





General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

7:00 pm in the LMC and on Zoom

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. Special Guest, **Dr. Brian Kaye**, District 25 Superintendent
 - a. Thanks for all that the PTA does
 - b. E-learning day - feedback is in and will be shared with the team Tuesday morning. Then will share data to the community and make a recommendation.
 - i. Not equivalent to an in-person day, but avoids having to tack on days at the end or pull back days that are otherwise SIP days.
 - ii. District uses a specific site to gauge weather and make decisions. National Weather Service also sends info to the district on severe weather days.
 - iii. Dist 214 has more than minimum number of school days req'd, which allows for snow days rather than e-learning.
 - c. Strategic plan - 50 people, open meeting (so it's recorded). Will send products of the meeting out via surveys. 2 more surveys coming over the next 2 months.
 - d. 5 Essentials coming - state req'd survey. We need at least 20% of the community to take it to be able to see the results. Only 5th graders at WG will take it. Staff typically participates well. WG community usually does hit the 20% mark.
 - e. School improvement day on January 5th - all local districts also do SIP day and can gather for professional development. Focus on elementary teachers.
 - f. Heart of Gold ceremony for Lisa Smorzewski on 2/22. An aide at Thomas also won.
 - g. Conferences coming up on 2/16.
 - h. BOE had scheduled a board meeting scheduled on March election day. New law says they can't meet on election days, so meeting will be moved to the week before instead.
 - i. Blair W. - friend at Windsor reported that Dr. Kaye accompanied kids walking to school after parent was detained by ICE.
 - i. He is part of the walking school bus in a personal capacity.
 - ii. The neighborhood network is amazing.
 - iii. Walking school bus is not sponsored by District or PTAs.
 - iv. BOE had met the night before and discussed a possible resolution to be brought in Feb. for a vote to mimic the resolution passed by the Village.

- v. At this time there is no known Westgate family worried about safe passage to school. If the community knows of someone who has not reached out, Dr. Buch would love them to reach out to receive assistance so everyone feels safe.
- 4. **Principal's Report - Ann Buch/Cara Giacomini-Ferris**
 - a. Variety Show - looking forward to it on 2/27. A few changes:
 - i. A performance will be held during the school day so kids can see it, on the Thursday before. Performers will also be able to watch the rest of the show.
 - ii. Tickets will be issued for evening performance. 4 tickets max per family to alleviate the congestion and minimize distractions.
 - iii. Hoping to be able to livestream it as well. Maybe kids behind the scenes can watch the livestream as well.
 - iv. Challenge with doing it elsewhere (such as Forest View theater) is we had to hire our own lighting/tech. Staff who work it volunteer (ie unpaid) so multiple nights is tricky.
 - v. Included a parent volunteer in the planning group this year.
 - vi. More to come on all of the above - ideally by Friday.
- 5. **Teacher's Report - Margaret O'Grady/Katherine Redmon**
 - a. Thank you to the parent community in general for helping with the recent e-learning day.
 - b. Looking forward to connecting with parents at conferences.
- 6. **Treasurer's Report - Marsha Mitchell**
 - a. Mid Year Report Completed  Mid Year Report 25-26.pdf
 - b. Food Donations were collected via Zelle and donated \$160 to Wheeling Township
 - c. We received fundraiser checks from Peggy Kinnane's \$135, Portillo's \$158.53 and School Pictures \$888.89
 - d. Money has been coming in via Zelle for our Parent Night Out Tickets
 - e. Our Zoom account will be renewed on the 27th with our NonProfit Discount applied
 - f. Paid a second round to Givebacks for our current Memberships \$386
 - g. Paid for the use of 32Auctions \$90 and Rental fee at Arlington Ale House \$475 for PNO
 - h. Purchased Supplies for Art Club and Sunshine
 - i. 5th Grade Committee paid for the gift and t-shirts
- 7. **Secretary's Report - Karen Radek**
 - a. Review & Approval of 10-22-25 minutes
 -  102225 General Meeting Minutes_pending approval.pdf
 - i. *Karen: I move that the minutes from October 22, 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 - Samme Nowakowski**
 - i. Membership gifts - tote bags delivered to all students in December; extras in front office for new families
 - ii. By the numbers...
 - 1. 25/26 (This Year) - 383 parent memberships; 52 faculty memberships
 - 2. 24/25 (Last Year) - 407 parent memberships; 54 faculty memberships
 - c. **Directory Spot - Samme Nowakowski**
 - i. Users logged in at least once - 405

