



September 9, 2025 Minutes

In Attendance:

PTO Board Members: Maggie Brickerman (Class Rep Coordinator), Joseph Clark (After School Classes), Renee Deschard (At Large), Adam Gratch (Events), Chrissy Greer (President), Kim Hinkley (Communications), Mimi Johnson (Communications), Colleen Ott (Class Rep Coordinator), Grace Sisson (Treasurer), George Sisson (Treasurer)

In Person - Approximately 30 parents and community members were present; additionally 1 babysitter and approximately 10 kids were on site

Online - Approximately 8 people were present, including staff members

Call to order

A meeting of the VHE PTO was called to order at 6:32 PM by President Chrissy Greer.

Approval of minutes

This was the first meeting of the year and no minutes were presented for approval.

Reports

PTO Updates, Old Business and New Business

BUDGET - Co-Treasurer George Sisson presented the [proposed operating budget](#). He spoke to the health of the general fund account (\$22,000), and projected income (\$92,000) and expenses (\$104,000). He offered that historically the budget is approved with up to \$10,000 overspend, and that trends have shown income is often higher and spending lower than expected.

The Board made some decisions about cutting budget items, including where budget items were under- or not utilized in the last few years. The Board offered background on some of the larger fundraisers, expenses, and events such as the direct appeal, carnival, after school classes, all school t-shirts, yearbooks, Rooted garden program (now offered to all grades), staff appreciation - including grants, stipends, book funds, and other celebrations. The budget was approved unanimously.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS - Kirsten Akenbrand volunteered to serve as the secretary for the year. It was noted that there will be a reduction in the number of full PTO meetings, with off months serving as meeting times for specific committees or causes (e.g., class reps will convene in October). Class Rep Coordinators Maggie Brickerman and Colleen Ott walked through the role

of class rep and the vision of improving communication and community building, the resources available from the PTO (\$200 per grade, template communications, etc.), and the goal to get reps for each class. Several PTO members in attendance committed to serving as class reps.

The school-led Open House is scheduled for September 25. The PTO is still working to determine whether any food will be provided (pizza, ice cream, popsicles, etc.) and volunteer needs.

The formal meeting adjourned.

There were questions and extensive discussion in the room about the new drop-off procedure.

- In general, there is a lot of confusion. There is a lack of understanding about the why/how, different interpretations, concern about the ability to abandon the procedures for many reasons - including inclement weather. There were additional conversations about the need to be clear and consistent, and about the challenges with the new communication tool not providing timely updates if notices are sent close to arrival time. Some families felt the protocol is just suggestive and not expected/required. Many felt they were better off arriving after 8.15/just before 8.25 to ensure they could get into their classrooms directly.
- It has been difficult for the kids who ride the school bus or participate in the walking school bus to navigate how early to arrive, for students to know whether/when to go straight to classrooms versus out to the playground to line up.
- There were also concerns about knowing when/whether doors (both classroom and external) were locked or accessible. There were also issues with morning schedules and specials starting at bell time that may prove challenging.
- Those who had been around prior to COVID noted that when it was last utilized, there was formal, supervised time on the playground for fifteen minutes prior to line-up and going inside.
- There is concern about the stigma around kids who access school breakfast. There is also confusion about how the process for breakfast works with the line-up procedure.
- Some asked whether there may be an increase in behavior incidents because it does not allow students to ease into their morning.
- Families raised safety concerns about jaywalking, others flagged that there may be parking enforcement issues very soon.
- There was discussion about how this seems to disincentivize prompt/early arrival and removes some opportunities for students to develop skills and independence.
- Families new to the school shared their perspectives.
- Some of the questions asked included:
 - Is this procedure done at other schools in the district? Are other schools in the district utilizing the soft start as had been done previously?
 - Is there more information about the goals of this move and what metrics are being used to measure its success?
 - Can attendance data/trends (including tardiness) be shared?

- Can information about the number of behavior incidents or trends in behavior incidents be shared?
- A new family said they liked the procedure.
- The Waukesha Street drop-off has been far less crowded than last year.
- The breezeway doors have been a good spot for drop off for kids getting breakfast (avoids any confusion about the lines).

It was suggested that the Hedgie Hustle could be a good place to provide updates (some suggested monthly) with data on the impact of the line-up and any additional information about the process. It was also suggested that there may need to be reminders about the Waukesha Street parking and signs - some are leaving parked cars in the drop-off zone and it is causing congestion and will lead to tickets.

Next Steps/Follow up

Next full PTO meeting November 11th.

Respectfully submitted by PTO Board

Approved by Board electronically on September 11, 2025