Board Minutes
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
Boardroom and Virtually

The Upper Grand District School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, in the Board Room at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, and virtually via Microsoft Teams, starting at 7:00 p.m.

Trustees Present:
- Ralf Mesenbrink (Chair)
- Alethia O'Hara-Stephenson (Vice Chair)
- Jen Edwards
- Irene Hanenberg
- Martha MacNeil
- Kyle Reaburn
- Lynn Topping
- Luke Weiler
- Laurie Whyte
- Elisa Emini (Student Trustee)
- Wreighn Fetalcorin (Student Trustee)

Absent:
- Robin Ross

Administration:
- Peter Sovran, Director of Education and Chief Executive Officer
- Brent McDonald, Associate Director and Chief Operating Officer
- Deirdre Pyke, Superintendent of People, Leadership and Culture
- Wendy Donaldson, Superintendent of Student Achievement
- Belal Taha, Superintendent of Student Achievement
- Claudine Tyrell, Superintendent of Student Achievement
- Steve Viveiros, Superintendent of Student Achievement
- Alicia Ralph, Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility Commissioner
- Heather Loney, Manager of Communications and Public Relations
- Nancy Fiorentino, Manager of Governance and Board Services

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Mesenbrink presided and called the meeting to order.

2. O Canada

Kemi Olagunju from Centennial CVI sang the national anthem.

3. Land Acknowledgement

Student Trustee Wreighn Fetalcorin recognized that the Board is meeting on the ancestral, treaty and title lands of two Anishinaabek Ojibwe Nations: The Michi Saagig of the Credit and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.

Equity and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Commitment Statement

Trustee Weiler highlighted the importance of the Board's commitment to equity and anti-racism/anti-oppression.

4. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #26-66:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the Upper Grand District School Board agenda for the April 28, 2026 meeting, be approved as amended to remove Item 9.7(c) - Election of OPSBA Director, as this is no longer a requirement of OPSBA, and further, to add an item under Other Business, Item 14.1 – Member Representative Appointment to the Special Education Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

6. Confirmation of Minutes of the Board

6.1 February 24, 2026 Board Minutes

RESOLUTION #26-67:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the minutes of the February 24, 2026 meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, be approved.

CARRIED

7. UG Ovation

Director of Education Sovran presented recognition of two UG Ovation recipients, an initiative that celebrates and recognizes outstanding achievements of students and staff across the Upper Grand District School Board.

- Jennifer Pigeon – Upper Grand District School Board teacher
- Anisha Chowdry – Upper Grand District School Board student

8. Delegation(s)

There were no delegations.

9. Committee Reports

9.1 Committee of The Whole – Closed

Pursuant to Section 207(2) of the *Education Act* a meeting of a committee of a board, including a committee of the whole, may be closed to the public when the subject-matter under consideration involves matters set out in 207(2)(a)-(e) of the *Education Act*.

Vice Chair O'Hara-Stephenson presented the Committee of the Whole (Closed Session) report held on April 28, 2026. The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. and was held in closed session as per Section 207 (2) of the *Education Act*. All board members were present and no declarations of pecuniary interest were declared.

RESOLUTION #26-68:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the Upper Grand District School Board approves the business of the Committee of the Whole -Closed Session of April 28, 2026.

CARRIED

9.2 Standing Committees

a) Policy and Priorities Committee – March 3, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-69:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the report of the Policy and Priorities Committee meeting of March 3, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

b) Policy and Priorities Committee – April 14, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-70:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

That the recommendations of the Policy and Priorities Committee meeting of April 14, 2026 be approved as follows:

Item 6.1 Human Rights @UGDSB Update

That the Human Rights @UGDSB Update, be received.

Item 6.2(a) Policy 307 Outdoor Play Spaces

1. That Policy 307 Outdoor Play Spaces, attached as Appendix A to the report dated April 14, 2026, be rescinded.

2. That Policy 322 titled Safe Operation of Schools and Board Sites, attached with revisions as Appendix B to the report dated April 14, 2026, be approved as amended with the deletion of the following line under Section 2 Definition of Authorized Visitor, it being:

   "*a person or persons using the school grounds for recreational purposes during non-school, daylight hours*."

Item 6.2(b) Policy 605 Cooperative Education

That Policy 605 titled Cooperative Education, attached as Appendix A to the report dated April 14, 2026, be rescinded.

Item 6.3(a) Policy Review Plan 509 Health Support Services

That the Policy Review Plan for Policy 509 – Health Support Services, attached as Appendix A to the report dated April 14, 2026, be approved.

