



BEN FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY PTO

January 2026 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Monday, January 26, 2026

WHERE: Ben Franklin 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: 7:35pm

TOPIC AND SPOKEPERSON	DISCUSSION POINTS
<p>Introductions</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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>Principal Update</p> <p>Mr. Hewitt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Reminder:</u> Weekly newsletters from Mr. Hewitt are typically sent out to families Saturday mornings around 10 a.m. - The next spirit assembly will take place this Friday, January 30. Students are welcome to show their school spirit by wearing Ben Franklin spirit wear or school colors (blue and white). - School Counselor Appreciation Week is next week with School Counselor Appreciation Day being February 4. Students will be doing different activities in their classrooms to show appreciation for Ben Franklin's school counselor, Ms. Umbach. - Before the Winter Break, the school's daytime custodian, Mr. Gerald, retired. Mr. William will now be the daytime custodian; he was previously the lead night custodian. From now on, evening custodial services will be contracted out. There will be a steady crew coming in each night.

- Teacher/Staff Changes:

- Mrs. Hargraves-Dix will be going on maternity leave. Lindsay Buckley will be her replacement and remain with the students until the end of the year. Ms. Buckley is experienced with 2nd grade and has some time in the classroom with Mrs. Hargraves-Dix to allow for the students to have some familiarity with her.
- Mrs. Docheff will also be going on maternity leave beginning in February; Jenna Valentine will replace her for the remainder of the year. Ms. Valentine also has a background in Pre-K and Special Education.
- Teaching Assistant, Dana Schan, has resigned. She was able to get a new teaching position elsewhere; hiring her replacement is in process.

- The 100th Day of School has been pushed back because of the recent snow day. Instead of falling on February 13, the 100th Day of School will be Tuesday, February 17.

- Valentine's Day classroom celebrations will continue the same way they have in the past. Food items and valentine exchanges will be allowed. There have been rumors that have popped up on social media regarding the other elementary schools in the district and the changes that have been implemented surrounding Valentine's Day. To clarify, other schools will explore ways to make celebrations simpler and as a result, more equitable for all students.

- Save the Date: On Wednesday, February 18, there will be a district wide curriculum and community conversation at LHS. Pizza and childcare will be provided. There will be more information on the referendum and the progress that has been made thus far.

- The preschool lottery is now open. Please spread the word to those who aren't in the system yet. Registration for the lottery will be open until Friday, February 19.

- Kindergarten registration is opening in early March. This is earlier to allow for schools to get the number of incoming kindergarteners sooner allowing for better planning.

<p>PTO President Update</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The PTO Directory is available to families and updated throughout the year. Families are welcome to use the directory to plan celebrations and playdates as well as receive correspondence from homeroom coordinators. If you would like to be added to the directory, email Mr. Hewitt. - Longtime, daytime custodian, Mr. Gerald, retired right before winter break. To celebrate his retirement and thank him for all of his help over the years, the PTO gifted him a gift card. - The PTO made prize baskets for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of the third grade geography bee. - Another PTO sponsored assembly has been booked for Friday, April 10.
<p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Shop to Donate - Five Below</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The PTO's Shop to Donate event was at Five Below (on Nassau Blvd.) for the week of December 15. -10% of \$360 was donated to the PTO (\$36.19). Currently waiting on Five Below to process the paper work and disperse the check. <p><u>Spirit Wear Sale</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - The Winter Spirit Wear sale took place from January 7 to January 21. All orders have been submitted to the vendor. - Order items are expected to arrive by mid-February. They will be delivered directly to the school and distributed in backpacks. - There will likely be one more sale in the spring with varying designs and additional sizes. <p><u>Family Movie Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicole Bottrell spoke. - Family Movie Night took place on Friday, January 23. There was a showing of A Minecraft Movie.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was a wonderful turnout; lots of families joined. Snacks and spirit wear were for sale at the event. - The 3rd Grade Committee also has a fundraiser table at the event. They were able to make \$55. - Based on rough numbers, \$1000 was made between admission and concessions.
<p>Ongoing Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Winter Clothing Drive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier and Lindsay Walsh spoke. - The Winter Clothing Drive ends this Friday, January 30. The PTO was able to donate lots of clothing items to HomeFront since the start of the drive on November 3. - HomeFront was able to haul 2 truck loads the last time they came to pick up donations. They will be returning for their final haul after the week after January 30 to make time for any last minute drop offs. - Winter coats and boots were given to BF school counselor, Mrs. Umbach, for BF students who are in need of these items. <p><u>Book Exchange Book Collection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petra Crevier spoke. - The PTO is collecting books for the annual book exchange year round. Donations can be dropped off in the collection box in the front entrance vestibule. - Books of all levels are welcome. The PTO also takes board books for BF Pre-K students. There is always a need for chapter books for more advanced readers. - For large book donation loads, Petra would be willing to come pick them up. Please email bfptorocks@gmail.com to arrange this. - If families happen to come across any social media posts giving away free books in the area, please alert the PTO as well.

