



BEN FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY PTO

May 2026 Meeting Minutes

WHEN: Monday, May 18, 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: 6:00PM – END TIME 6:45PM

| TOPIC AND SPOKEPERSON | DISCUSSION POINTS |
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| <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>PTO Board Elections</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominations for all open PTO board positions opened 10 days prior to the April PTO meeting and closed at the end of the April PTO meeting. The election was held at this May PTO meeting. - All positions are open for nominations: President, Vice President 1, Vice President 2, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary and Treasurer. As for the April PTO meeting, only one candidate is running for each position. - This meeting served as the election for the open board positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilana Hernandez elected as President (unanimous and unopposed). - Petra Crevier re-elected as Vice President 1 (unanimous and unopposed). - Lindsay Walsh re-elected as Vice President 2 (unanimous and unopposed). |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chelsea Rubin elected as Corresponding Secretary (unanimous and unopposed). - Alex Brady elected as Recording Secretary (unanimous and unopposed). - Kristen Paladino re-elected as Treasurer (unanimous and unopposed). <p>- A big thank you to Megan Coopersmith, who served as PTO President, and Nicole Bottrel, who served as PTO Corresponding Secretary, for all of their hard work and service to the BF community. You will be missed!</p> |
| <p>Principal Update</p> <p>Mr. Hewitt</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congrats to the new board! Thanks extended to Megan Coopersmith and Nicole. Their support will be missed. - Changes in staff: Rachel Lee was hired as a new Pre-K teacher going into next year. Jenna Valentina has replaced Ms. Docheff and will be approved for the self-contained position going into next year. - Administration has started class roster placements for next year. Updates of the teachers for next year will be presented in an upcoming newsletter. For next year, there will be two Pre-K classrooms, three Kindergarten classrooms, three 1st Grade classrooms, three 2nd grade classrooms and four 3rd grade classrooms. The number of self-contained classrooms will remain the same. - There has been a change for incoming Kindergarteners. The school will be holding Kindergarten screeners on June 10 for incoming kindergartners who are brand new to the district. Pre-K students attending Kindergarten in the fall will be screened by Pre-K teachers. This will help with class placement. - Orientation for Preschool and Kindergarten families will take place on August 27. - Save the Date: The PTO's Popsicles on the Playground will take place on August 19 (August 20 - rain date). |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lots of 3rd grade activities planned for the rest of the school year. 3rd grade students will be visited by LIS ambassadors, have Unity Day, and other events for families to tour LIS. They will also get to take part in the water balloon toss after field day and have their 3rd grade party. - Field Day is taking place on May 28. Volunteers are needed to attend. See Mrs. Cimorelli's sign up genius in the newsletter to sign up. - The Kindergarten concert is taking place in early June. Families are invited to attend. - A big thank you to the PTO for another successful Carnival! It was well intended and it continues to be a great way for the BF community to come together. - Please be on the lookout for the upcoming newsletter as it will contain more information about upcoming events. |
| <p>PTO President Update</p> <p>Megan Coopersmith</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thank you all! This is Megan's last meeting at Ben Franklin. She has been on the board since 2019 and has had a great experience. |
| <p>Recaps</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p> | <p><u>Book Fair</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The spring Scholastic book fair took place from April 21 through April 24. - Decisions on whether or not the PTO will receive the profit of this fair by cash, Scholastic Dollars or both has yet to be made and is typically influenced by how much money is in the PTO's bank account. - Often the Scholastic Dollars are used to purchase birthday books and library books each year. <p><u>Teacher Appreciation Lunch Sponsored by Pre-K/Kindergarten Families</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chelsea Rubin spoke. |

- The luncheon went well. Families were generous with their monetary donations making it possible for the lunch to be catered. Teachers and staff greatly appreciated the meal.

Teacher Appreciation Week - PTO Sponsored Week

- Megan Coopersmith and Petra Crevier spoke.
- The PTO's Teacher Appreciation Week took place from April 27 to May 1.
- Teachers and staff were celebrated with free books for their classroom libraries, candy and lotto tickets, raffles and games, and restock of supplies and snacks. There was lots of positive feedback.

Teacher Appreciation Week - Classroom Families Sponsored Week

- Lindsay Walsh spoke.
- Classroom families celebrated BF teachers during National Teacher Appreciation Week which took place from May 4 to May 8.
- There was great feedback. Homeroom coordinations collected money, coordinated notes and found other ways to acknowledge teachers.

Pizza Night with Book Bingo

- Lindsay Walsh spoke.
- The PTO's Pizza Night with book bingo took place on May 6 as a Screen-Free Week activity.
- This event was well attended. Families were able to enjoy a dinner of pizza, salad and dessert while enjoying a game of bingo. Together kids and adults were very engaged and some won books as prizes.

Carnival

- Megan Coopersmith spoke.
- The PTO's annual Carnival took place on May 17. It was a hot day but this year, the event was equipped with tented areas for shade and misting stations.
- The event was well attended with families enjoying inflatable games, prizes and raffles. This year, the PTO hired a student teacher for face painting. Families also enjoyed balloon animals and a magic and bubble show. Cotton candy and other snacks were sold at the event.

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| <p>Ongoing Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p> | <p><u>Spring Spirit Wear</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - Spring spirit wear orders went out a couple of weeks ago. Everyone who put in an order should have received their items by now. |
| <p>Upcoming Events</p> <p>Respective Chairs</p> | <p><u>3rd Grade Party</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - The 3rd Grade Party Committee has been working super hard to organize the third grade party scheduled for June 16. - The party will take place during school hours. There will be water ice, a photo booth, splash tower, misting stations and lots of games. <p><u>Trenton Thunder Game</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Paladino spoke. - The Trenton Thunder game will take place on June 18. Order forms are due by May 22. - BF students attending the game have the option of singing "Grand Old Flag" on the field prior to the start of the game. Mrs. LaFlamme will be holding rehearsals for students during school hours once all order forms are submitted. <p><u>Chalk the Walk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Megan Coopersmith spoke. - The final event of the school year will take place the evening before the last day of school, June 23. - Families are encouraged to decorate the front walkway with drawing and messages with chalk. Ice pops and snacks will be available at the event. |
| <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 together to finalize all of the end of year items for 3rd graders. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 3rd grade party is scheduled for June 16. Vendors for the event have been hired. - The 3rd grade yearbook is almost complete with the cover being finalized. The committee is waiting on the student count to submit the final order for printing. A copy will be purchased for the main office and BF library. - The 3rd grade gift this year will be a t-shirt. The design is being finalized and t-shirts will be ordered soon. |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Treasurer's Report</p> <p>Kristen Paladino</p> | <p><i>*A final report will be released once the year is closed on June 30.</i></p> |
| <p>Questions or Comments</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All</p> | <p>Q: With the number of classrooms being reduced to 3 classrooms per grade (with the exception of 3rd grade), what is the expected maximum number of students per classroom?</p> <p>A: There is no set requirement for the number of students in a classroom. Kindergarten is the only grade level that has a state requirement in which a school must add an assistant to a classroom if there are more than 25 students. The district is not planning to have a large amount of students in each classroom with the cap being 25 students per classroom. At this time this amount isn't slated to increase. If certain elementary schools surpass 25, students can be diverted to the other elementary schools to keep this number (answered by Mr. Hewitt).</p> <p>Comment: Mr. Hewitt will not be present for Chalk the Walk this year as he will be attending the Lawrence High School graduation ceremony.</p> |
| <p>Next Meeting</p> | <p>See you next year! Enjoy your summer!</p> |