Item 6.3(b) Policy Review Plan 205 School Volunteers

1. That the Policy Review Plan for 205 School Volunteers, attached as Appendix A to the report dated April 14, 2026, be approved.

2. That Policy 205 titled School Volunteers, attached with revisions as Appendix B to the report dated April 14, 2026, be released for public consultation for a period of 15 days.

CARRIED

c) Governance Committee – April 21, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-71:

Moved by: Trustee Weiler
Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That the report of the Governance Committee meeting of April 21, 2026 be received for information.

CARRIED

d) Finance and Facilities Committee – April 21, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-72:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn
Seconded by: Trustee Hanenberg

That the report of the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting of April 21, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

e) Student Trustees and Student Senate Report – March 9 and April 13, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-73:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the Student Trustees and Student Senate Report of March 9 and April 13, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.3 Statutory Committees

a) Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) – February 23, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-74:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the Parent Involvement Committee report of February 23, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

b) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – March 11, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-75:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

1. That the Chair of SEAC write letters in support of the correspondence from the Simcoe County District School Board and the Thames Valley District School Board regarding the need for increased provincial funding for students with special education and mental health needs, as well as the significant wait times for community-based Speech and Language Pathology (SLP) services, and to advocate for a more integrated and efficient service delivery model.

2. That the Special Education Advisory Committee Report of March 11, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

c) Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) – March 30, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-76:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the Parent Involvement Committee report of March 30, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

d) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – April 8, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-77:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Hanenberg

That the Special Education Advisory Committee minutes of April 8, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.4 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council (FNMIEC) – April 13, 2026

RESOLUTION #25-78:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That the April 13, 2026 report of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council be received.

CARRIED

9.5 Advisory Committees

a) Sustainability MYP Advisory Committee – March 23, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-79:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

That the March 23, 2026 report of the Sustainability MYP Advisory Committee report be received.

CARRIED

b) Championing Health and Wellbeing MYP Advisory Committee – March 24, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-80:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the March 24, 2026 Championing Health and Wellbeing MYP Advisory Committee be received.

CARRIED

c) Lifelong Love of Learning MYP Advisory Committee – April 9, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-81:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the April 9, 2026 report of the Lifelong Love of Learning MYP Advisory Committee be received.

CARRIED

9.6 Ad Hoc Committee(s)

a) Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee – February 25, 2026

b) Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee – March 25, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-82:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee reports from the meetings of February 25, 2026 and March 25, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

c) Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee – April 15, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-83:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Hanenberg

WHEREAS Dr. Martha C. Rogers, former longtime Director of the Upper Grand District School Board, demonstrated exemplary leadership, dedication, and commitment to advancing the mission, values, and priorities of the Upper Grand District School Board; and

WHEREAS her contributions have had a meaningful and lasting impact that merits formal recognition; and

WHEREAS the establishment of an awards program in her name would serve to honour her legacy while inspiring and recognizing others who demonstrate similar excellence, integrity, and commitment; and

WHEREAS such a program recognizes and reinforces the values upheld by the Upper Grand District School Board;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the establishment of the Dr. Martha C. Rogers Leadership Awards Program in recognition of the outstanding contributions of Dr. Martha C. Rogers, be approved; and

2. That a committee be established to develop and bring forward for Board consideration the Dr. Martha C. Rogers Leadership Awards Program including program framework, criteria, nomination process, implementation plan and any other required elements;

3. That a Terms of Reference be developed for the establishment of the Dr. Martha C. Rogers Leadership Awards Program Development Ad Hoc Committee by the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee for the Board's consideration at a future meeting; and

4. That upon approval of the Terms of Reference for the Dr. Martha C. Rogers Leadership Awards Program Development Ad Hoc Committee, the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee be dissolved having achieved their mandate.

CARRIED

9.7 External Appointment

a) Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

RESOLUTION #26-84:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the Ontario Public School Boards' Association report be received.

CARRIED

b) Art Gallery of Guelph

RESOLUTION #26-85:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the Art Gallery of Guelph Report be received.

CARRIED

c) Election of OPSBA Voting Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegate

The Chair called for nominations for the position of OPSBA Voting Delegate.

Trustee Whyte nominated Trustee MacNeil.

Trustee MacNeil accepted the nomination for the position of OPSBA Voting Delegate.

RESOLUTION #26-86:

Moved by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That there being no further nominations for the position of OPSBA Voting Delegate, that nominations now be closed.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-87:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That Trustee MacNeil be appointed as the OPSBA Voting Delegate for a one year term or until a successor is elected.

