

Ben Franklin Elementary PTO

January 2025 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Monday, January 27, 2025

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

PTO BOARD: Megan Coopersmith, Petra Crevier, Lindsay Walsh, Nicole Bottrel, Ilana Hernandez,
and Kristen Paladino

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

START TIME: 7:01pm **END TIME:** 8:00pm

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, Lindsay Walsh - 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>- Global School Play Day will be next week, Wed., February 5. The idea is to have kids interact socially and creatively in an unstructured way with their peers. Mrs. Cimorelli partnered with Amerikick to put on a presentation for students in the afternoon. Waivers were sent home.</p> <p>- Important Upcoming Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LTPS Preschool applications for the 2025/2026 opens Feb. 3 - Lunar New Year is this Wed., Jan. 29. Students will be learning about the holiday and doing related activities in their classrooms. - A spirit assembly will be held this Fri., Jan. 31. Students are welcome to wear spirit wear or blue and white. - 3rd Grade Fitness Challenge is taking place Wed., Feb. 5. This will be the 14th year taking on this challenge at BF. - Feb. 14 is Valentine's Day and 100th Day of School; classroom celebrations will be had. It is also an early dismissal day. <p>- Mr. Hewitt expressed his views on the referendum indicating that he is happy to be a part of the expansion. With new proposed level grade band changes, he believes they would be more developmentally appropriate for students.</p>

<p>PTO President Update</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p>	<p><u>Referendum for LMS Expansion Town Hall Meeting - Feb. 4 6-8p at Lawrence Middle School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LTPS Superintendent, Dr. Robyn Klim spoke. - Dr. Klim and Communications Manager, Jen Baldassari - Board of Ed member attended this meeting to answer any questions about the referendum vote for March 11. - The Town Hall meeting will take place on Tues., February 4 from 6 to 8pm at LMS. The full administrative team will be there to discuss the footprint for the next 75 years at LTPS. - With a growing population and a growing demand, the district needs to adjust and pivot for its students and their needs. Since COVID, there has been an increase in special education and language needs. Currently, approx. 23% of the entire student body requires special education services, 31% of the student body are multilingual learners, and 30% of students are of lower socioeconomic status. - Students need more space, better facilities (i.e. gyms, fields), specialized instruction, and expanded programs. Presently, there are limits in the district (i.e. lack of ADA accessible fields, parking, elevators and bathrooms). - Students would also benefit developmentally and academically to be in appropriate grade level bands. With the proposed change being Pre-K to 2nd in elementary, 3rd to 5th in intermediate, 6th to 8th at the middle school.
<p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Dine to Donate at Jersey Mike's</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The Dine to Donate for the month of December took place at Jersey Mike's in the Lawrence Shopping Center. 25% of proceeds were to be donated to the PTO. A check hasn't been dispersed just yet. <p><u>Warm Clothing Drive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier and Lindsay Walsh spoke. - The warm clothing drive benefiting HomeFront took place from Oct. 14 to Jan. 13. A big thank you to everyone who sent in their gently used warm clothing items. - There were plenty of warm jackets and winter boots donated that were split between BF students, LIS students and HomeFront families. <p><u>Shop & Dine to Donate at Final Boss Comics & Gingered Peach</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The fundraising event went well. Both businesses were busy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was a discrepancy in the business hours for the Gingered Peach in the original flyer. Correspondence was sent out to families to make them aware of the new change.
<p>Ongoing Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Winter Teacher Clubs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Clubs are going well. Reminder: Send in notes for dismissal. This helps volunteers know where students are going after club dismissal.
<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Family Movie Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicole Bottrel spoke. - Family Movie Night is taking place on Fri., January 31. The Wild Robot will be shown as this was the one most voted for by students. - Doors open at 6pm with the movie starting at 6:30pm. Refreshments, BF shield magnets, teddy bears and blankets will be for sale at the event. - Admission: \$5 per family in advance; \$8 per family at the door. Thus far, 34 families (116 individuals) have RSVPed. - Families are encouraged to bring blankets to sit on the floor. Folding chairs are allowed for back row viewing. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by 2nd Grade</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lindsay Walsh spoke. - The 2nd grade is sponsoring the next teacher appreciation meal scheduled for Thurs., February 6. It will be Super Bowl themed. - 2nd grade families have been signing up to bring food or donate money to be used to purchase larger ticket items. There are slots available for entrees and desserts. <p><u>Science Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilana Hernandez spoke. - Science Night will take place on Thurs., February 20 from 6pm to 7:30pm. This is a free family event. - This year is a hospital theme where families can take part in activities, experiments and games related to body science. Students will act as medical doctors while they learn about the human body. Doctor badges will be given out at the check in table upon arrival. - The 3rd grade science fair will be taking place simultaneously. 3rd graders do not have to present projects that are related to the hospital theme. They are encouraged to explore any scientific topic. They are also welcome to complete a project with a friend.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminder: The 3rd grade science fair is just for 3rd grade participants. BF students of all grades are welcome to observe the 3rd grade projects during Science Night. - Thus far, 6 3rd graders have signed up to present a project. Certificates and ribbons will be given to all who participate. If interested, fill out this form. - There is a need for volunteers to assist with clean up, immunology table and orthopedics table. If interested in volunteering, select a slot. <p><u>Book Exchange</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - This year’s book exchange will take place on Fri., March 7. - This event takes place during the school day where students are allowed to choose 6 “new to them” books and take them home. - Book donations are welcome to be dropped off in the vestibule at the entrance of the school. There is a need for chapter books and informational books. - Pre-K students will be participating too. Board books as well as sensory books are welcomed for donation. <p><u>Multicultural Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier and Ilana Hernandez spoke. - The 2nd annual Multicultural Night will take place on Wed., March 12 from 6pm to 8pm. This year it will be airport themed where families will receive boarding passes and passports at the check-in counter. - Families will have the opportunity to take part in the event by bringing a dish, hosting a table or volunteering their time. More details to come. This is an invitation to share your culture with your community.
<p style="text-align: center;">Updates</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>3rd Grade Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amanda Taglairino spoke. - The 3rd Grade Committee is working hard to put together a party, yearbook and gift for the 3rd graders. They are meeting regularly to plan and set things up. - The 3rd grade party is set for Wed., June 18. The 3rd grade was presented the opportunity to vote on the theme. Gaming was selected. - Another fundraiser will happen soon for 3rd grade families. Dates are TBD. - Anyone still interested in joining the 3rd Grade Committee should email Petra Crevier at bfptorocks@gmail.com to be added to the group.

