



BEN FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY PTO

April 2026 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Monday, April 13, 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: 7:03pm - END TIME: 7:55pm

TOPIC AND SPOKEPERSON	DISCUSSION POINTS
Introductions Megan Coopersmith	<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
Principal Update Mr. Hewitt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students enjoyed an assembly this past week titled "Your Life is a Work of Art," which highlighted focus and mindfulness through song. The kids appeared to really enjoy it. Pictures can be found in Mr. Hewitt's latest newsletter.- Right before Spring Break, the school had a high energy spirit assembly where the new Amos mascot was unveiled. Students were super excited about this surprise reveal as hints were left around the building leading up to the assembly. It was a great way to go into the break. Amos will make other appearances throughout the remainder of the school year. However, nothing will be scheduled as to keep the spontaneity that the kids enjoy.- On Wednesday, April 15, the district will be holding a strategic planning meeting at LHS beginning at 6pm. Everyone is invited. There will be a total of three meetings but attendees are not expected to attend all of them. Families interested in attending can RSVP via the link in the most recent newsletter. Walk-ins are welcome.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff training on the new adaptive version of NJSLA took place. Similar to iReady, the NJSLA exam will adjust its level of difficulty with the student. The third graders are the only students at BF testing this year. This will be their first year taking the NJSLA exams and will be tested in reading, writing and math. Third grade parents will receive a notice with more details. All questions regarding NJSLA should be addressed with the child's teacher, Mrs. Umbach and/or Mr. Hewitt. - The chicks will be arriving tomorrow! Each year eggs are delivered by a local farm and put into an incubator. A hatch cam can be viewed live until the eggs hatch. This is a project held by Kindergarten allowing them to witness the hatch cycle. The chicks will be with BF for around a week before they return to the farm. - The LTEF's 3rd annual Lawrence Has Talent will take place this Friday, April 17. The youngest performer this year is Ben Franklin's Rieley Andrie. Tickets are still on sale if interested in attending. - Unclaimed Lost and Found items have been bagged up to be donated to HomeFront. With the changes in weather, the racks have been filling up again. Remember to please label items so they can be returned to families, otherwise unclaimed and unlabeled items will be donated to HomeFront. - The school is again taking part in Soles for Souls this year, an event that is organized by Mrs. Cimorelli, where shoes are collected. Please bring in any shoes to donate; there is a bin in the front entrance vestibule. Shoes will be collected until April 30.
<p>PTO President Update</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The second PTO sponsored assembly, "Your Life is a Work of Art," was held on Friday.

<p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Coin Wars</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Nicole Bottrell spoke.- Coin Wars took place this year from March 2 to March 27. The PTO was able to raise \$1519 in total.- The third graders won. They have earned a pajama day with popsicles and an extra recess. An email was sent out to third grade families with more information. Weather permitting the third graders will get their prize on April 28. <p><u>Book Exchange</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Petra Crevier spoke.- The PTO's annual book exchange took place on March 6. Students were able to take home 5 "new to them" books plus 1 bonus book. Each child was offered the opportunity to take home 6 books in total. Teachers were also welcome to take some books for their classrooms.- Books are collected all year round. There is a bin in the front entrance vestibule for donations. If there is a need for the donation to be picked up, the PTO is willing to arrange that as well. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Lunch Sponsored by 1st Grade</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Petra Crevier spoke.- The latest teacher appreciation luncheon was sponsored by 1st grade families and took place on March 10.- The luncheon was "Lucky to Have You" themed. First grade families were generous with their monetary donations and homemade meal contributions. Money contributions were used to pay for a St. Patrick's Day themed catered lunch from Wood Craft Catering. <p><u>Dine to Donate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Petra Crevier spoke.- The Dine to Donate for the month of March took place at Shake Shack on March 24. There was little engagement this time around with less than
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	<p>\$100 of contributions. As a result, Shake Shack agreed to donate a \$100 gift card to the PTO that will be used for a future raffle.</p> <p><u>Multicultural Night</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilana Hernandez and Petra Crevier spoke. - The 3rd annual Multicultural Night took place on March 25. Families in attendance were able to learn about other cultures/heritages through information tables, food, and performance. - This year there was an increase in involvement by teachers and staff members with some hosting a table, performing in a fashion show, and volunteering their time to serve food or check families in. Thank you to the LHS volunteers who assisted in the event as well. - There was an increase in students wearing traditional attire this year celebrating cultural differences through dress. <p><u>Adults Only Night at River Horse Brewery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The 1st Adults Only Night took place April 11 at River Horse Brewery. In the end of year survey sent out to families last school years, feedback indicated that parents wanted the PTO to host events that would encourage socialization between parents. - Around 26 people attended the event, which was less than anticipated. Attendees enjoyed food, trivia, raffles, a tour of the brewery and the opportunity to purchase a custom flight of beer.
<p>Ongoing Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Spring Spirit Wear</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - The online shop for spring spirit wear is now open. This is the final sale of the school year with the sale ending on April 20. - New to the shop this season: Shorts, lightweight zip up, and baseball caps

