

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ECOLE WESTGATE SCHOOL PARENTS' SOCIETY HELD VIRTUALLY USING WEB-BASED TECHNOLOGY MICROSOFT TEAMS AT APPROXIMATELY 7:40 PM ON THE 20TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2025.

PRESENT:

Gillian Hogg, Treasurer
Vanessa Huey, Member-at-Large
Stephanie Leech, Assistant Principal,
Westgate School

Kristin Mason, Secretary
Julie Muhlberger, Principal, Westgate School
Stephanie Paquet, President
HollyJoy Stanford, Vice-President

REGRETS:

ALSO PRESENT:

Eight parents¹

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 7:43 p.m. and a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by HollyJoy S., seconded by Stephanie P., to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Stephanie P. and seconded by Gillian H., to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 25, 2025. A typo was pointed out to the Secretary, who confirmed she will make the correction and the motion was carried to approve the minutes with that amendment.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Vacant position

Stephanie P. reminded meeting attendees that the Parents' Society is still looking for a member of the school community to join the executive as Casino Coordinator. She mentioned that it is a key role, responsible for facilitating the casino nights on behalf of the Parents' Society, as per rules and directions set out by AGLC. She further commented that, while not complex, the role is very necessary for the Society to operate and contribute financially to the school community. Interested parties were invited to comment in the live meeting chat or send an email to westgateschoolcouncil@gmail.com.

Results of survey on teacher support

¹Privacy and Attendance Note:

Full names of Parents Society executive and board 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 Parents Society files.

Stephanie P. reminded meeting attendees that HollyJoy S. had offered during the last meeting to put together a survey to teachers, on how Westgate families may best support them. As a follow-up to that previous discussion and in the context of the results from the survey, HollyJoy S. was prepared to provide an update and had further requested two motions to be put forward at this meeting. Stephanie P. read the motions which had been provided as part of the agenda and notice of meeting.

- Regarding the first motion, HollyJoy S. reported that survey responses had been received from the majority of teachers. She summarized key findings, noting that teachers reported average out-of-pocket expenses of approximately \$450 per year. Teachers also ranked the items that made them feel most appreciated as follows: (1) food, (2) handwritten cards or small gifts, and (3) assistance in the classroom. HollyJoy S. shared several wishlist items arising from the survey, and noted that Dana will review these to determine what the school is able to provide. The current request for funding includes goals of purchasing carpets for Grade 1 classrooms and allocating \$100 per grade team for math games. HollyJoy S. also noted that the teachers requested that a follow-up survey be conducted in the spring.
- Gillian H., Treasurer, noted that the requested amount is in addition to the previously approved budget and confirmed that the Society has sufficient cash on hand to support the request.
- Moved by HollyJoy S., seconded by Gillian H. to approve expenditures of up to \$3,000 for teacher classroom supports and supplies, with the specific purchases to be determined in consultation with school administration and teachers. Funding will be drawn from the appropriate Society account(s) based on AGLC eligibility and available balances. Carried.
- Regarding the second motion, HollyJoy S. reported that the consensus from the survey, would be to have a dedicated time for a group of volunteers, and the teachers can add tasks to a sign-up sheet to have accomplished during that time. Teachers also would like to have parents to come in and read with kids, for example. Some classes have less parent support, so it might need to reach a pool of parents outside of the class. Discussion ensued. Suggestion to put out a call to parents on availability and skillset, and then teachers can review the list and pick what they can use.
- Regarding the second motion, HollyJoy S. reported that survey feedback indicated support for establishing a dedicated volunteer time, during which teachers could post tasks on a sign-up sheet for volunteers to complete. Teachers also expressed interest in having parents assist with activities such as reading with students. It was noted that some classes have limited parent support, and that volunteers may need to be drawn from a broader pool beyond individual classrooms. Discussion ensued. A suggestion was made to issue a general call to parents to identify their availability and skill sets, after which teachers could review the list and select support that best meets their needs.
- Moved by HollyJoy S., seconded by Stephanie P. to establish a “Worker Bee Committee” to coordinate volunteer support for school-based tasks identified as helpful by teachers and school administration, and that the Committee report its activities to the Society at regular meetings. Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of bank account signatories

