

Ben Franklin Elementary PTO

February 2025 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Tuesday, February 25, 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: 7:02 pm **END TIME:** 7:49pm

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>- LTPS will be hosting a virtual community meeting regarding the referendum tomorrow night, February 26 from 6pm to 8pm. If you would like to attend, go to the district referendum website to register. There will be a section on the registration where questions can be submitted. All attendees must pre-register to get the link to the meeting.</p> <p>- There will be a spirit assembly this Fri., February 28. Students are encouraged to wear spirit wear or school colors.</p> <p>- The 2nd grade concert is taking place on Wed., March 5. The family showing is at 2pm.</p> <p>- Next week is Read Across America week. To celebrate, students and teachers can dress up according to the different themes for each day. There will be buddy reading, a reading train and guest readers in the classroom during the week.</p> <p>- For the month of February, BF 1st grade art is on display in Mercer County Library. Thank you to Ms. Skorupa for organizing this.</p> <p>- St. Baldrick's will be taking place in March. The big fundraising event for the town will take place at Amalfi's. BF will have the shaving event for Team Ben Franklin take place on March 14. The Color Run to raise additional funds for the organization will take place on March 15. Details to come on the Pie Day fundraising event to come. Thank you to Mr.</p>

	<p>Rude for being the team leader and organizing the school’s fundraising efforts for this event. If you would like to join or donate, see Mr. Hewitt’s weekly newsletter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recently, BF partnered with Mercer Street Friends to start a food bank at the school. Mrs. Smoots spearheaded this partnership to ensure that food was available to BF families who may need it. If in need, please reach out to the school for more information. - Reminder to vote on Tues., March 11 regarding the referendum. Please take the time to vote and make an informed decision. Reach out if there are any questions. - Lastly, there have been issues with toys in the classrooms as of late. Students should keep their toys in their backpacks while at school as it causes distraction. Recently, pokemon cards and trading those cards have caused upset amongst students; therefore, it is best to keep these items out of the learning environment.
<p>PTO President Update</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mad Science assembly is booked for Fri., April 4. There will be two assemblies: PreK to 1st and 2nd to 3. The Mad Science representative recommended separating the age groups this way to make the lessons more age appropriate. - The PTO School Directory has been updated and will be emailed to families. The directory includes ONLY families that opt-in to be included in it. It is recommended that families ask teachers the classroom count when sending in snacks or birthday invitations for students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families who do not receive the PTO weekly newsletter or other PTO emails should email bfptorocks@gmail.com to be added to the email list. This list is for receiving emails from the PTO only. It will not be included in the school director for all families to see. This can only be done if families opt-in via Mr. Hewitt’s directory form. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher Club signup links are sent out using the PTO email list. Request to be added to not miss out on these links. The signup link is also posted to the PTO’s Facebook and Twitter pages.
<p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Movie Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicole Bottrel spoke. - Family Movie Night at BF took place on Fri., January 31. - It was a fun night with approximately 50 families in attendance to watch The Wild Robot. The children did a nice job sitting and watching the movie. Popcorn, cotton candy and other refreshments were sold at the event. Thank you to everyone who helped out!

	<p><u>Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by 2nd Grade Families</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lindsay Walsh spoke. - Teachers and staff were able to enjoy a Super Bowl themed lunch sponsored by 2nd grade families on Thurs., February 6. - There was great participation by 2nd grade families including monetary donations to purchase lots of food. Teachers and staff were very appreciative. - There was a Super Bowl box pool for teachers and staff to participate in. There were four winners getting one \$10 gift card to local businesses. <p><u>Science Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilana Hernandez spoke. - Science Night took place on Thurs., February 20. It was a night of hospital science themed activities, experiments and games. There was an amazing turnout for it being a snowy evening. - The 3rd Grade Science Fair took place at the same time. There were 18 participants this year with amazing projects. Each participant received a certificate and ribbon. - Thank you to all of the volunteers (parents and staff alike)! This event would not have been possible without you.
<p>Ongoing Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Spring Teacher Clubs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Registration for spring teacher clubs opens on Thurs., February 27 at 7:30pm. An email with the Signup Genius link will be sent out to families. - Club volunteers are needed! Volunteers who sign up before registration opens are guaranteed one (1) spot in ANY club. Once registration goes LIVE, the PTO cannot guarantee a spot in ANY club. Sign up to volunteer beforehand. <p><u>Front Row Seats Raffle for 2nd Grade Concert</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - 2nd grade families are welcome to take part in a raffle to win front row seats to the 2nd grade concert on Wed., March 5. - Information has been emailed out to 2nd grade families and posted to social media, the winner will be picked on Monday evening (March 3). If you would like to participate, do so here.