<p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>Book Fair</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The Scholastic book fair will be back at BF from April 21 to April 24. - Set up will take place on Friday afternoon with a Preview Day taking place on Monday. Students will come home with their wishlists this day. - Sales taking place during school hours for students will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Shopping hours for families will take place on Wednesday, Thursday evening, and Friday during conferences. Dinner will be provided on Thursday evening. Families are welcome to shop and enjoy hot dogs, nachos and pasta. - This season the theme for the book fair is mythical creatures. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Lunch Sponsored by Pre-K/Kindergarten</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chelsea Rubin spoke. - The final teacher appreciation lunch will be sponsored by Pre-K and Kindergarten families. It will be spring themed and take place on April 23. - Donations are coming in slowly and are needed. There are 100 teachers and staff members that this lunch will feed. Pre-K and Kindergarten families can contribute via this link. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Week - PTO Sponsored Week</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith and Petra Crevier spoke. - Teacher Appreciation Week sponsored by the PTO takes place from April 27 to May 1 to avoid complications with NJSLA testing that typically takes place during National Teacher Appreciation Week. - Similar to last year, the days will be as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday: Ben's & Noble - Teachers will get to pick books for their classroom while enjoying coffee donated by Starbucks - Tuesday: Snacks and Supplies - Teachers will get snacks and supplies to restock their classroom - Wednesday: A catered lunch by Wood Craft Catering (owned by former BF parent, Sal Riccobono) - Thursday: TBD
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	<p style="text-align: center;">- Friday: Raffles and games for teachers</p> <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Week - Classroom Families Sponsored</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lindsay Walsh spoke. - Classrooms will celebrate their teachers during National Teacher Appreciation Week from May 4 to May 8. - An email was sent out to homeroom coordinators with directions on how to help celebrate that week. Teachers will get more gifts and goodies from their students and their families that week. <p><u>Pizza Night with Book Bingo</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lindsay Walsh spoke. - The PTO's Pizza Night featuring book bingo will take place on May 6. Forms were sent home and should be returned over the next couple of weeks. - Families are welcome to pay \$5 per person in advance to enjoy a pizza dinner. Adults are welcome to play bingo for a chance for their child to win. Current BF families with siblings are welcome to participate. - Winners take home a book bundle that they will be able to choose from the prize table. <p><u>Carnival</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - The PTO's annual Carnival will take place on May 17. There will be a magic and bubble show, inflatable games, raffles including 50/50, cotton candy and more. - This is the biggest event of the year and is rain or shine. More information to come.
<p>Updates</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p>	<p><u>3rd Grade Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - The 3rd Grade Committee has been working hard. Thus far, all fundraising efforts are complete. The yearbook is in process and the t-shirt

	<p>is being designed. The party subcommittee has booked a photo booth and is considering a vendor for water ice.</p> <p><u>Nominations for PTO Executive Board</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominations were accepted beginning April 3 and closed at the end of this meeting. At the May meeting, an election will be held. - For a candidate to be eligible, prior to nomination all of the following requirements must be satisfied: (1) attended at least 50% of the PTO meetings, and (2) volunteered for PTO activities. - No nominations were submitted via email to Recording Secretary, Ilana Hernandez. Nominations for the following open board positions were made in person at this meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President: Petra Crevier nominates Ilana Hernandez; Chelsea Rubin seconds this nomination; Nicole Bottrel thirds this nomination. - Vice President 1: Kristen Paladino nominates Petra Crevier; Ilana Hernandez seconds this nomination. - Vice President 2: Nicole Bottrel nominates Lindsay Walsh; Petra Crevier seconds this nomination. - Corresponding Secretary: Petra Crevier nominates Chelsea Rubin; Kristen Paladino seconds this nomination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominee doesn't meet eligibility requirements; there were no objections to this nomination. Nominee moves forward. - Recording Secretary: Kristen Paladino nominates Alex Brady; Ilana Hernandez seconds this nomination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominee doesn't meet eligibility requirements; there were no objections to this nomination. Nominee moves forward. - Treasurer: Ilana Hernandez nominates Kristen Paladino; Nicole Bottrel seconds this nomination. - This concludes board nominations. Elections will take place at the May 2026 meeting.
<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>All</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Based on a recent conversation with Mrs. Umbach, she is always looking for old spirit wear donations.</p>
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Monday, May 18, 2026 at 7pm (virtual)</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">4/17/26 Summary</p> <p>1. Coin Wars Income \$1519; PNO Admissions \$644; PNO Raffles \$385; Third Grade Fundraising \$110</p> <p>2. Dine to Donate \$315 (Candela's & Chuck E Cheese); Popcorn Fundraiser \$860; Donation \$61</p> <p>3. Science Night \$97 and PNO expenses \$33 (see Event Summary for event totals)</p> <p>4. Multicultural Night \$343; Student Appreciation \$158; Book Fair Expenses \$39</p> <p>5. Additional Expenses: Bank Fees (\$3), Coin Wars Expenses (\$30), Operating Expenses (\$53)</p>
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Ben Franklin PTO 2025-2026