- ii. Users logged in this week (Mon - Sun) - 33
 - iii. Users logged in this month (January) - 199
 - iv. Total Users - 731
8. Vice President Social & Enrichment - **Julie Hansen**
- a. Art club: **Karen Radek and Christine Conway** report that the art club has had 4 of 6 regular meetings for the year and we're ramping up gallery prep now!
 - i. Celebration of the arts gallery night will be Wednesday, April 15, 2026.
 - 1. Invitations will be out shortly.
 - 2. When can we begin hanging art in the hallway? Ann will get back to Karen on this.
 - 3. Access to Room 160 for the week of the gallery (M-F)
 - b. Reflections: **Karen Radek** reports that Westgate had 17 submissions for this year's Reflections competition! And we heard earlier this month that ALL of Westgate's entries moved on from the Council level to the regional contest! Hoping to hear soon if any will advance to State! Congrats and good luck to the Westgate artists!
 - c. Room Reps: **Shelly Daley** reports that Room Reps have been given information on preparing for the Valentine's Day party next month. Thank you to all the room reps who have volunteered this year!
 - d. Chess Club: **Colleen Crandall** reports that the second session of Chess Club is in full swing, but it isn't too late if any new students would like to join! We currently have around 40 participants ranging from kindergarten through fifth grade. All ages and skill levels are welcome! Paul Raso, the owner of Illinois Chess Teachers, generously donated a chess-themed basket for the PTA Bingo Night. This donation includes a chess set, chess board, bag, and a certificate for a free 8-week session for Chess Club valued at \$250.
 - e. 5th grade celebration committee: **Becky Jehl** reports the last day's celebration is well-organized and moving ahead of schedule. Here is the current status of the event:
 - i. Shirts: All shirts have been ordered and are scheduled for pickup tomorrow. This includes 5th grade and admin staff and parent volunteers; please note that volunteer shirts are not coming out of the PTA budget.
 - ii. 5th Grade Gifts: The gifts for 5th graders have been ordered. The customized drawstring bags featuring their respective middle school logos have been received and are of good quality.
 - iii. Decorations: A balloon arch and decorations have been secured through a local company (a district parent). A Card My Yard display has also been reserved.
 - iv. Entertainment: A DJ has been secured through a local company (a district parent).
 - v. Photo Booth: Arrangements for the class party photo booth are in progress. This will include Polaroids and props, followed by a creative station for students to decorate frames.
 - f. 3rd grade magic show 2/20 - drop off event this year. Next year back to movie night for 3rd graders. Committee is working on a drop off/pick up procedure.
9. Vice President Ways & Means - **Alison Smazik**
- a. Westgate Cares: **Meredith Czaplewski and Kirsten Boyce** report there were no Westgate Care events held in January. We are planning our next event, which will be at Feed My Starving Children on February 26.
 - b. Scholastic Book Fair: **Kelly DeGuia, Alison Smazik and Hillary Walker** report the following: The Westgate PTA will be hosting the Scholastic Book Fair in the Westgate

LMC during Parent Teacher Conferences on Monday, February 16th. Every purchase at the Book Fair benefits the Westgate PTA. Students will preview the Book Fair with their classes on February 13th (no purchases during the preview), and families can shop during Parent-Teacher Conferences on February 16th between 8am-3:45pm and online between February 11th-24th. All forms of payment will be accepted. Volunteers are needed to help set up the fair (February 12th), to supervise the classroom preview walkthroughs (February 13th), and to work the book fair during parent teacher conference hours on February 16th in the LMC. See PTA Post for the links to the volunteer sign-up genius.

