

Ben Franklin Elementary PTO

April 2025 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Monday, April 28, 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: 7:02pm **END TIME:** 7:40pm

Topic and Spokesperson	Discussion Points
Introductions Megan Coopersmith	- 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
Principal Update Mr. Hewitt	- Mr. Hewitt thanked the PTO for kicking off Teacher Appreciation Week at BF. The teachers enjoyed all the goodies and the signage outside of the school. It was a nice way to start the week. - Last week, there was a lot going on in the school, specifically related to Earth Day. Students and staff celebrated Green Week with various activities organized by Ms. Skorupa since Earth Day and Arbor Day was last week. Additionally, teachers set up great lessons for students. - Staff Updates: Ms. Offery is retiring at the end of this school year. Her replacement, Stephanie Perry, has been hired and approved by the Board. Sheila Carnavale, teacher assistant, will also be retiring this year. Her replacement has not been hired as hiring is based on student need. Mrs. Erica Smoots will be retiring this year as well; admin is still looking for her replacement. In addition, Ms. Andrews (ESL teacher) that BF currently shares with LES took a full time job at Slackwood Elementary. Interviews for her replacement have been scheduled. - NJSLA testing will begin for 3rd graders on Mon., May 12. ELA testing will be Monday and Tuesday; this test can go up to 75 minutes in duration. Math testing will take place from Wednesday to Friday with a 45-60 minute duration. Letters are going out to families to provide more information on how to prepare students and what to expect. Families

	<p>have the choice to opt-out but should keep in mind that this is a good opportunity for students to experience standardized testing. iReady is set up similarly with it being on the computer and having timed sessions. The information gathered from NJSLA testing is used to determine the curriculum and programming to better meet student needs. It does not keep students from moving forward.</p> <p>- Field Trips: Kindergarteners attended their field trip to Howell Farm this week; it went well. Next week, 1st graders will be visiting the Philadelphia Zoo and 2nd graders will be visiting the Jenkinson Aquarium for their field trips. 3rd graders will be visiting Grounds for Sculpture on May 31. Thank you to the PTO for funding these field trips.</p> <p>- Upcoming Concerts: The 1st grade concert will be taking place this Thurs., May 1. The Kindergarten concert will take place on June 13.</p> <p>- All are invited to the family session on mattering taking place at LHS. Childcare will be available.</p>
<p>PTO President Update</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p>	<p>- Reminder: The updated file for the School Directory was updated. ONLY families that opted in are included in the directory. If you have not yet done so and would like to added to the directory, email Mr. Hewitt.</p> <p>- The PTO will be making an online survey using Google Forms and sending it out to families for feedback on PTO events from this year and suggestions for next year. The PTO is looking to improve. The link to the survey will be in the PTO newsletter in the near future.</p> <p>- There continues to be a need for volunteers for events. The Carnival is the last big event of the school year and volunteers are needed. Volunteers who do 12+ hours this school year will win their child a lunch with Mr. Hewitt. Petra Crevier has been keeping track of hours. If interested in finding out how many hours you have accumulated thus far, reach out to bfptorocks@gmail.com.</p>
<p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by 1st Grade</u></p> <p>- Ilana Hernandez spoke.</p> <p>- The 1st grade sponsored the teacher appreciation meal that took place on Wed., March 26. Teachers and staff were able to enjoy a brunch themed meal with chicken, waffles, french toast, salads, sandwiches, mock mimosas and more.</p> <p>- There were lots of donations. Thank you to everyone who contributed.</p>

Dine to Donate - Shake Shack

- Petra Crevier spoke.
- The Dine to Donate for March took place at Shake Shack on Mon., March 31 - students had off this day.
- It was a successful event with Shake Shack donating \$155.74 to the PTO. The check hasn't been received yet as it must be cleared by the corporate office first.

Spring Book Fair

- Kristen Paladino spoke.
- The Scholastic spring book fair took place from April 8 to 11. The fair made approx. \$8000 in sales.
- The PTO will be allocating \$200 to Mrs. Reif to give out summer reading books. There are Scholastic dollars to buy books for the BF library. Kristen will be speaking with Ms. Offery to see if she would like to spend the money or pass it on to the new librarian.
- New this year was the Thursday evening family event. Dinner was provided to families in the form of hotdogs and nachos. Lots of BF families attended and hung out. It is something we may try again next year.