<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Book Exchange</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The PTO’s annual book exchange will take place on Fri., March 7 during school hours. Students will be given the opportunity to take 4 to 6 “new to them” books home with them. - In the past, there was a limited supply of chapter books. This year there will be 250 chapter books for readers to choose from. - There is a need for multilingual and informational books. Donations can be dropped off in the vestibule at the front of the school. <p><u>Multicultural Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilana Hernandez and Petra Crevier spoke. - Multicultural Night will take place on Wed., March 12 from 6pm to 8pm. Families looking to participate must RSVP and indicate if they will bring a dish, host a table or volunteer in order to attend. - So far, 12 tables have registered. There are new representations of countries like Colombia, Cuba, France and South Korea. There is a need for more food contributions. - The event has been changed a bit this year with food being served in the “Global Marketplace” in the All Purpose Room and tables being set up in the “Ben Franklin International Airport” in the gym. Students will receive a passport and boarding pass this year. There will be raffles including one for students who wear traditional clothing. Cultural performances and song requests are new this year! - Holidays in Harmony posters are also being collected to act as decorations for the event. - Inclement weather date is March 13. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by 1st Grade Families</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilana Hernandez spoke. - The teacher and staff appreciation meal sponsored by 1st grade families will take place on Wed., March 26 with a brunch theme. There will be chicken and waffles, french toast, sandwiches, etc. for teachers and staff to enjoy. - An email with the signup will go out to 1st grade families this week to request assistance with set up, food and cash contributions. <p><u>Spring Book Fair</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The Scholastic spring book fair will take place April 9 to 11. There will be no Saturday event this time but a parent/grandparent event will be planned. - Anyone interested in joining the book fair committee should reach out to Kristen at bfptorocks@gmail.com.
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<p>Updates</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>3rd Grade Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The 3rd grade committee is focusing on fundraising right now. Thus far, they have done 3 fundraisers: Guess How Many, Pay-jama Day and Coin Wars. They have planned to do one more fundraiser of popcorn selling geared for 3rd grade families taking place from March 3 to March 7. - The 3rd Grade Party is scheduled for Wed., June 18 from 1pm to 3pm outside of the school building. More details to follow. - Anyone interested in joining the 3rd grade committee can reach out to Petra at bfptorocks@gmail.com.
<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: Is the school accepting donations for the food bank directly from BF families?</p> <p>A: Right now, we are picking up food from Mercer Street Friends twice a month. They are providing us with two options: bags of food and individual food items allowing us to get variety. This method allows for more consistency in the type of items and quantity of items that can be provided to families. Donations from BF families might possibly be needed in the future if there is an increase in demand; however, donations are not being accepted (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Q: If a sibling is not a Ben Franklin student, can they join the Color Run?</p> <p>A: There is no problem with siblings participating in the Color Run as long as they have a sibling currently attending Ben Franklin (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Q: Will wire racks, steam trays and sternos be provided at Multicultural Night?</p> <p>A: Yes, all of that will be provided. We ask that families just bring the food they have prepared. We will also have extension cords for those who bring crockpots.</p> <p>Q: When is Teacher Appreciation Week this year?</p> <p>A: This year teachers will have two teacher appreciation weeks. The PTO's portion where something is done for the teachers each day will be from April 28 to May 2. National Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5 to May 9; this is when homeroom coordinations will</p>

	<p>give teachers their gift and do what they want to demonstrate appreciation. Homeroom coordinators will receive an email from Lindsay with more information.</p> <p>Thank you all for coming! Stay connected with us:</p> <p>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>
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Monday, March 24, 2025 at 7pm</p>

2/14/25 Summary

1. Holiday Shop Summary: Spent \$352 and took in \$888. (\$184 excess returned 2/20)
2. Paid \$182 for Spirit Wear (Stickers) and sold \$220 at Movie Night.
3. Paid out \$4671 for Winter Teacher Clubs and made Deposit for 3rd Grade Field Trip (\$50)
4. Started paying for Science Night (\$222) and gifted \$25 for School Counselor Day.
5. Other Deposits: \$69 Dine to Donate; \$185 Third Grade Fundraising.

