MINUTES

BEDMINSTER TWP PTO • 234 SOMERVILLE RD • BEDMINSTER, NJ 07921 • PHONE: 908-234-0768

SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

Start Time: 7:04 pm

President's Welcome: Fareeha Rahim

Fareeha Rahim welcomed attendees to the first PTO meeting of the 2026–2027 school year and introduced the Executive Board: Allison Opperman, Vice President; Hiba Najeeb, Secretary; and Nadine Griffiths, Treasurer.

She encouraged families to participate in PTO activities and emphasized that even small contributions of time, including helping with envelopes and preparing materials, support the school community.

Principal's Report: (Elementary) Corby Swan

Good evening everyone. Thanks for being here. It's still obviously very early in the school year so I only have a few updates and highlights to share with you tonight. We will of course have more as we move through the school year.
On September 1st, we welcomed our full staff back, we were treated to an awesome grab and go breakfast by the PTO, so thank you for that. We then hosted not one but two orientations, Kindergarten Orientation on September 1st and New Student Orientation on September 2nd.

Our PTO was very instrumental in assisting with arrival and dismissal, as they helped many of our Kindergarten and some of our new 1st - 4th grade students find their way around to make it to homeroom.

Academically, for continuity and growth, we will be using the same programs in elementary school this year as we did last year:

Benchmark Advance, which is our English Language Arts Program. We are excited to be entering year #2 of using this program, Releasing Writers (for writing), Sound Start (for phonics), Ready Mathematics and Big Ideas for math, and TCI for Science.

Any internet-enabled devices (including cell phones, smartwatches, and smart glasses) must be kept in cubbies or backpacks from the opening bell to the last bell of the school day. Thank you in advance for partnering with us regarding our school procedures.

We will continue to place an emphasis on the Six Pillars of Character. To do this, we will speak to students often about the Six Pillars of Character, which we use as a guide to help students develop these areas. Parents, I am giving YOU a homework assignment to memorize the Six Pillars of Character so that you can have conversations with your children about them. One way to memorize it is to use the TRRFCC acronym which sounds like the word "Terrific". I will also continue with the Principal's Character Lunch Award Series where we recognize students demonstrating consistent examples of great character.

PreK - 4 Back to School Night is next Wednesday, September 23rd. You should have received communication regarding that today.

This is an awesome evening where parents get the opportunity to meet your child's teacher(s), learn more about our curriculum and programs, new initiatives, and gain a sense for what an average school day looks like for your child(ren). It is also an opportunity to build and connect with other parents who share your same homeroom. In hearing from many parents over the years, one of the highlights is leaving a note of encouragement in their child's desk that night so they see it when they arrive the next morning.

School is closed on Monday, September 21st in observance of Yom Kippur.

Thank you to the PTO for all that you do and we look forward to a great school year!

Principal's Report: (Middle School) Lauren Zugale

- Welcome back!

- Dr. Zugale visited all students in Advisory/ Instructional Center to review the MS Handbook and seek suggestions from the students themselves for how to make this a great year!

- Community Service management will be stored in Genesis. Dr. Zugale is going into Instructional Center classes to show students how to upload forms and a correspondence will

be sent to families. Paper forms will continue to be accepted for now as well to be turned into the main office. Opportunities will be listed on the website and shared with students at school.

- Reminder that all students should be bringing the following to all classes: Chromebook in the school-issued case, student agenda, and a writing utensil. All other items should be stored in locked lockers during the school day, including cell phones and extra bags. Smart watches may be worn but need to be on “school mode” or off.

- Students will complete IXL reading, writing and math benchmark testing this week to provide baseline data for instruction.

- MS students are encouraged to advocate for themselves as much as possible; we teach students how to use their own resources to answer potential questions (agenda, Google Classroom, class notes, etc.) and how to communicate with their teachers. Sometimes, students need help from families to advocate. Should you have any questions as a parent, please contact the teacher directly, preferably through district email. Ms. Deckhut, MS school counselor, is a helpful resource as well.