Teacher Appreciation Meal Sponsored by Pre-K/Kindergarten

- Petra Crevier spoke.
- The final teacher appreciation meal took place on Thurs., April 10 and was sponsored by Pre-K and K families. This was an evening conference day for teachers providing them with a dinner option.
- The theme was "Picnic in the Park" with teachers enjoying foods like fried chicken, hot dogs, burgers, salads and more. There were lots of donations making it possible to purchase hot foods and have them delivered.

Dine to Donate - Chuck E. Cheese

- Petra Crevier spoke.
- The Dine to Donate event for the month of April took place on Fri., April 25 at Chuck E. Cheese.
- There is no update on the profits. Chuck E. Cheese has been generous in donating gift baskets to the school that the PTO uses for raffles during Fall Fest or Carnival. Thank you to them!

<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 are finishing up. Pokemon club was a big hit this year. Reminder to please be sure to always send in a change of dismissal note. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Weeks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - This year there will be two Teacher Appreciation weeks. The PTO sponsored week is this week, which began today. The PTO put out snacks and supplies for teachers and staff to pick from in the faculty lounge. Next week will be the schoolwide teacher appreciation week managed by homeroom coordinators.
<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Teacher Appreciation Weeks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith and Petra Crevier spoke. - The PTO's sponsored Teacher Appreciation Week is taking place from April 28 to May 2. It began with snacks and supplies today, where staff helped themselves to drinks, snacks and classroom supplies. Tomorrow is "Lucky Us, Lucky You!" where staff will get a chance to play the lottery and enjoy smoothies that were donated by Tropical Smoothie Cafe. On Wednesday, staff will enjoy a catered lunch by Wood Craft Catering, whose owner is former BF parent, Sal Riccobono. Thursday will consist of free coffee donated by Starbucks Main Street location and free books to add to classroom libraries. The week will end with raffles and prizes. - Homeroom coordinators are managing the school wide celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9). Individual classrooms are coming up with ideas to demonstrate appreciation for their teachers. <p><u>Screen Free Week</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - Screen Free Week is taking place from May 5 to 9. Flyers were sent home with lots of screen free options for families to enjoy. - The PTO set up rock painting to add to the rock garden on Monday. Kindergarteners will be selling lemonade to support a fundraiser for charity at the event. Mercer County Library is sponsoring Tuesday night by having a craft for kids to do. Families who sign up for a library card or bring theirs can get a free book. On Wednesday night, families are invited to play Minute to Win It games at BF. Thursday night is a at home nature scavenger hunt. Lastly, Friday is a playground meetup at the pavilion st Village Park - Bergen St. entrance. The PTO has arranged for Mr. Softee to come but this is a buy your own ice cream event. The PTO is not paying.

Carnival

- Megan Coopersmith spoke.
- The PTO's final big event of the year takes place Sun., May 18 from 1pm to 4pm. There will be a reptile show with frogs, turtles, snakes and more. In addition, there will be face painting, game prizes, inflatable games, sand art, over 30 raffles and more.
- Admission is \$15 per child, adults are free.
- Volunteers are greatly needed! Carnival volunteers get to have their current BF children to throw a water balloon at Mr. Hewitt at the end of the vent. Older siblings are welcome to volunteer too. See the [link](#) to volunteer.

3rd Grade Party

- Megan Coopersmith spoke.
- The 3rd grade party will be taking place during the school day on Wed., June 18. More details to come from the 3rd Grade Committee.

Trenton Thunder Game

- Kristen Paladino spoke.
- The Trenton Thunder game is happening on Thurs., June 19. BF students will be able to sing "Grand Old Flag" on the field before the game.
- At this point, the PTO has collected a few order slips. Keep in mind that once Ms. LaFlamme begins pulling students for rehearsals, and your child will want to sing. In the past, the PTO received last minute requests once rehearsals begin.
- Ticket [order forms](#) are due back by May 22; time is needed to organize and get tickets prior to the game.
- Reminder: This is NOT a drop off event. Parents must stay with their children.
- The game begins at 7pm. The BF group meets around 6pm for singing. An email will go out to families ahead of time with more details.

Chalk the Walk

- Megan Coopersmith spoke.
- The last event of the year takes place on Mon., June 23 - the night before the last day of school.
- Popsicles and chalk will be provided. Families are welcome to join in on leaving goodbye wishes before the school year is up.