Ben Franklin PTO 2024-2025

Budget Categories

Income Categories	23-24 Actual	24-25 Recommer	Actual 24-25	Dif
Cash Donations	\$ 2,210.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,215.00	\$ 1,215.00
Coin Wars Income	\$ 1,556.60	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,454.53	\$ (45.47)
Fun Run Income	\$ 960.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 841.50	\$ (1,158.50)
Dine to Donate Income	\$ 1,823.83	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 376.76	\$ (1,423.24)
End of Year Carnival Income	\$ 4,171.70	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -	\$ (4,500.00)
Fall Fest Income	\$ 1,348.90	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,411.35	\$ 161.35
Field Trip Offset Income	\$ 1,216.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -	\$ (1,200.00)
Fundraising Activity Income	\$ 2,113.50	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 3,429.90	\$ (1,670.10)
Insurance Refund/Reimbursements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
No-Cost Fundraisers	\$ 18.10	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Income	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Raffle/Gaming Income	\$ 1,468.50	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,686.35	\$ (813.65)
Scholastic Book Fair Income	\$ 8,689.51	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 3,917.58	\$ (4,882.42)
Spirit Wear Income	\$ 7,590.90	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 4,913.03	\$ (4,086.97)
Teacher Clubs Income	\$ 28,024.50	\$ 24,500.00	\$ 16,847.00	\$ (7,653.00)
Third Grade Party Fundraising	\$ 1,348.70	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 185.00	\$ (815.00)
Trenton Thunder Income	\$ 2,652.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ -	\$ (2,750.00)
Winter Event Income	\$ 1,419.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 2,100.45	
Expense Categories	23-24 Actual	24-25 Recommer	Actual 24-25	Dif
Assemblies	\$ 1,815.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 690.00	\$ 1,310.00
Bank Fees	\$ 165.36	\$ 160.00	\$ 150.95	
Coin Wars Expenses	\$ 36.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 55.96	\$ (5.96)
Fun Run Expenses	\$ 477.32	\$ 500.00	\$ 429.78	\$ 70.22
Day of Service	\$ 237.72	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
End of Year Carnival Expenses	\$ 2,769.26	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00
Fall Fest Expenses	\$ 1,240.33	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,249.78	\$ 0.22
Field Trips	\$ 6,710.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 650.00	\$ 9,350.00
Fundraising Activity Expenses	\$ 859.58	\$ 1,550.00	\$ 869.17	\$ 680.83
Insurance Expenses	\$ 466.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 487.00	\$ 13.00
Misc Family School Activities	\$ 541.76	\$ 700.00	\$ 314.21	\$ 385.79
Misc In-School Activities Expenses	\$ 5.98	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operating Expenses	\$ 856.49	\$ 850.00	\$ 723.44	\$ 126.56
Other Expenses	\$ 1,838.72	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
PTO Gift to School	\$ 2,533.87	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Scholarships	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Scholastic Book Fair Expenses	\$ 7,399.64	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 1,999.03	\$ 5,500.97
Screen Free Week Expenses	\$ 269.87	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Spirit Wear Expense	\$ 5,560.95	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 3,852.52	\$ 4,647.48
Student Appreciation	\$ 289.07	\$ 500.00	\$ 63.59	\$ 436.41
Teacher Appreciation Activity	\$ 2,664.11	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 731.91	\$ 1,918.09
Teacher Club Expenses	\$ 16,341.24	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 9,909.00	\$ 4,091.00
Teacher Request Fund	\$ 1,165.45	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 563.25	\$ 436.75
Third Grade End of Year	\$ 5,205.15	\$ 4,185.00	\$ -	\$ 4,185.00
Trenton Thunder Expenses	\$ 1,694.00	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 805.00	\$ 945.00
Trunk or Treat	\$ 161.61	\$ 200.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 50.00
Volunteer Appreciation	\$ -	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Winter Event	\$ 1,547.33	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,496.23	\$ (96.23)

Income Total	\$ 65,292.74	\$ 38,278.00
Expenses Total	\$ 59,648.87	\$ 22,739.59
NET	\$ 5,643.87	\$ 15,538.41

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	