- Stephanie P. read the motion, to make the following changes to all Ecole Westgate School Parents’ Society bank accounts: (1) Remove Patricia Bal and Sheri Bolitho as signing authorities; and (2) Add Holly Joy Stanford and Gillian Hogg as signing authorities.
- Moved by Stephanie P. and seconded by Vanessa H., the motion carried.

Purchase of library book bags

- Moved by Stephanie P. and seconded by Vanessa H. to ratify the expenditure for the purchase of library book bags for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students in the amount of \$888.20, which was incurred in August 2025, and to approve payment from the Society’s account(s).

- Stephanie P. explained that this order included a sufficient quantity of bags to last a couple of years. She also noted that future requests to re-order will come from Mme Brenda. The Chair invited discussion. The motion carried.

Approval of funding requests by school administration

- Moved by Stephanie P., seconded by Vanessa H., to approve up to \$4,000 in funding to Westgate School from the Parents' Society as requested by Westgate School Administration for the following:
 - Up to \$400 for the Jing Woo Cultural Association – donation for Chinese New Year performance;
 - Up to \$1,000 for food for the school's Francophonie club event with Bishop Pinkham and Western Canada schools;
 - Up to \$1,000 for six French reader pens – reader pens help students by scanning printed text, reading it aloud, defining words, and allowing them to record notes or lectures. This supports independent learning, helps struggling readers access grade-level material, and provides support for students with learning disabilities or those learning English as a second language. The devices enhance confidence, motivation, and the ability to focus on content rather than on decoding words;
 - Up to \$1,500 toward the deficit accumulated in the 2024-2025 school year for offsite learning fees;
 - An increase of \$100 (from \$500 to \$600) for staff dinners due to the increased cost of food.

Funding will be drawn from the appropriate Society account(s) based on AGLC eligibility and available balances.

- Stephanie P. invited discussion on these items. Discussion ensued regarding the school clubs and the impact of labour action. Julie M., Principal, commented that the school's Réunis en Francophonie club will be deferred from its usual November start to February. It remains uncertain whether other school clubs will proceed this year. The Principal also indicated that the school intends to begin with a purchase of six reader pens to be made available across all grades, and that the need for additional pens will be assessed following evaluation of usage from the initial purchase. Further discussion took place regarding the field trip deficit, strategies used by the school to communicate the outstanding fees, and to confirm that fee assistance provided by the Society would be applied to the general school account, and not to clear any individual family accounts. Gillian H. indicated that she will inquire with AGLC about eligibility for this expense. Motion carried.

Subsidy of student fees by the Parents' Society for the 2025-2026 school year

Julie M. mentioned that school administration is considering a request for the Society to generally subsidize offsite learning experiences and invited meeting attendees to raise any questions or concerns in advance of that request. The Principal indicated that a request would likely be put forth at the Society's next meeting in January.

Holiday Hamper initiative

Stephanie P. explained that the Parents' Society is proposing to collect gift cards and cash donations from Westgate families, to be distributed to families of Westgate and Sherwood schools who may need assistance during the holiday season. She explained that families will be invited to send the cards to the school (drop off at the office or send with students) beginning December 1 and donations will also be collected by volunteer(s) at the SnowBall concession and sugar cookie station. Gillian H. reminded event organizers that the Square app must have coding to keep donation funds separate from concession revenue. Stephanie P. invited discussion on the possibility of sharing the donated cash and gift cards with Sherwood School. Julie M. and Stephanie L. confirmed that Westgate School families are invited to reach out to the school administration if they could benefit from the donations and that school staff are also able to put forward names for consideration. Julie M. and Stephanie L. review the families identified and the donated funds available, reach out directly to families and match up as appropriate. They mentioned that

last year approximately 10 families received around \$200 each (actual amounts varied depending on the number of children in the family). Following discussion, it was agreed to advertise that the donations are being collected for both Westgate and Sherwood families, prioritizing Westgate families and then sharing with Sherwood after we fulfill Westgate needs for assistance.