CARRIED

The Board proceeded to the election of OPSBA Alternate Voting Delegate with the Chair calling for nominations.

Trustee MacNeil nominated Trustee Edwards.

Trustee Edwards accepted the nomination for the position of OPSBA Alternate Voting Delegate.

RESOLUTION #26-88:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That there being no further nominations for the position of OPSBA Alternate Voting Delegate, that nominations now be closed.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-89:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That Trustee Edwards be appointed as the OPSBA Alternate Voting Delegate for a one year term or until a successor is elected.

CARRIED

10. Report from Chair

On April 9, Chair Mesenbrink and Trustee Ross hosted a visit to Norwell Secondary School with Education Minister Calandra and MPP Matthew Ray, including classroom tours. Chair Mesenbrink and Trustees Edwards and MacNeil attended a Parent Involvement Committee event on April 16th held at Centre Wellington District High School that focused on human trafficking awareness. On April 23, Chair Mesenbrink and Trustee MacNeil joined students, family, staff, members of Executive Committee, and officials to celebrate the grand opening of Grand River Elementary School. Chair Mesenbrink shared updates on upcoming school projects and the introduction of Bill 101, noting its potential impact is still unclear. Chair Mesenbrink concluded by recognizing the National Day of Mourning and reflecting on those affected by workplace-related loss or trauma.

11. Report from Director

Director of Education Sovran expressed appreciation for Upper Grand staff for their ongoing commitment to student achievement and alignment with the multi-year strategic plan. Director Sovran highlighted the accomplishments and leadership of students across academics, extracurriculars, and community involvement and noted that

attention is now turning to preparing the 2026–27 budget to ensure schools remain well-resourced. Director Sovran shared a recent classroom visit and noted the quality of learning and also reflected on the positive energy at the opening of Grand River Public School and other events, emphasizing strong engagement and community connection across the system.

12. Motions for Consideration (Introduced at a Previous Meeting)

None.

13. Notice of Motions (Discussion for Next Meeting)

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn

13.1 **WHEREAS** on April 1, 2026, NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, and Christina Koch, and Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen launched aboard the Artemis II mission, the first crewed flight around the Moon since the Apollo program; and

WHEREAS Colonel Jeremy Hansen became the first non-American astronaut to travel beyond low Earth orbit and the first to journey to the vicinity of the Moon; and

WHEREAS on April 6, 2026, the Artemis II crew broke the record for the farthest distance humans have ever traveled from Earth, surpassing the record previously set by the Apollo 13 mission in 1970; and

WHEREAS Colonel Hansen was born in London, Ontario, and raised on a farm near Ailsa Craig, a rural southwestern Ontario upbringing not unlike the communities served by many Upper Grand District School Board schools, demonstrating to rural students that world-changing ambitions can take root anywhere; and

WHEREAS Colonel Hansen's Artemis II mission patch was designed by an Anishinaabe artist and references the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, reflecting a deep commitment to Indigenous knowledge and partnership that aligns with the Upper Grand District School Board's values; and

WHEREAS the Artemis II mission represents a triumph of science, engineering, courage, and international collaboration that captures the imagination of young people everywhere; and

WHEREAS the students of the Upper Grand District School Board deserve the opportunity to hear directly from those who dare to reach beyond the limits of human possibility;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Director of Education be requested to write a letter, on behalf of the Board, congratulating Colonel Jeremy Hansen, Commander Reid Wiseman, Mission Specialist Victor Glover, and Mission Specialist Christina Koch on the successful and historic completion of the Artemis II mission and formally inviting Colonel Jeremy Hansen and the Artemis II crew to visit schools within the Upper Grand District School Board to speak with students about space exploration, science, courage, and the power of dreaming big; and

2. That staff be directed to explore partnership opportunities with the Canadian Space Agency and NASA to bring space-themed STEM programming to UGDSB schools; and

3. That this resolution be shared with the Canadian Space Agency, the federal Members of Parliament for Guelph, Perth-Wellington, Wellington-Halton Hills, and Dufferin-Caledon, and the federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry.

14. Other Business

14.1 Appointment to the Special Education Advisory Committee
RESOLUTION #26-90:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That Ted Fransen be approved as the nominated representative, on behalf of the Waterloo Down Syndrome Society, on the Upper Grand District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee effective immediately.

CARRIED

15. Correspondence

None.

16. Information Items

None.

17. Adjournment

RESOLUTION #26-91:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the April 28, 2026 Upper Grand District School Board meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.