<p>Updates</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>3rd Grade Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Presently, the committee is working on the class gift. They were able to get a quote for t-shirts with Aztec at approx. \$1k. The shirts are expected to be order soon <p><u>PTO Board Elections</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Nominations for open board positions are open 10 days prior to the April PTO meeting and closed at the end of this meeting. Nominations are to be sent in to Ilana Hernandez, Recording Secretary, during this time period or announced at this meeting. - Elections are held at the May PTO Meeting. - Positions open for nominations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President: Ilana Hernandez nominated Megan Coopersmith; Kristen Paladino seconded this nomination. No other nominations for president were presented. - Recording Secretary: Petra Crevier nominated Ilana Hernandez; Megan Coopersmith seconded this nomination. No other nominations for recording secretary were made. - Corresponding Secretary: Lindsay Walsh nominated Nicole Bottrel; Megan Coopersmith seconded this nomination. No other nominations for corresponding secretary were made.
<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: At the start of the school year, it was mentioned that the district was pushing for all elementary schools to go on the same field trip. How is that going?</p> <p>A: All grades across the district are going to the same trip but not on the same day. So far, this is going well. It is important for all students in the district to have a shared experience and field trips allow for that (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Comment: When it comes to the 3rd grade party, the PTO has not paid for anything yet. It would be helpful for the committee to reach out to the PTO to handle that soon as it is the end of April.</p>

Next Meeting	Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at 7pm
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4/28/25 Summary

1. Collected \$244 (last minute payments) for Spring Teacher Clubs.
2. Paid \$1470 for 2nd Grade Field Trip; collected \$1436 to partially cover expenses for K & 1st Field Trips.
3. Paid \$680 for Mad Science Assembly and \$318 for Multicultural Night.
4. Spent \$303 for Book Fair, \$180 (so far) for Screen Free Week and \$575 (so far) for Teacher Appreciation Week.
5. Other Deposits: \$45.26 from Gingered Peach Dine to Donate, \$15 for Spirit Wear, \$4129 for Book Fair and \$1185 for Third Grade Fundraisers.

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	\$ 3,235.00	\$ 1,235.00
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	\$ 422.02	\$ (1,377.98)
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	\$ 1,436.00	\$ 236.00
Fundraising Activity Income	\$ 2,113.50	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 3,549.90	\$ (1,550.10)
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	\$ 8,111.93	\$ (688.07)
Spirit Wear Income	\$ 7,590.90	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 4,928.03	\$ (4,071.97)
Teacher Clubs Income	\$ 28,024.50	\$ 24,500.00	\$ 25,123.20	\$ 623.20
Third Grade Party Fundraising	\$ 1,348.70	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,763.50	\$ 763.50
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	\$ 1,520.00	\$ 480.00
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	\$ 888.13	\$ 2,111.87
Fall Fest Expenses	\$ 1,240.33	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,249.78	\$ 0.22
Field Trips	\$ 6,710.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 6,120.00	\$ 3,880.00
Fundraising Activity Expenses	\$ 859.58	\$ 1,550.00	\$ 684.73	\$ 865.27
Insurance Expenses	\$ 466.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 487.00	\$ 13.00
Misc Family School Activities	\$ 541.76	\$ 700.00	\$ 418.99	\$ 281.01
Misc In-School Activities Expenses	\$ 5.98		\$ 16.75	\$ (16.75)
Operating Expenses	\$ 856.49	\$ 850.00	\$ 769.78	\$ 80.22
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	\$ 2,406.48	\$ 5,093.52
Screen Free Week Expenses	\$ 269.87	\$ 500.00	\$ 180.83	\$ 319.17
Spirit Wear Expense	\$ 5,560.95	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 3,852.52	\$ 4,647.48
Student Appreciation	\$ 289.07	\$ 500.00	\$ 121.29	\$ 378.71
Teacher Appreciation Activity	\$ 2,664.11	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 1,306.91	\$ 1,343.09
Teacher Club Expenses	\$ 16,341.24	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 9,978.45	\$ 4,021.55
Teacher Request Fund	\$ 1,165.45	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 563.25	\$ 436.75
Third Grade End of Year	\$ 5,205.15	\$ 5,763.50	\$ -	\$ 5,763.50
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	\$ 1,888.65	\$ (488.65)

Income Total	\$ 65,292.74	\$ 53,963.31
Expenses Total	\$ 59,648.87	\$ 31,201.58
NET	\$ 5,643.87	\$ 22,761.73

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	