REPORTS

Treasurer Report

Gillian H. mentioned that the Treasurer's report had been posted and invited questions. No discussion followed.

Casino Report

Stephanie P. provided the update in the absence of a formal Casino Coordinator. She reported on the casino nights that took place in October at Cowboys Casino, and extended thanks to the former Casino Coordinator, Michael Dorsey for his efforts on that important fundraising event. Stephanie indicated that the Society could expect revenue of around \$80,000 from the casino, making it a significant source of funding for the Parents' Society every 18 months to two years. She also confirmed that, with the assistance of Gillian H. and in accordance with AGLC rules, necessary paperwork related to the event had been filed and that the application for the next casino has been submitted on behalf of the Parents' Society. The next casino is likely to be scheduled in late 2026 or early 2027.

Fundraising Committee Report

In the absence of a formal committee, Stephanie P. reminded meeting attendees that the Society's fundraising activities typically include (in addition to the casino) event concessions, fun lunches, popcorn sales and bottle drives. She reported that the prior bottle drive held in September raised \$600, and that Vanessa H. is arranging for the Bowness Bottle Depot truck to visit Westgate School during portions of the parent conference times November 27 and 28. Discussion ensued regarding the logistics of collecting bottles outside of the times that the truck is available. It was decided to put containers inside the main doors to collect donated recyclables until the truck arrives.

Fun Lunch Committee Report

Stephanie P. shared the update on behalf of the Committee. She reminded meeting attendees that the lunch and popcorn dates in October were cancelled due to labour action. There were issues with delivery of the latest lunch on November 18 yet, with a strong team of volunteers as well as help from the lunchroom supervisors and Westgate staff, the challenges were sorted and all pizza lunches were delivered. Laurie B. spoke with the vendor and received assurances of high quality and customer service going forward. As a gesture of commitment, the vendor offered a pizza lunch for Westgate School staff on the next pizza lunch day, December 16, free of charge. Stephanie also reported that, due to the labour action in October, the first Texas donut day was rescheduled from November 4, 2025 to January 14, 2026. Existing orders for the donuts were moved and reminders of the change will be sent out via email.

Grade 6 Farewell Committee Report

Kerri C. reported that most volunteer positions related to the Grade 6 Farewell have been filled and that a third date has been booked for the Texas donut sale. She also noted that certain deposits are due and confirmed with Gillian H. the procedure for using Society funds to pay vendors. The Treasurer confirmed that expenses may be paid either by Committee members and submitted to the Society for reimbursement, or by submitting invoices directly to the Society for payment to vendors. Kristin M., Secretary, further clarified that expenses already approved within the Society's budget do not require separate meeting motions, while any expenses not previously approved must be authorized by motion. Additionally, expenses exceeding \$500 require at least five days' advance notice to Society members before a motion may be brought forward.

During further discussion, the Treasurer clarified that the Committee does not need to wait until funds are received from its dedicated fundraising activities before incurring expenses, as the Society's accounts are sufficient to cover farewell-related costs regardless of the timing of revenues.

Stephanie P. reminded the Committee that, in addition to proceeds from its dedicated fundraising activities, the Grade 6 Farewell Committee has received \$1,000 from the Parents' Society in each of the past two years to support farewell activities if required. This contribution is intended to help ensure a consistent experience for Grade 6 students. The Committee was advised to bring forward a motion in January, should the \$1,000 contribution be deemed necessary.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Westgate School Council is scheduled for Thursday, January 22, 2026 following the School Council meeting. It will be a hybrid meeting, held both virtually and in-person.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting terminated at 9:06 p.m.