- The district has not yet received the 2026 NJSLA-A score reports; upon receipt they will be shared with families, stored in Genesis and presented at a BOE meeting.

- The Middle School Back to School Night will be on Tuesday, September 22nd. There are 5 sessions- ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Cafe (specials, World Language, student services, PTO table, etc). Parent schedules can pick up individualized schedules for the evening in the main lobby.

- Upcoming dates:

- Anticipated Walking Trip to Jacobus Vanderveer House and visit to the Bedminster Garden grades 5 & 8 in October

- Grade Level Trip to the New Jersey School of Conservation in Stokes State Park grade 5 in October

- Anticipated Halloween Costume Contest and new this year a Halloween Dance sponsored by the BTS Student Council

- Anticipated Career Day in November for grades 7 & 8

Teacher Representative:

Fareeha Rahim read the following welcome message from the Bedminster Education Association (BEA).

Dear Parents, Guardians, and PTO Members,

On behalf of the entire teaching staff, we want to welcome you to the start of a wonderful new school year! We hope your families had a refreshing summer, and we are thrilled to have our students back in the classrooms, bringing their energy and curiosity with them.

Partnering with our families and PTO is essential to creating a supportive, thriving community for our students. To show our dedication to this partnership, the BEA (Bedminster Education Association) is actively working once again toward achieving 100% teacher participation in the PTO this year!

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming Back to School Nights—we are eager to connect, share our goals for the year, and give you a glimpse into your child's daily learning environment:

- **Middle School Back to School Night:** Tuesday, September 22
- **Elementary Back to School Night:** Wednesday, September 23

Thank you for your ongoing support, dedication, and warm welcome. Together, we are going to make this a fantastic year!

Warm regards,

Bedminster School Teachers

Ms. Skiba:

Ms. Skiba thanked the PTO for the staff welcome back breakfast and Chalk the Walk messages and expressed appreciation for the PTO's continued support.

Board of Education Report:

Mr. Mabry and Ms. G. were available for the meeting (Laurie/Gabe unable to make it) to answer questions related to the participation fee structure

Discussed:

Welcome back

Superintendent Welcome Back Letter shared with families in August

Thank you to pto/parents teacher grab-and-go, and chalk the walk

Budget - importance of not going below 2%; we are in tough times, and the budget will get tighter

Feasibility Study: Mr. Greene left Rowan and is on his own; still conducting the study, they received the required reports requested this summer, and will take the next few months to analyze

Participation Fee history and structure (see Superintendents Welcome Back Letter or Student Section of website for that information)

Explained the streamlined administrative team: shared roles for Superintendent/curriculum, MS principal/supervisor of student services, and part-time SBA

New assistant covers Superintendent/SBA/Technology support

Explained when BoE meetings take place

Vice President: Allison Opperman

Allison Opperman announced that the new online spirit wear store would launch during Back to School Nights. The PTO is working with a new vendor offering additional clothing options and personalized items. Samples of the new materials will be available at both Back to School Nights.

The new tie-dye shirts, magnets, and pens will be available for purchase at the PTO table. QR codes will provide access to the online store, and the store link will also be posted on the PTO website.

Families may choose home delivery for a shipping fee or school distribution in November.

Fall Fest is scheduled for October 10. Volunteers are needed to assist with spirit wear sales, PTO membership, and promotion of the online store.

Secretary's Report: Hiba Najeeb

Hiba Najeeb shared thank-you notes received from recipients of the previous year's awards. She also shared a note from Ms. Mancini expressing appreciation for Chalk the Walk and the staff welcome back breakfast. The PTO will cover transportation costs for the sixth-grade field trip on October 2.

Treasurer's Report: Nadine Griffiths

Nadine Griffiths presented the following financial summary:

Inflows: $1,023

Item	Amount
Memberships	$519
Spirit Wear	$504

Outflows: $3,545

Item	Amount
Spirit Wear order	$2,055
Welcome Back Events	$500
Bulletin Board Materials	$500

PE Day (June '26)	$221
8th Grade Graduation (June '26)	$114
Other Expenses	$155

The detailed Treasurer's Report is available at bedminsterpto.org.

