

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WESTGATE SCHOOL COUNCIL HELD IN PERSON AT WESTGATE SCHOOL AT APPROXIMATELY 6:30 PM ON THE 25TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2025.

PRESENT:

Michael Dorsey, Director-at-Large
Gillian Hogg, Director-at-Large
Vanessa Huey, Director-at-Large
Stephanie Leech, Assistant Principal,
Westgate School

Kristin Mason, Secretary
Julie Muhlberger, Principal, Westgate School
Stephanie Paquet, Chair
HollyJoy Stanford, Vice Chair
Marie-Claude Tremblay, Key Communicator

ALSO PRESENT:

Eight parents*

Stephanie P. acted as Chair and Kristin M. acted as Secretary of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting was called to order by Stephanie P. at 6:35 p.m. and a quorum was present.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Stephanie P. welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited those present to introduce themselves.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by HollyJoy S., seconded by Marie Claude T., to approve the agenda as presented. Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by HollyJoy S., seconded by Marie-Claude T., to approve the minutes of the meeting held on May 22, 2025. Carried.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Call for Executive Members

- In response to a call for an Executive member in the position of Secretary, Kristin M. put her name forward. Moved by HollyJoy S., seconded by Vanessa H., that Kristin M. be appointed Secretary of the Westgate School Council, effective immediately until the next AGM or until a successor is elected. Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Parent Volunteer and Engagement Opportunities

***Privacy and Attendance Note:**

Full names of School Council executive members and school representatives are included in these minutes to meet governance and transparency requirements. The names of other attendees are not published to protect personal privacy in accordance with Alberta's *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*. A complete sign-in record is retained securely for Council files.

- Stephanie P. discussed past and ongoing efforts to engage parents and guardians in the school community, including attendance at meetings of the School Council. She mentioned use of the application Signup and its success in facilitating the filling of certain volunteer roles. The Chair then invited discussion on how to create additional opportunities and encourage engagement. She mentioned past initiatives with parent engagement sessions (e.g. 2025 presentations by teachers on committee work). Julie M. commented that the staff is also considering various topics that would be meaningful to parents. Communication on this matter between school administrators and Council members will continue.
- Stephanie P. also discussed the role of the School Council as an advisory group on behalf of students and families, to the school administration and encouraged members of the school community to use the Council as a forum to share thoughts and ideas, and to ask questions generally. The Chair pointed out that the School Council and its activities are separate from the Parents Society, which is involved in fundraising, and she provided a reminder that community members can contact the Chair at the email address westgateschoolcouncil@gmail.com.

REPORTS

Chair Report

- Stephanie P. thanked outgoing Council members from last year and welcomed new members. She mentioned that meeting dates, agendas and minutes are made available on the school website.
- The Chair mentioned that the school year's first fundraiser (Davidson Apples) was completed September 24 and revenues will be reported at a later meeting, when available.
- Stephanie P. reported that merchandise is again available for purchase in the Gator Gear online store. She mentioned a previous suggestion to host a Gator Gear swap or second-hand sale to keep the products circulating in the community and left the matter open for consideration, suggestions or volunteers to bring it to fruition.
- The Chair also reported that efforts are well underway in fun lunch planning and a more detailed update will be given during the meeting of the Parents Society.

Key Communicator Report

- Marie-Claude T. introduced her role and let attendees know what to expect from the Key Communicator at each Council meeting. She then summarized the most recent CBE Connections newsletter and reported that the Community of School Councils (COSC) will set its meeting dates for the 2025-26 school year following the upcoming municipal election. The Key Communicator also informed attendees that our elected Trustee may be invited to attend School Council meetings to provide direct communication with the school community.

Administration Report

- Julie M. recapped the first few weeks of school, mentioning that it went smoothly and teachers did an excellent job setting things up to welcome kids and set routines, expectations and build relationships. The year's first assembly focused on expected behaviours, values and set the tone for the start of the year.
- The Principal provided updates on school staffing changes, mentioning that Mme Victoria has joined as a grade two teacher, Mme Tamara is on maternity leave with Mme Denaud filling her leave, Mme Alexandra is currently filling Mme Leah's leave, M. Sebastien has joined leadership team, Mme Karen D. is now in a permanent role as a full time grade six teacher, and Mme Allan has moved to a part-time resource role, working two days per week.

- Julie M. then reported on class configurations, pointing out the approach at Westgate School to focus funds on maximizing teaching staff and prioritizing smaller classes (as opposed to adding educational assistants). She then mentioned this year's class sizes by grade. Discussion ensued about the decisions to prioritize smaller classes and the trade-offs of directing less budget to resource teachers and having the Principal and do most of the resource work.
- Stephanie L. discussed government mandated literacy and numeracy assessments for grades one, two and three, as well as non-mandated assessments done for grades four to six. She reported that, although it is a lot of work for teachers and sometimes stressful for students, teachers continually confirm that they find value in having the data and using it to design their instructions.
- The Assistant Principal then reported on school events, mentioning the Terry Fox Run that had just taken place, and the upcoming residencies of Frisbee Rob, Rocks and Rings, Matt Mailandt. She reminded attendees of Orange Shirt Day September 26, the grade 6 outdoor school event moving from October to April due to uncertainty regarding ATA labour action and an upcoming Franco-Canadian music performance organized by Mme Kim. Stephanie P. also invited the school community to bring forward suggestions for similar learning experiences.
- Julie M. mentioned the school's deficit of unpaid excursion fees from prior years, which totalled more than six thousand dollars for the 2024-25 school year, and reinforced the importance of parents checking their PowerSchool accounts and paying the assessed fees. This year in particular, buses are in short supply and so it's important that the school books in advance, which is a risk with fees. Typically, the whole-school experiences are paid through Parents Society funds and individual grade level excursions are charged back to parents. Discussion ensued regarding the trend of unpaid fees and potential strategies to remind and encourage parents to pay, as well as the potential of using funds from the Parents Society to cover more of the unpaid fees.

Event Committee Report

- Vanessa H. reported that Gatorfest in June 2025 generated revenue of \$4,200. She explained the new technology (Ticket Spice) used to reduce cash transactions and encourage electronic payments, issue electronic tickets for entry. The Event Committee counted 940 attendees at Gatorfest 2025. Vanessa H. further reported that three Square devices were purchased that can be used for future events.
- Discussion ensued regarding admission fees for Gatorfest and whether attendance was impacted by the fees, versus the years in which the event was free. The conclusion was that attendance was not negatively impacted by the nominal fees charged.
- Vanessa H. mentioned this year's Snowball is scheduled for December 4 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., and that anyone interested in helping with events can contact her in person or via the school council email address.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Julie M. thanked Vanessa H. for her work on the Gator Gardens during this year's growing season.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Westgate School Council is scheduled for Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. It will be a hybrid meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting terminated at 7:48 p.m.