# UGDSB Election Guidelines 2026

## INTRODUCTION

During all school board, municipal, provincial and federal elections, we ask Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) schools and offices to follow these election guidelines, which outline the types of activities that can take place during the election period.

The UGDSB has information about the 2026 School Board Elections posted on its website.

## POLICY

The Upper Grand District School Board Election Guidelines align with Policy 111 Use of School Board Resources for Elections.

*It is the policy of the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) that school board resources and/or budgets are not used to sponsor or produce any campaign-related materials for a school board, municipal, provincial or federal election at any time, and especially during election periods. This policy applies to all trustees, registered trustee candidates seeking election (including acclaimed candidates), committee members, employees, and any member of the community who works or learns on board property and accesses school board resources (including students and parents). This prohibition is not meant to restrict trustees from routinely communicating with constituents; however, it supports accountable stewardship of school board resources and contributes to confidence in public education.*

## GUIDELINES

### School Visits by Candidates

Politicians are welcome in schools when their visit is at the invitation of the principal or teacher and for the benefit of the students (e.g. curriculum focus).

During an election period [1], visits by politicians and candidates with official business in the school must be of a non-partisan nature and serve an educational purpose (e.g. provide information on the election process; bring greetings at a school anniversary or graduation). **The visit is to be strictly for the students' benefit. No campaigning may occur in the school and all messaging must be of a non-partisan nature.**

Requests by candidates with no official duties in the school and for the purpose of campaigning are to be denied. Requests by politicians to address students for partisan purposes are to be denied. This includes informal visits to classrooms and meetings with the School Council or school administrators.

## Role of Current Trustees

Current members of the Board of Trustees are permitted to continue with routine business of the board. It is appropriate for schools to involve the local trustee in events at the school in a way they would have prior to the beginning of the election campaign (e.g. presenting awards at an assembly).

Schools should not distribute campaign material on behalf of the current trustee if the trustee is a candidate in an upcoming election.

## All-Candidates Meetings

Elections can be an ideal time to help students learn more about government. Schools can organize all-candidates meetings. When arranging an all-candidates meeting, all registered candidates must be invited to address the students and be given equal time to speak.

All-candidate meetings may also be organized after hours in UGDSB schools, subject to appropriate Community Use permits being issued.

## School Events

Open houses and other school-related events (e.g. graduation) are intended for parents and families of students at the school. They are not open to the general public and are not for election candidates to use as a way to campaign. If a candidate is a parent at the school, the candidate may attend school events as normal, but are not permitted to campaign during the visit or hand out materials

## School Councils

School councils are agents of the school and the UGDSB, and are bound by the same guidelines as the school. It is not appropriate for the school council as a group to endorse a specific candidate or to campaign on behalf of a specific candidate.

Invitations to, or requests by, candidates to present or campaign at school council meetings are not appropriate. However, the council could host an all-candidates meeting to assist parents/guardians in learning more about all of the candidates.

If it is the normal practice of the school council to meet regularly with the local trustee(s), those meetings can continue as they usually would. Otherwise, individual candidates are not permitted to meet with the council during the campaign period.

These guidelines apply to the school council as a group. The individual parent members of a school council, including the chair of the council, are not limited in their ability to campaign for specific candidates. However, it must be clear that they are supporting a candidate as an individual, not as a representative of the council.

A school council chair or member who is also a candidate for election may continue in their council role for the remainder of the school year. However, they must not use their role to promote their campaign while they are serving in the role of school council member. They are not allowed to distribute campaign materials on school property or to discuss their campaign during council meetings or at school events.

School council meetings are public. A candidate may choose to attend a council meeting as a member of the public. The candidate may ask a question during public question period, as any other member of the public could, but are not allowed to use this time to deliver campaign messages or to give out campaign materials at the meeting.

## Distribution of Material by Candidates

Campaign materials should not be directly or indirectly distributed through UGDSB schools. Candidate and/or political party signs are not permitted on school property.

This restriction includes current trustees who are also candidates in an upcoming election. Schools should not distribute any information by or about trustees who are also candidates until after the election.

Schools do not have control over what happens off board property. If a candidate wishes to stand off school property and distribute campaign materials, there is no action that can be taken.

It is appropriate to distribute information about the election in general—for example, information for voters, the date of the election, etc.

## Endorsing Candidates in an Election

It is not appropriate for a staff member to openly campaign for or endorse a specific political party while in the workplace. Class discussions about the election in general are appropriate.

The UGDSB logo, school logos and board or school letterhead should only be used in the context of school or board communication.

Staff members should exercise caution to ensure their individual support of a candidate outside of the school day is not seen as an opinion of the school or school board.

# NOTES

[1] The 2026 election period is from May 1, 2026, when the nomination period begins, to October 26, 2026, voting day.

***UPDATED JULY 2026***