Lawrence Primary & Elementary Schools - PTO Information Night
Wednesday, March 25, 2026
6:00 PM

- Welcome from Brian Wedge, Lawrence Elementary; Lori Lee, Principal at Lawrence Primary; and Pamela Blais, Assistant Principal at Lawrence Primary
- 16 parents/family members in attendance
- The purpose of tonight is informational and to ask the school community what they want the PTO to be. PTO will serve both schools PreK - 6.
- What has PTO done for our schools?
    - Partial list including: Gagaball pits, playground toys, Teacher Appreciation (lunches, dinners during conferences), Author visits, Educational Assemblies (Mr. Drew, etc.), Scholastic Book Fairs, Portland Sea Dogs game, Trunk or Treat, Extreme Science Show. These events and opportunities help provide the "wants" that do not fit in the regular school budget.
    - Albion offered Mother's Day Bizarre, calendar fundraiser, Fiddlers, Holiday Dinner for the entire community, grandparents day, wrapped books/gifts for students.

Breaking out into small groups, brainstorm and share out:

1. **How would you describe a successful PTO?**
    - One unified PTO with sub groups/committees from the two schools.
    - Organized community
    - Teachers sign up to attend/rotate meetings.
    - Communication is vital. The "unofficial" Facebook group is good but not everyone has social media or not all notifications are received. If a message is being sent, send it out via email/Facebook/printed handout/ReachMyTeam. Communication on both sides - families & school.
    - *Can we have meetings included in the Thursday news text? Suggestion - could it be a monthly PTO update?*
    - Put out volunteer sign up for annual events/early notification out.
    - Transparency
    - Open opportunities to classroom and teacher interactions, more face-to-face contact with classrooms/teachers
    - Consistency with time and place for meetings
2. **What will we need in order to be successful?**
    - Communication - clear, consistent, send out through all possible avenues
    - Involvement

- We are all in this together. We all need to work together and be kind, welcoming, including. If you want to be there and help, we need YOU!
- Review mission statement of PTO, meeting rules - ensure we are welcoming and allow open, productive dialogue
- Fundraising
- Community/Business Support

3. **What might get in the way?**
    - Lack of participation/involvement
    - Limited access to facilities
    - Capacity - need details for capacity at certain locations (gyms), be aware of the number of students in the schools now.
        - *How many children do we have? 414 at Primary, 500 at Elementary. Elementary has 120-ish per grade level.*
    - Need to plan accordingly between the schools, not planning things the same night for those that have students in both schools. There will be more planning and capacity needs but it is about the kids so we can make it work to make great things happen for them.
        - Is there an open calendar of events to help PTO organize meetings/coordinate various events? *Admin establishes a calendar at the beginning of the year that is out facing for parents/community. PTO to communicate with admin, will add meetings/events there.*
        - Building admin will be in attendance at PTO meetings - will help coordinate during discussions with calendar access.
    - Keeping it fair between the schools. One school does something, the other doesn't. Find similar activities for the other school.
    - Time and capacity of parents
    - Burnout of volunteers
4. **What activities and events would you like to see our PTO support?**
    - Teacher Appreciation week
    - Trunk or treat
    - Grandparents day
    - Family Dance/carnival
    - Mr. Drew/assemblies
    - Sea Dogs
    - Book Fairs
    - Engaging guest speakers - "science is boring"
    - Mother's Day Bazaar (Albion PTA) - so special for students to pick out gifts for their special person. Gift wrapping table provided. The pride in

students was amazing to see. Donation of materials, trinkets - sell things for $1.
    - Always a possibility, navigate obstacles. Admin wants to consider “Yes AND…” instead of “Yes BUT…”
    - Annual Volunteer Needs: Vaccine clinics, Picture Day, Smiles 4 Life.
5. **How would you like to be involved?**
    - Any way possible to help our schools and kids feel loved and supported.
    - Yearbooks, sweatshirts/apparel
    - Communicate ways for after hours volunteering - interested working volunteers can help fold papers at home, drop off the next day.
    - Consider time versus donation constraints - if I can’t donate my time, I will support with a donation of materials/supplies.
6. **How can we help people get involved?**
    - Flexibility
    - Allowing the kids to attend various events/activities (child care conflicts)
    - Set date for meetings, consistent time and place
7. **How can we best communicate with families?**
    - Multiple modes of communication - ReachMyTeach, Flyers, Email, Zoom?

- Albion PTA dissolved earlier this year and wrote a check for remaining funds to the Benton PTO. Kept skeleton of Benton PTO, transitioning everything over to this new PTO model. We will be copying over by-laws to be updated after officer elections. Once officers are elected and starting, the previous Benton PTO President and Treasurer will be transferring everything over.

- **PTO Leadership Structure**
    - President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Teacher Reps (2 from each school) from LPS & LES
    - Can consider a different structure. Current meetings are facilitated using Robert Rules of Order (more formal, motion & second, voting)
    - Suggestion - grade level parents to help bridge communication
    - Need chair people and helpers for each event, should not fall on President/Vice President every time
    - ***Interested in volunteering, sharing your thoughts or want to hold a leadership role? Attend the next meeting!***

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 29th 6:00 PM at Lawrence Elementary - Cafeteria. The goal will be to elect officers - President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Teacher Reps (2 from each school)