



Minutes of the East Moriches PTO Meeting
September 15, 2026

A meeting of the East Moriches PTO was held on Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 7:00 pm at the East Moriches Elementary School.

PTO Board Attendees: President - Lauren Otto; Vice-President- Alexis Heinz; Corresponding Secretary- Melissa Webster, Recording Secretary- Maddie Everhart and Treasurer- Megan Slowey

PTO Guest Attendees: Mr. Schneyer, Elementary School Principal, was present; as well as PTO Teacher Rep Mrs. Percoco

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:06 pm. Lauren welcomed everyone and the newly formed board introduced themselves and their roles.

Minutes: Minutes from June were unavailable for review. The June 2026 PTO meeting had two out of five Board members in attendance so minutes were unable to be recorded. Previous minutes are available online at <https://empto.org>.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Megan Slowey presented the financial report for June through August 2026.

June Financial Overview

June deposits included income from field day, Winter Wonderland, PTO memberships, yearbook sales, Mr. Softee, and the Turkey Trot. Mr. Softee raised 350 dollars, and the Turkey Trot raised 27,397 dollars.

June expenses included scholarships, accounting fees, office supplies, elementary school recess toys and storage bins totaling 1,076 dollars, fourth-grade yearbooks, field day T-shirts, the Fun Fair, the fourth-grade Moving Up Ceremony, and eighth-grade graduation.

The PTO reported a net profit of 17,755 dollars for June, primarily due to the Turkey Trot proceeds.

July and August Financial Overview

July and August deposits came from yearbook sales, spirit wear, and PTO memberships. Expenses included Family Movie Night, eighth-grade graduation, PTO insurance, accounting fees, and the kindergarten meet-and-greet.

The PTO reported a combined loss of 1,928 dollars for July and August.

Account Balances

- **Checking Account:** Used for regular, day-to-day transactions.
- **Savings Account:** Holds funds retained from prior years.
- **AMA Account:** Funds designated for arts, music, and athletics. The current balance is 40,000 dollars.

The total starting balance for September 2026 was 78,744 dollars.

Events/Fundraisers Updates:

Completed:

1. **Eighth-Grade Formal — June 12:** Chaired by Carmela Puglisi, with support from PTO volunteers. The event included new decorations and was successful.
2. **Elementary School Fun Fair and Field Day:** The event included music in the gymnasium, an early-bird PTO membership drive, and Italian ice in the courtyard.
3. **Fourth-Grade Yearbook Signing:** Chaired by Alexis Heinz and held in the library. Blank signing pages were provided so students could sign one another's yearbooks, which was well received.
4. **Fourth-Grade Moving Up Ceremony:** Chaired by Michelle Fernandez. Decorations provided and PTO volunteers helped with set up. Pop-up tents were used to provide shade during the ceremony.
5. **Eighth-Grade Graduation:** Chaired by Kalle, who helped serve the refreshments for the event. Decorations from the Moving Up Ceremony were reused.
6. **Eighth-Grade Breakfast:** The PTO provided bagels for the school-sponsored breakfast.

7. **Kindergarten Meet-and-Greet:** PTO representatives attended and assisted incoming families.
8. **Teacher Welcome Back:** PTO volunteers stocked and decorated the teacher lounges at both the elementary and middle schools with beverages and donated refreshments. Corrin Abbatiello created and donated welcome banners to decorate the lounges.
9. **Family Movie Night:** The event featured Toy Story 5 and was attended by more than 400 people. The full PTO Board attended and helped set up, serve and break down the event.

Ongoing or Upcoming Business:

1. **PTO Membership Drive:** Membership forms will be available online and will also be sent home. Zelle has been added as a payment option, and Venmo is being explored as an additional option for future. The membership raffle drawing was also discussed. This was an incentive to encourage early membership to the PTO. A winner was drawn live at the meeting and Melissa Scott was the winner of this membership drive.
2. **Drippi Fundraiser:** Drippi Long Island created a school-spirit design featuring the East Moriches eagle. Online ordering will remain open through the end of September (9/25/26) with delivery expected approximately two to three weeks after the order is placed.
3. **Believe Fundraiser:** The holiday catalog fundraiser is scheduled to launch on September 22. PTO volunteers will coordinate delivery of orders to families.
4. **Middle School Book Fair:** The book fair will take place October 8-9, with setup on October 7. Volunteer sign-ups were available at the meeting.
5. **Elementary School Book Fair:** Volunteer sign-up sheets will be distributed approximately two weeks before the event after teachers establish their book fair schedules.
6. **Harvest Fest and Family Book Fair Night:** The event will include family book fair shopping, a possible Out-of-this-World theme, a pumpkin-carving contest, and a possible 50/50 raffle. Caitlin Giorgio will chair the event, and Brandi Scotto will co-chair and assist with raffles. Additional volunteers are needed. Sign ups for volunteers available at the meeting. The anticipated event time is approximately 6:00-7:30 p.m.

