



General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

7:00 pm in the Commons

-
1. Welcome / Call to Order
 2. Meeting Ground Rules
 - a. We are all volunteers, and we try our best.
 - b. Everyone is treated with respect.
 - c. Participation is encouraged - everyone's input is valuable.
 - d. Remember the mission of the PTA in all that we do: "To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children."
 3. Principal's Report - **Ann Buch/Cara Giacomini-Ferris**
 - a. Conferences tomorrow day and night plus Friday morning. No students in school.
 - b. Next up is Halloween next Friday - p and running for festivities.
 - i. Email sent with form for lunch at home on Halloween. Needs to be completed to release them. Only one lunch shift from 12:15 to 1:15.
 - ii. Parade starts 1:45 pm, same route as past years. 5th graders first, kindly last. Families welcome to attend parade, please stay off sidewalk. Will also be livestreamed.
 - iii. Costume portions that could be scary or gory should be kept until after school rather than for in-school costume.
 - iv. All of above communication will be repeated next week multiple times.
 - c. Blair W. asks if there is any update on crossing guard situation? Not yet. Ann continues to ask for an update and is awaiting response.
 4. Teacher's Report - **Margaret O'Grady/Katherine Redmon**
 - a. We are really looking forward to connecting with families during conferences.
 - b. The staff truly appreciates the lunch during conferences. It makes our day so much easier without having to plan a lunch and gives us an opportunity to get together with other staff who we rarely see. Thank you so much!
 - c. We're also excited for the Halloween parties this year, especially that they're on a Friday!
 5. Treasurer's Report - **Marsha Mitchell**
 - a. Art Club dues have been coming in.
 - b. Received a Fundraiser check from Garibaldi's for \$150 and Noodles and Company for \$43.64
 - c. Membership Dues from the Teachers have been coming in. Thank you!
 - d. The food truck at Fall Fest brought in \$181.65!
 6. Secretary's Report - **Karen Radek**
 - a. Review & Approval of 09-24-25 minutes [9-24-25 general meeting minutes pending approval](#)

- i. *Karen: I move that the minutes from September 24, 2025 be adopted as presented.*
 - ii. *Abby: It has been moved by the Secretary that we adopt the minutes as presented. Are there any questions or discussion about the minutes? Do we have a second? All those in favor say Aye. Opposed? Motion passes/fails.*
 - 1. Motion passes unanimously
 - b. Membership and Directory Spot - **Samme Nowakowski** reports 32 staff memberships so far. Grant application submitted to 4imprint.com to go toward membership gifts; ideally distribution by Friday before Thanksgiving break.
 - i. Directory Spot stats: Users logged in at least once - 399; logged in this week (Mon - Sun) - 60; this month (October) - 175; Total Users - 726.
 - c. PTA post: **Hillary Walker** reports weekly posts are going smoothly (always open to feedback!). Working on Community Corner monthly post beginning in November highlighting organizations that offer programs to benefit Westgate community. If anyone on exec has organizations that have reached out to advertise, please send my way.
7. Vice President Social & Enrichment - **Julie Hansen**
- a. Art club: **Karen Radek and Christine Conway** report that the art club has had their October meetings for 4th and 5th grade. Super fun!
 - i. Access confirmed for room 160 for the gallery (April 15, 2026).
 - b. Reflections: **Karen Radek** reports the theme for next year's Reflections contest is "*I Belong*". Guidelines and entry form have been available in the post for the last several weeks. Will also appear in the Wire starting this week, and will get onto socials as well. Deadline for entries is November 21st!
 - c. Room Reps: **Shelly Daley** reports that all room reps are currently planning for their classroom Halloween decorating and for the party. Event information has been emailed out to everyone.
 - d. Chess Club: **Colleen Crandall** reports that Chess Club is off to a great start! There are currently 37 students enrolled, with new players attending each week to try it out. It's not too late to join! Chess Club meets in the LMC on Fridays after school from 3:35-4:35. No experience is needed and all ages are welcome!
 - e. Bike/Walk/Roll to School: **Colleen Palmer and Amy Wilkins** report Walk and Roll to School Day was held on Wednesday, October 8th. We were so excited and grateful for another beautiful morning filled with hundreds of students, teachers, and families walking to school together. Thank you to the committee for their help with organizing and decorating for this event. A huge shout out and thank you to Dr. Buch who helped pull everything together and her amazing team of teachers who enthusiastically volunteered to walk different routes to school. It was another great day for the Westgate community!
 - f. Second grade magic night: **Katie Smith** reports the 2nd grade magic show is planned for November 5th parents are encouraged to accompany their student. The magician is all set. Flyers have been posted on socials and pta newsletter.
 - g. 5th grade celebration committee: **Becky Jehl** reports that planning underway with 2 committee meetings so far and 1 meeting w Dr. Buch. Awaiting feedback from Dr. Buch about our proposed ideas.
8. Vice President Ways & Means - **Alison Smazik**
- a. Westgate Cares: **Meredith Czaplewski and Kirsten Boyce** report they had planned an activity for October to collect suggestions from students for positive, kind messages for

the outdoor Westgate sign. Unfortunately, our event was cancelled due to weather and we are in the process of rescheduling. Our next planned activity is to make cards for soldiers and veterans on Veteran's Day.