<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Ice Skating at IceLand</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The PTO is hosting a private ice skating session at IceLand on Friday, February 6 from 6pm to 7:30pm. The ice rink has been reserved for BF families only. - Cost: \$12 per person (including skate time and skate rental) in advance; \$15 per person (including skate time and skate rental) at the door - The PTO will be selling hot chocolate for \$1 inside the rink area. Concessions will be for sale in the Ice Land main area. - See the signup to register your skater. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Lunch Sponsored by 2nd Grade</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lindsay Walsh spoke. - The next teacher appreciation lunch will be sponsored by 2nd grade families and takes place on Friday, February 6. - Thus far, lots of monetary donations have been received. Those funds will be going towards catering Italian food. Additional funds are still needed. - Home cooked food is needed and helpful. See the signup to contribute. - Reach out to Lindsay with any questions. <p><u>Valentine’s Day Babysitting Night at Amerikick</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith and Kristen Paladino spoke. - The PTO is offering babysitting services at Amerikick on Valentine’s Day (Saturday, February 14) from 6pm to 8:15pm. - Cost: \$15 per child (new reduced price) - This is a drop off event. Pizza, snacks, drinks, karate and crafts are included. See the signup to reserve your child’s spot. <p><u>Science Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilana Hernandez spoke. - The PTO’s annual Science Night will take place on Thursday, February 26 from 6pm to 7:30pm. This year it is animal science themed. Students will receive an explorer notepad and badge upon arrival to encourage their
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	<p>exploration of animal science activities, experiments and games in the BF gym. Families are welcome to check out the 3rd Grade Science Fair in the All Purpose Room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteers are needed to help with check-in, experiments and clean up. If interested, sign up here. - The 3rd Grade Science Fair will be taking place at this event as well. BF 3rd graders are welcome to sign up to present a science project of their choice. Group projects are allowed. Each 3rd grader will receive a scientist ID badge, certificate and ribbon. If your child is interested in signing up for the Science Fair, fill out this form. - The 3rd Grade Fundraising Committee will be selling soft pretzels, baked goods and drinks at this event to raise money for the 3rd grade yearbook, party and gift. This will be cash only. - This is a FREE event open to all BF families. <p><u>Coin Wars</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicole Bottrel spoke. - Coin Wars will be taking place from March 2 to March 27. - To participate, families can send in loose change and dollar bills for their kids to place into their grade's jar. Whichever grade has the most money will win a prize. - The prize has yet to be determined; it still needs to be discussed with Mr. Hewitt. More info in the future.
<p>Updates</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Third Grade Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - The 3rd Grade Committee has had their first meeting. They have divided into subcommittees: Yearbook, Class Gift, Party and Fundraising. - Thus far, planning is going well. The fundraising group has come up with various ideas of how to raise money for the 3rd Grade Party. - If you are a 3rd grade parent and would like to join, reach out via email at bfptorocks@gmail.com <p><u>Open PTO Board Positions at end of School Year</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - At least two board positions will be open at the end of this year as it is Megan and Nicole’s final year at BF. - Please email bfptorocks@gmail.com if you’re interested in joining the board. We would LOVE to have you!
<p style="text-align: center;">Treasurer’s Report</p> <p>Kristen Paladino</p>	<p><i>*Please scroll to the end of the Meeting Minutes for Kristen’s Treasurer’s Report</i></p>
<p>Questions or Comments</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All</p>	<p>Q: Will there be more slots for preschool this coming year as there were in the past years?</p> <p>A: Yes, there will be more openings because additional Pre-K classrooms will be opening this year. These classrooms will not be at Ben Franklin as there isn’t space but at other locations in the district. There likely will still be a waitlist and lottery system (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Q: When will jumpstart dates be set for LIS or BF?</p> <p>A: At this moment, there are no set dates just yet. It will likely be the first week of August. Admin is still discussing the dates (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Q: Which emergency closing date will be taken for today’s snow day?</p> <p>A: As per the district calendar, May 26 is the emergency closing date that will be used and school will be in session that day (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Q: Have the field trips dates been chosen for this school year?</p> <p>A: Yes, the field trip dates are as follows: Kindergarten will be going to Howell’s Farm on April 16; 1st Grade will be going to the Philadelphia Zoo on May 13; 2nd Grade will be visiting the Jenkinson’s Aquarium on March 23; and 3rd Grade will be visiting the Watershed Institute on May 27. Pre-K</p>

	<p>classrooms will be visited by the Touch It Truck; the date is TBD (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Comment: Dine to Donate Update - PTO received a check for \$220 from Candela's Dine to Donate today.</p>
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Monday, March 2, 2026 at 7pm (virtual)</p>

2/7/26 Summary

1. Movie Night Summary: \$407 Admissions, \$694 Concessions; Spent \$371 (NET: \$730)

2. Holiday Shop Summary: \$2434 Sales; \$1492 Expenses (NET: \$942)

3. Other Deposits: \$972 Ice Skating (still have a deposit so this is not final); \$90 Amerikick; \$115 3rd Grade Concert Raffle; \$38 Charleston Wrap; \$36 Dine to Donate; \$400 Book Fair Income; \$27 Spirit Wear Income; \$55 to 3rd Grade Fundraising

4. \$81 Bank Fees; \$1120 Operating Expenses (6 New Tables, Annual Insurance Premium, New Cotton Candy Machine); prepaid some expenses for PNO and Science Night.

