	
Remaining	\$ 676.64	

BF PTO 2023-2024

Budget Categories

Income Categories	22-23 Actual	23-24 Recommer	Actual 2023-2024	Dif
Cash Donations	\$ 3,222.26	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,200.00	\$ (300.00)
Coin Wars Income	\$ 1,226.75	\$ 1,556.00	\$ 1,556.60	\$ 0.60
Color Run Income	\$ 3,246.30	\$ 960.00	\$ 960.00	\$ -
Dine to Donate Income	\$ 1,750.58	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,041.24	\$ (458.76)
End of Year Carnival Income	\$ 5,054.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -	\$ (4,500.00)
Fall Fest Income	\$ 1,454.50	\$ 1,348.00	\$ 1,348.90	\$ 0.90
Field Trip Offset Income	\$ 1,587.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 304.00	\$ (1,196.00)
Fundraising Activity Income	\$ 3,629.61	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 1,619.50	\$ (680.50)
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	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,468.50	\$ (531.50)
Scholastic Book Fair Income	\$ 8,869.06	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 4,370.89	\$ (4,429.11)
Spirit Wear Income	\$ 9,643.41	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 5,811.10	\$ (188.90)
Teacher Clubs Income	\$ 36,808.55	\$ 26,000.00	\$ 27,328.25	\$ 1,328.25
Third Grade Party Fundraising	\$ 1,074.11	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 541.00	\$ (459.00)
Trenton Thunder Income	\$ 2,895.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ -	\$ (2,750.00)
Winter Event Income		\$ 1,419.00	\$ 1,419.00	

Expense Categories	Actual 2022-2023	Recommended	Actual 2023-2024	Dif
Assemblies	\$ 590.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,215.00	\$ 785.00
Bank Fees		\$ 160.00	\$ 108.56	
Coin Wars Expenses	\$ 46.77	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	\$ -
Color Run Expenses	\$ 712.90	\$ 477.00	\$ 477.32	\$ (0.32)
Day of Service	\$ -	\$ 250.00	\$ 237.72	\$ 12.28
End of Year Carnival Expenses	\$ 2,944.42	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 394.82	\$ 2,605.18
Fall Fest Expenses	\$ 1,175.39	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,240.33	\$ 9.67
Field Trips	\$ 3,526.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,110.00	\$ 890.00
Fundraising Activity Expenses	\$ 1,056.20	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 859.58	\$ 390.42
Insurance Expenses	\$ 2,082.83	\$ 466.00	\$ 466.00	\$ -
Misc Family School Activities	\$ 426.95	\$ 700.00	\$ 536.43	\$ 163.57
Misc In-School Activities Expenses	\$ 87.36		\$ 5.98	\$ (5.98)
Operating Expenses	\$ 593.22	\$ 825.00	\$ 679.77	\$ 145.23
Other Expenses	\$ 1,239.10		\$ 1,809.75	\$ (1,809.75)
PTO Gift to School		\$ 2,466.00	\$ 2,465.55	\$ 0.45
Scholarships	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Scholastic Book Fair Expenses	\$ 6,865.49	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 4,884.37	\$ 2,615.63
Screen Free Week Expenses	\$ 396.71	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Spirit Wear Expense	\$ 8,421.03	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 2,236.75	\$ 2,263.25
Student Appreciation		\$ 500.00	\$ 130.03	\$ 369.97
Teacher Appreciation Activity	\$ 3,034.94	\$ 3,350.00	\$ 826.24	\$ 2,523.76
Teacher Club Expenses	\$ 21,417.81	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 10,367.00	\$ 6,633.00
Teacher Request Fund	\$ 1,495.24	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 756.51	\$ 743.49
Third Grade End of Year	\$ 5,073.06	\$ 4,541.00	\$ -	\$ 4,541.00
Trenton Thunder Expenses	\$ 1,848.00	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 875.00	\$ 875.00
Trunk or Treat	\$ 103.29	\$ 161.00	\$ 161.61	\$ (0.61)
Volunteer Appreciation	\$ 50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Winter Event	\$ 616.94	\$ 1,561.00	\$ 1,547.33	\$ 13.67

Income Total	\$ 82,986.37	\$ 64,283.00	\$ 48,649.98	\$ (14,214.02)
Expenses Total	\$ 61,385.42	\$ 63,193.00	\$ 35,843.71	\$ 23,375.85
NET	\$ 21,600.95	\$ 1,090.00	\$ 12,806.27	\$ (37,589.87)