- b. Scholastic Book Fair: **Kelly DeGuia** and **Alison Smazik** report that using \$21.76 of earned Scholastic Dollars and "Share The Fair" funds (the money collected by rounding up the change at the register), after being out of stock during the spring order, two books were purchased and delivered to two "new" teachers' classroom libraries. Thanks to everyone who rounded up at checkout.
 - c. Dine Outs/Fundraising: **Becky Jehl** reports fundraising efforts to date raised total: **\$344.14**
 - d. Back to school Breakfast and Conference Lunches: **Karen Radek** reports that teacher meals for tomorrow's parent teacher conferences are ready to go! Light breakfast offerings will be available starting at 7 am; lunch is catered by Caputos again and will be set up by 11 am.
 - i. Went out in teacher communication yesterday.
 - ii. Thank you to everyone who has donated food and drinks!
 - e. Yearbook: **Chrissy Kordalewski** reports that yearbook sales are open and 10% savings is through 10/31/25. Please share photos with yearbook4westgate@gmail.com include your child's name and teacher. Photos needed back to school at Westgate, Fall Fest, grade level events, walk/roll to school. Future Halloween Parties, Spirit Days and Grade level events.
 - f. The Parent Night Out Committee: **Kelley Balmer** and **Alison Smazik** reports that the Back-to-the-90s Bingo event will be held on Saturday, January 31st at Ale House downtown Arlington Heights. Mark your calendars and get your best 90s gear out of the closet! The Sign-Up Genius for the silent auction gift baskets is open until Nov. 7th! We are looking for 6-10 volunteers to create baskets and/or collect items on behalf of a grade level or group organization. Thank you!
 - i. Will reach out to admin after halloween to organize teacher experiences.
9. President Elect's Report - **Samme Nowakowski**
10. President's Report - **Abby Harkey**
- a. Success of 1st grade game night and Walk & Roll to School.
 - b. NW Cook Region PTA meeting was held on October 20th and Westgate walked away with three awards!
 - c. Volunteer Code of Conduct has been sent out. Thank you to those who have signed and submitted. For those of you who did not receive one, please reach out to me.
 - d. ABC25 - **Nina Obediah-Berlin** and **Renee Kazecki** report deadlines for grant proposals and membership promotion was 10/17. Waiting for info as to whether we met our quota or not. We'll be reviewing proposals and voting in November. Future ABC25 dates to remember: 11/20 grant approval announcement; 1/19/26 anti-bullying campaign food fundraiser; 3/15/26 Topgolf fundraiser.
 - e. Thank you to all those who are helping to make two long days for the teachers a bit more enjoyable.
 - f. Looking forward to seeing some happy faces and clever costumes at the Halloween parties and school parade next week! Thank you to all the volunteers who are bringing the fun and making the magic happen!
 - g. Sunshine.

11. New Business

- a. Kelley Balmer proposed the purchase of additional recess supplies to facilitate alternative recess options for kids.
 - i. Is there a place for parents and/or pta to contribute? - One time commitment for PTA this year to bridge the gap, will advertise parent volunteer SUG in our pta post. Investigate the option of adding a line item to budget for next year.
 - ii. Per admin - these activities came from a place of alternate activities for kids that aren't drawn to sports/playground. There is a budget for all playground equipment, inc. puzzles, weaving, rainbow looms etc. Hard to manage logistics, so piloting with 4th and 5th graders this year. School would welcome additional funds; unknown how fast materials will move. School does have room to store materials and would want to have input as far as what items are included on the list if materials are provided by pta and/or parents.
 - iii. Can we ask parents to donate unused items from their homes? Yes.
 - iv. Moved and seconded. Passed unanimously.
 - b. Many districts are offering teachers/staff a know your rights night. Is our district putting anything together on this?
 - i. Ann is not aware of a night planned. Suggests you reach out to Dr. Kaye if you feel that that is something the district should consider.
 - ii. The question was brought up for discussion at AHC as well.
12. Unfinished Business
13. Raffle Winners! Two \$10 gift cards to Chick 'N Fizz. Support Local!
- a. Sam B. and Kelley B. won raffle!
14. Adjourn- no social gathering tonight due to parent teacher conferences tomorrow morning! The next general PTA meeting will be in January.