- c. Dine Outs/Fundraising: **Becky Jehl** reports fundraising efforts to date raised total: **\$829.14**. This does not include the ongoing fundraisers (Card My Yard and Dave and Busters). Upcoming dine out at Panera next week Thursday, Feb. 5th and Westgate Family Night at the Chicago Wolves game on Feb. 21st. See the most recent PTA post for more details!
 - d. Back to school Breakfast and Conference Lunches: **Karen Radek** reports that teacher meals for next month's parent teacher conferences are good to go! Light breakfast offerings will be available starting just after 7 am; lunch will be catered by Caputos again and will be set up by 11 am. Please see the SUG in the PTA post if you're able to donate items. Will forward the menu to the main office as soon as it's finalized.
 - e. Teacher Appreciation Week: **Kelley Balmer and Leia Bradley** report that the dates are May 4th-May 8th. Meeting next month to get the details ironed out.
 - i. Hopefully Tom's Coffee Truck will be back by popular demand.
 - ii. More details to come at next general meeting.
 - f. Yearbook: **Chrissy Kordalewski** reports that yearbook sales remain open. 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.
 - g. The Parent Night Out Committee: **Kelley Balmer, Alison Smazik & Blair Waring** report that the Parent Night Out 90s Bingo fundraiser is this Saturday, Jan. 31st at Arlington Ale House. Doors open at 5:30pm and Bingo will run from 6pm-8:30pm. The online silent auction is live! The online auction will close this Saturday, January 31st at 8pm at the event. Thank you to all of the Westgate teachers and staff for donating student-experiences to the silent auction. In addition, thank you to all of the Westgate families and local businesses for their donations to the auction, raffle baskets and Bingo prizes.
 - i. Will report earnings and what it goes to after the event.
 - h. **Shelby Gajos** reports that it is almost time for MARCH MADNESS and our Westgate Basketball Knockout Fundraiser! This is a fundraiser that benefits the Westgate PTA and is for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. It costs \$10 per student to enter. Our dates for knockout are: 3rd grade is Wednesday, March 4th, 4th grade is Wednesday, March 11th, 5th grade is Wednesday, March 18th. All entry and pick up details will be communicated to all participants and we will also be looking for volunteers to help make this a successful event. If you have any questions, please contact me!
10. President Elect's Report - **Samme Nowakowski**
- a. ABC25 (FYI Only for Westgate PTA)
 - i. ABC/25 Foundation is a non-profit dedicated to enhancing District 25. Our mission is to inspire innovation, creativity, and excellence for District 25 children.

Comprising district parents, community leaders, and school administrators, our volunteer board and committee drive positive change. With over 30 years of impact, we've raised nearly two million dollars, funding projects and grants that empower District 25 students and teachers.

- ii. Westgate was awarded 4 grants - 10% of all grants awarded. All details are here: <https://abc25.org/2025-2026-teacher-grant-winners/>
- iii. This year ABC/25 gave over \$40k in fall grants and had an Anti-Bullying Campaign event on MLK day free to everyone in the school district. We're set to give out another \$2,500 per school that makes its membership numbers
- iv. Next up, we're promoting our upcoming fundraiser: **Nina Obediah-Berlin and Renee Kazecki** are excited to announce the return of the ABC/25 Fore Education Fundraiser at Top Golf in Schaumburg! Join us for a family-friendly golf outing on Sunday, March 15th from 1 - 4 PM for 3 hours of golf, appetizers, silent auction, raffles, and good times as par as the eye can see! Please note, the raffles and auctions will go live at a later date. Keep your eyes peeled for more information on those tee-rific details!
 1. \$30 spectator tickets that allow you access to the event, food, and a chance to swing a few golf balls at a designated free swing bay
 2. \$75 single golfer tickets
 3. Full bays of 6 for the entire golfing experience
 4. With your generous support, last year we were able to raise an impressive \$11,288 to benefit our schools! Let's try to beat that number this year!
 5. Interested in sponsoring? Reach out to ABC25president@gmail.com
 6. <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/abc25-fore-education-topgolf--2026>

11. President's Report - **Abby Harkey**

- a. The Nominating Committee needs to be formed. This group of 5 and 2 alternates elect our 2025-2026 leadership team.
 - i. Would anyone like to be involved in this amazing and helpful committee?
Kim Powers, Shelby Gajos, Katie Smith, Colleen Palmer
Kelley Balmer, Blair Waring (alternate)
 - ii. Motion to adopt
 - iii. Vote - motion passes unanimously
- b. AHC Scholarship Information; 12 scholarships total @ \$1500 each. 7 Achievement, 3 Power of Courage, 2 Marybeth Anderson Awards. Contact d25scholarship@gmail.com for more information.
- c. RMHS Basketball Game; Westgate Night will be Thursday, February 5th. Go Mustangs!
- d. Sunshine

12. Unfinished Business

- a. Crossing guard - previous person has not been there. Subs out there. If no one can be there then Greg or Cara go out to help. When the contracted person is not available the company contacts the district in advance.

13. Raffle Winners! Two \$10 gift cards to Sweet T's Bakery. Support Local! Kim and Dori

14. Adjourn- We hope to see everyone this Saturday night for PNO! The next general PTA meeting will be in March.