<p style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">All</p>	<p>Q: What is the feedback the Board has received from Lawrence residents who do not have children in the school system?</p> <p>A: The feedback has been positive. Good thriving schools increase property; they are an added value. The township mayor and town council have endorsed the referendum and will be at the town hall meeting to voice their support (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: Do you have a prepared answer on how much property taxes will increase?</p> <p>A: The project cost is \$98,900,000, which will be bonded. It is expected to cost the average taxpayer an additional \$1 per day. All are welcome to use the assessed value of their home to determine how much it would cost for their individual home. A tax calculator is available on the referendum site. It is important to note that the district will be moving forward with improvements even if the referendum doesn't pass. This will only result in the district leaving behind 40% in state aid that would be used to help pay down principal and interest. Changes in property taxes wouldn't occur until 2027 and would eventually level out (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: Is this whole project because of preschool expansion?</p> <p>A: The plan has always been to update and expand the middle school. The district applied for the preschool program because it values early childhood education. Conveniently, the preschool program provides additional state aid and can be used as a financial tool to improve the district (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: What will the vote options be on March 11th?</p> <p>A: The referendum options will be yes or no (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: Will the town hall be virtual? Will it be recorded for those who might not be able to attend?</p> <p>A: The town hall meeting will take place in person at the middle school. It will be video recorded and available on LTPS Rewind after (answered by Dr. Klim).</p>

	<p>Q: How long are the terms of the preschool expansion grant? Is it similar to the ESSER grant that had a time limit on it?</p> <p>A: The money coming from the preschool grant is based on the last census. It is approx. \$16-17k per child to be used on staffing, space and programming, which is charged to state aid. It is not like ESSER which was federal aid meant for COVID pandemic needs such as plexiglass (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: Which groups of students will benefit most from this referendum?</p> <p>A: All of the student population benefits from this referendum. It will also positively impact a growing segment of the student population providing targeted instruction for multilingual learners, special education, and low income students. It will allow for equitable access to education in the district (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: What happens if the referendum doesn't pass?</p> <p>A: We will move forward with the expansion. It might not be as great as the plans (i.e. trailers) due to cost. Our students deserve excellent quality education facilities (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: Besides attending town hall, what can we as parents do to support you and the board?</p> <p>A: We need parents to show up to town hall. We need them to put out yard signs supporting this referendum, make sure people get out to vote and that those in our community are informed (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Q: If the vote doesn't pass, will there be a re-vote?</p> <p>A: We could try to refine the project if it is voted down; however, project costs continue to grow and it would ultimately be wasteful rather than just getting funded in one shot (answered by Dr. Klim).</p> <p>Thank you all for coming! Stay connected with us:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ben Franklin PTO Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BFLawrNj Ben Franklin PTO Twitter: @bfpto Ben Franklin PTO website: http://bfpto.org/ Ben Franklin PTO email address: bfptorocks@gmail.com</p>
Next Meeting	Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 7pm

1/12/25 Summary

1. Holiday Shop Summary: Spent \$1496 and took in \$2100.

2. Paid for Kindergarten Field Trip (\$600) and spent \$172 for Teacher Appreciation Chocolate Bar and \$88 for 3rd Grade Geography Bee Prizes.