7. **5th and 6th grade Halloween Dance:** The dance is scheduled for Thursday, October 22. A chairperson is still needed. A DJ is available and the chair will coordinate.
8. **Middle School Trunk-or-Treat:** The event will be held separately from the 5th and 6th grade dance to better manage attendance and student safety. Additional portable restrooms and string lighting will be considered. The PTO will also seek support from local law enforcement and emergency services.
9. **Yearbook Committee:** The committee will seek approximately two parent volunteers per grade from prekindergarten through 4th grade.
10. **Yearbook Company:** The PTO is exploring a change from Lifetouch to Irvin Simon for yearbook production because of communication and customer-service concerns. The yearbook contract is renewed annually. This change would not affect the school's current picture-day contract.
11. **Picture Days:** School picture day is scheduled for the following week (Middle School 9/23; Elementary 9/24), with retakes in November. Spring picture day is scheduled for April 29, 2027. Volunteers are needed, with approximately three to four volunteers requested for each picture day.
12. **Elementary School Costume Parade:** The PTO plans to coordinate a photo display in the lobby, pending confirmation from the photography provider.
13. **Winter Wonderland/Gingerbread Family Night:** The PTO discussed changing the event to a calmer, more family-centered format. The proposed plan includes approximately 3-4 craft tables, a vendor sale in the gymnasium, and affordable gingerbread kits costing approximately 5 dollars. A gingerbread decorating activity may replace the competitive gingerbread-house contest. The PTO will explore sponsorships and possible subsidies to keep the kits affordable. A sensory-friendly opening approximately 15 minutes before the regular start time was also discussed.

New Business:

1. The PTO's application for reinstatement of nonprofit status was resubmitted to the IRS on August 20, 2026, after historical financial records dating back to 2018 were reviewed and submitted. The application remains pending.
2. The PTO also clarified that, under New York State records, the organization is classified as an unincorporated group rather than an LLC or corporation.

The Board is reviewing accounting options and has discontinued unnecessary QuickBooks-related expenses.

3. Members discussed the importance of maintaining a data-driven budget based on actual revenue and expenses from prior years. The Board explained that budget lines were reviewed and adjusted to reflect realistic costs while maintaining equitable support for elementary and middle school students.
4. Members also discussed how schools communicate requests for recess equipment and other supplies. The Board will contact Mrs. Pesce regarding the middle school's current needs. Elementary school indoor-recess materials have been supplemented with Scholastic dollars and PTO funds.
5. The ice cream social was not held this year. The reading teacher is instead coordinating a literacy-related event, including a Masked Reader program.
6. The middle school spelling bee will be held as an in-school event on November 25. The change is intended to increase student participation and allow students to support their classmates. The PTO will fund trophies. The school is considering inviting parents of finalists or livestreaming the event.
7. The following requests and potential uses of the AMA account were discussed:
 - a. **Drama Department Microphones:** The PTO discussed using AMA funds to address microphone shortages and sound-quality issues during middle school drama performances.
 - b. **Outdoor Recess Equipment:** Matt Monpetit submitted a request expected to be under 1,000 dollars. The request will be reviewed and presented for a vote in October.
 - c. **Motivational Speaker:** Lisa Pesce submitted a request for the PTO to sponsor Rohan Murphy, an amputee athlete and motivational speaker, at a cost of approximately 2,500 dollars. Mr. Murphy has previously received positive feedback from middle school students.

Additional Questions/Meeting Discussion:

1. **Yearbook/Photography company:** A question was raised about moving away from LifeTouch for yearbook. Ed Schneyer noted the PTO has switched companies several times and each one has produced errors. The 2026-27 school picture contract is with LifeTouch, but since the yearbook contract is

year-to-year, Alexis is exploring alternatives (Irvin Simon) for yearbooks only.

2. **Middle school budget items** (Question by Maureen LaRocca): Maureen asked about equity in the budget and why the middle school is allocated \$250 less and also how the PTO learns what the middle school needs. Megan will contact Mrs. Pesce to ask about specific needs, noting the middle school often doesn't use its full recess budget as allocated. Change in allocated funds was carried over from previous year's budget.
3. **Indoor recess carts**: PTO updated carts and activities using Scholastic dollars plus PTO funds.
4. **Ice cream social**: Question of this event raised by Maureen LaRocca. Question of allocated budget line which was reviewed and not currently being allocated to anything. This event will be replaced by an author event (Masked Reader) run by the reading teacher.
5. **Minutes**: Will be published within two weeks of the meeting and posted to social media and the PTO website.
6. **Budget**: A data-driven budget review was highlighted, based on actual prior-year expenses and revenue.
7. **Spelling bee**: Question of this event raised by Maureen LaRocca. Now described as an in-school event (Nov. 25) so students can watch classmates compete; a livestream or finalist-parent invitations are being considered, and the PTO will fund trophies.
8. **Drama and arts**: Question/suggestion raised by Heather Bencosme and Corrin Abbatiello -Discussion of using AMA funds to buy microphones so all performers can be heard. PTO will ask the drama department about this request and needs.
9. **Outdoor recess equipment**: Request submitted by Matthew Monpetit (under \$1,000), to be presented and voted on in October.
10. **Motivational speaker**: Rohan Murphy's \$2,500 appearance at the middle school was proposed for PTO sponsorship via the AMA account.

There being no further business, Heather Bencosme motioned to adjourn, and Carmela Puglisi seconded the motion. The PTO meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Questions and/or Comments: Please keep comments or questions to under 3 minutes.

Next PTO Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 7th @ 7:00 pm at the Middle School.