New Business

PTO Membership: Executive Board

Annual Membership fees are $15 per family and $10 per teacher, staff member, or administrator.

https://www.bedminsterpto.org/join-the-pto.html

PTO Meeting Schedule — All in-person meetings will be held in the Faculty Lounge

· October 14, 2026

· November 18, 2026

· December 15, 2026

· January 13, 2027 - *VIRTUAL*

· February 10, 2027 - *VIRTUAL*

· March 10, 2027

· May 12, 2027

· June 2, 2027

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Homeroom Parents: Danielle F., Jen T., Alicia M.

Fareeha welcomed this year's volunteers and noted changes to the process. Volunteers were encouraged to contact the coordinators or the board with questions.

Scholastic Book Fair: Danielle F., Amanda J., Stephanie Z. (October 5–9)

Fall Fest: Allison O. (October 10)

Volunteer sign-up sheets are available under the Volunteer tab on the PTO website.

Spooktacular: Chair Needed (October 23)

Volunteers are needed to chair the event, and planning materials from the previous year are available. The event time has not yet been finalized, likely 6pm-7:30pm or 6:30pm-8pm.

Spirit Wear Annual Sale: Allison O., Samantha G. (September 22–October 11)

Families may choose home delivery for a shipping fee or school distribution in November.

PR / Social Media: Steve Z., Fareeha R., Sheryl P.

Fareeha thanked Steve for his assistance with the PTO website and resolving issues over the summer.

Dine and Donate: Kim N.

The first Dine and Donate event is tentatively planned for after the October PTO meeting. Families were encouraged to attend and connect with other parents.

Update since the meeting: The event will not take place following the October PTO meeting. Any future date will be announced separately.

Eighth Grade Committee (non-PTO): Danielle F., Jenn T., Amanda J., Robin G.

Planning is underway. Additional information will be shared at the next meeting.

Spring Fling: Executive Board *(April 2027)*

A new venue is being sought because Trump National will be undergoing renovations in 2027.

Volunteers are needed to help organize the PTO's largest annual fundraiser, which supports its other activities. Additional details will be shared as planning progresses.

Families were encouraged to follow the PTO on Facebook and Instagram for updates.

Old Business

Photos were shared from the following summer and back-to-school events and activities:

Farmers' Market

Chalk the Walk

Kindergarten & New Student Ice Cream Social

Staff Welcome Back Breakfast

Welcome Bulldogs CardMyYard

Welcome Back Bulletin Boards

Public Questions and Comments

No public questions or comments were raised.

Ongoing Committees

https://www.bedminsterpto.org/pto-committees--volunteer-sign-up.html

Fareeha Rahim encouraged families to review the committee list and available chair and volunteer opportunities on the PTO website. Interested volunteers were invited to contact her or another Executive Board member to discuss responsibilities and time commitments.

Assemblies: Krista Hudak, Sheryl Picado

- **October 12: EM13RACE** — Motivational speaker and professional athlete Alexia Michitti will share her experience overcoming adversity to help students begin the school year with encouragement and confidence.
- **February: Eda Ne Kakati (From the Past to the Present)** — In celebration of Black History Month, this interactive assembly will introduce students to East African cultures through music, dance, storytelling, and traditional instruments.
- **The Wacky Science Show** — Planned for later in the school year, this assembly will explore scientific concepts and the scientific method in a fun, engaging way.
- **Digital Safety** — A potential program for upper elementary students is being explored with Mr. Swan. Details are still under discussion.

Additional updates will be provided as plans are finalized.

Closing Notes: Fareeha Rahim

Fareeha thanked Sheryl Picado and Krista Hudak for organizing the assemblies. She highlighted the lasting impact of inspirational programs on students, including helping them navigate challenges, alongside opportunities for fun and learning. She noted that PTO fundraising throughout the year makes these programs possible.

The next PTO meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2026, in the Faculty Lounge.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.