3. Paid \$3207 for Spirit Wear (see "Event Summary" for Totals); collected \$1235 for Winter Teacher Clubs.

4. Operational Expenses totalled \$99, which is annual fee for Clover. Bank fees were \$3 and we paid our annual insurance premium (\$487).

5. Other Deposits: \$23 residual from Charleston Wrap; \$373 for later Spirit Wear Payments and \$140 in Dine to Donate Income.

Teacher Appreciation Monthly		
September		
October		
November		
December	\$ 171.88	Chocolate Bar
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
Total	\$ 171.88	
Budget	\$ 400.00	
Remaining	\$ 228.12	

Ben Franklin PTO 2024-2025

Budget Categories

Income Categories	23-24 Actual	24-25 Recommenc	Actual 24-25
Cash Donations	\$ 2,210.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,215.00
Coin Wars Income	\$ 1,556.60	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,454.53
Fun Run Income	\$ 960.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 841.50
Dine to Donate Income	\$ 1,823.83	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 307.60
End of Year Carnival Income	\$ 4,171.70	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -
Fall Fest Income	\$ 1,348.90	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,411.35
Field Trip Offset Income	\$ 1,216.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -
Fundraising Activity Income	\$ 2,113.50	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 2,541.90
Insurance Refund/Reimbursements	\$ -		\$ -
No-Cost Fundraisers	\$ 18.10	\$ -	\$ -
Other Income	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ -
Raffle/Gaming Income	\$ 1,468.50	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,686.35
Scholastic Book Fair Income	\$ 8,689.51	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 3,917.58
Spirit Wear Income	\$ 7,590.90	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 4,692.78
Teacher Clubs Income	\$ 28,024.50	\$ 24,500.00	\$ 16,832.00
Third Grade Party Fundraising	\$ 1,348.70	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -
Trenton Thunder Income	\$ 2,652.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ -
Winter Event Income	\$ 1,419.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 2,100.45

Expense Categories	23-24 Actual	24-25 Recommenc	Actual 24-25
Assemblies	\$ 1,815.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 690.00
Bank Fees	\$ 165.36	\$ 160.00	\$ 246.86
Coin Wars Expenses	\$ 36.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 55.96
Fun Run Expenses	\$ 477.32	\$ 500.00	\$ 429.78
Day of Service	\$ 237.72	\$ 500.00	\$ -
End of Year Carnival Expenses	\$ 2,769.26	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -
Fall Fest Expenses	\$ 1,240.33	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,249.78
Field Trips	\$ 6,710.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 600.00
Fundraising Activity Expenses	\$ 859.58	\$ 1,550.00	\$ 332.97
Insurance Expenses	\$ 466.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 487.00
Misc Family School Activities	\$ 541.76	\$ 700.00	\$ 91.48
Misc In-School Activities Expenses	\$ 5.98		\$ -
Operating Expenses	\$ 856.49	\$ 850.00	\$ 624.44
Other Expenses	\$ 1,838.72		\$ -
PTO Gift to School	\$ 2,533.87	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -
Scholarships	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -
Scholastic Book Fair Expenses	\$ 7,399.64	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 1,999.03
Screen Free Week Expenses	\$ 269.87	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Spirit Wear Expense	\$ 5,560.95	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 3,670.19
Student Appreciation	\$ 289.07	\$ 500.00	\$ 63.59
Teacher Appreciation Activity	\$ 2,664.11	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 706.91
Teacher Club Expenses	\$ 16,341.24	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 5,237.58
Teacher Request Fund	\$ 1,165.45	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 563.25
Third Grade End of Year	\$ 5,205.15	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -
Trenton Thunder Expenses	\$ 1,694.00	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 805.00
Trunk or Treat	\$ 161.61	\$ 200.00	\$ 150.00
Volunteer Appreciation	\$ -	\$ 250.00	\$ -
Winter Event	\$ 1,547.33	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,496.23

Income Total	\$ 65,292.74	\$ 36,900.59
Expenses Total	\$ 59,648.87	\$ 17,048.82
NET	\$ 5,643.87	\$ 19,851.77