5. Paid \$1120 for 2nd Assembly; \$55 on Summer Books for Students; \$125 for Student Winter Goodies; \$230 for Teacher Winter Treats and \$84 for Mr. Gerald; purchased Geo. Bee Prizes and Headbands for 3rd Graders.

Ben Franklin PTO 2025-2026

**as of 2/7/26

Budget Categories

Income Categories	24-25 Actual	25-26 Recommer	Actual 25-26	Dif
Cash Donations	\$ 3,235.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,065.00	\$ 65.00
Coin Wars Income	\$ 1,454.53	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ (1,500.00)
Fun Run Income	\$ 841.50	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 765.75	\$ (234.25)
Dine to Donate Income	\$ 700.85	\$ 750.00	\$ 570.14	\$ (179.86)
End of Year Carnival Income	\$ 2,894.50	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ (3,000.00)
Fall Fest Income	\$ 1,411.35	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,706.40	\$ 206.40
Fundraising Activity Income	\$ 3,549.90	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,027.15	\$ (972.85)
Other Income	\$ 5.20	\$ -	\$ 2,502.18	\$ 2,502.18
PNO Income		\$ 2,500.00		
Raffle/Gaming Income	\$ 2,483.35	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,676.50	\$ (1,323.50)
Scholastic Book Fair Deposits	\$ 8,142.93	\$ 8,800.00	\$ -	\$ (8,800.00)
Spirit Wear Income	\$ 4,932.53	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,544.25	\$ 1,044.25
Third Grade Party Fundraising	\$ 1,763.50	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ (1,000.00)
Trenton Thunder Income	\$ 2,715.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ -	\$ (2,750.00)
Holiday Shop Income	\$ 2,100.45	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,716.95	
Expense Categories	24-25 Actual	25-26 Recommer	Actual 25-26	Dif
Assemblies	\$ 1,520.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,810.00	\$ (10.00)
Bank Fees	\$ 172.29	\$ 175.00	\$ 177.47	
Coin Wars Expenses	\$ 55.96	\$ 50.00	\$ -	\$ 50.00
Fun Run Expenses	\$ 429.78	\$ 500.00	\$ 174.31	\$ 325.69
End of Year Carnival Expenses	\$ 2,911.46	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00
Fall Fest Expenses	\$ 1,249.78	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,118.13	\$ 131.87
Fundraising Activity Expenses	\$ 684.73	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,214.57	\$ 135.43
Insurance Expenses	\$ 487.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Misc Family School Activities	\$ 418.99	\$ 50.00	\$ -	\$ 50.00
Misc In-School Activities Expenses	\$ 16.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
No-Cost Family Events		\$ 650.00		
Operating Expenses	\$ 883.74	\$ 850.00	\$ 1,930.49	\$ (1,080.49)
Other Expenses	\$ 39.00	\$ -	\$ 203.74	\$ (203.74)
PNO Expenses		\$ 1,000.00		
PTO Gift to School	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Scholarships	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 100.00	
Scholastic Book Fair Expenses	\$ 6,651.03	\$ 900.00	\$ 196.07	\$ 703.93
Scholastic Book Fair Payment		\$ 6,500.00		
Science Night		\$ 400.00		
Screen Free Week Expenses	\$ 286.52	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00
Student Appreciation	\$ 298.51	\$ 500.00	\$ 197.00	\$ 303.00
Teacher Appreciation Activity	\$ 2,245.29	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 740.52	\$ 659.48
Teacher Appreciation Week		\$ 1,250.00		
Teacher Request Fund	\$ 614.66	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 825.92	\$ 174.08
Third Grade End of Year	\$ 5,382.62	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 448.84	\$ 3,551.16
Trenton Thunder Expenses	\$ 1,596.00	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 1,050.00
Trunk or Treat	\$ 150.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 106.90	\$ 93.10
Holiday Shop Expenses	\$ 1,888.65	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,492.12	\$ 7.88

Income Total	\$ 36,230.59	\$ 18,574.32
Expenses Total	\$ 28,182.76	\$ 11,436.08
NET	\$ 8,047.83	\$ 7,138.24

Teacher Appreciation Monthly		
September		
October		
November		
December	\$ 230.41	Chocolate Bar
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
Total	\$ 230.41	
Budget	\$ 400.00	
Remaining	\$ 169.59	