**as of 4/17/26

Budget Categories

Income Categories	24-25 Actual	25-26 Recommer	Actual 25-26	Dif
Cash Donations	\$ 3,235.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,146.52	\$ 146.52
Coin Wars Income	\$ 1,454.53	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,519.00	\$ 19.00
Fun Run Income	\$ 841.50	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 840.75	\$ (159.25)
Dine to Donate Income	\$ 700.85	\$ 750.00	\$ 885.35	\$ 135.35
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	\$ 5,809.65	\$ 809.65
Other Income	\$ 5.20	\$ -	\$ 2,502.18	\$ 2,502.18
PNO Income		\$ 2,500.00	\$ 694.00	\$ (1,806.00)
Raffle/Gaming Income	\$ 2,483.35	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,061.00	\$ (939.00)
Scholastic Book Fair Deposits	\$ 8,142.93	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 4,796.31	\$ (4,003.69)
Spirit Wear Income	\$ 4,932.53	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,767.25	\$ 1,267.25
Third Grade Party Fundraising	\$ 1,763.50	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 896.36	\$ (103.64)
Trenton Thunder Income	\$ 2,715.00	\$ 2,750.00	\$ -	\$ (2,750.00)
Holiday Shop Income	\$ 2,100.45	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,716.95	\$ 716.95
Pizza Party/Family BINGO Income		\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ (200.00)
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	\$ 185.22	\$ (10.22)
Coin Wars Expenses	\$ 55.96	\$ 50.00	\$ 29.64	\$ 20.36
Fun Run Expenses	\$ 429.78	\$ 500.00	\$ 174.31	\$ 325.69
End of Year Carnival Expenses	\$ 2,911.46	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 222.75	\$ 2,277.25
Fall Fest Expenses	\$ 1,249.78	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,118.13	\$ 131.87
Fundraising Activity Expenses	\$ 684.73	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,288.55	\$ 61.45
Insurance Expenses	\$ 487.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 516.00	\$ (16.00)
Misc Family School Activities	\$ 418.99	\$ 50.00	\$ -	\$ 50.00
Misc In-School Activities Expenses	\$ 16.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
No-Cost Family Events		\$ 650.00	\$ 482.64	\$ 167.36
Operating Expenses	\$ 883.74	\$ 850.00	\$ 1,539.61	\$ (689.61)
Other Expenses	\$ 39.00	\$ -	\$ 203.74	\$ (203.74)
PNO Expenses		\$ 1,000.00	\$ 734.46	\$ 265.54
PTO Gift to School	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Scholarships	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Scholastic Book Fair Expenses	\$ 6,651.03	\$ 900.00	\$ 234.70	\$ 665.30
Scholastic Book Fair Payment		\$ 6,500.00	\$ 2,566.73	\$ 3,933.27
Science Night		\$ 400.00	\$ 305.56	\$ 94.44
Pizza Party/Family BINGO Expenses	\$ 286.52	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00
Student Appreciation	\$ 298.51	\$ 500.00	\$ 355.07	\$ 144.93
Teacher Appreciation Activity	\$ 2,245.29	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 765.52	\$ 634.48
Teacher Appreciation Week		\$ 1,250.00	\$ -	\$ 1,250.00
Teacher Request Fund	\$ 614.66	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 825.92	\$ 174.08
Third Grade End of Year	\$ 5,382.62	\$ 4,896.36	\$ 393.84	\$ 4,502.52
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	\$ 29,341.72
Expenses Total	\$ 28,182.76	\$ 16,151.41
NET	\$ 8,047.83	\$ 13,190.31

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	