

**Board Minutes
Tuesday, February 24, 2026
Boardroom and Virtually**

The Upper Grand District School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, February 24, 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
- Robin Ross
- Lynn Topping
- Luke Weiler
- Laurie Whyte
- Elisa Emini (Student Trustee)
- Wreighn Fetalcorin (Student Trustee)

Absent:

- None

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
- Pat Hamilton, 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
- Dilip Parmar, Senior Facilities Manager
- Heather Imm, Senior Planner
- 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

A video recording was shared of Grade 5-8 students from King George Public School performing O Canada.

3. Land Acknowledgement

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

4. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #26-38:

Moved by: Trustee Ross

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the Upper Grand District School Board agenda for the February 24, 2026 meeting, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Trustee Ralf Mesenbrink declared a conflict of interest on Finance and Facilities Committee Confidential Item, 7.1 – Property Matter, as a family member is a member of Guelph City Council. Trustee Mesenbrink did not participate or vote on this item.

6. Confirmation of Minutes of the Board

6.1 January 27, 2026 Board Minutes

RESOLUTION #26-39:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the minutes of the January 27, 2026 meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, be approved.

CARRIED

7. UG Ovation

None.

8. Delegation(s)

a) Nia James and Marsha Myrie Obi representing Black Parent Council, appeared before the Board to speak to equity and anti-Black racism with respect to:

- Item 6.2 of Policy and Priorities Committee, February 10, 2026 – *Policy 413 Behaviour Prevention and Intervention*.
- Item 9.3(a) Special Education Advisory Committee, February 11, 2026; and
- Item 9.5(b) Equity of Access and Outcomes MYP Committee, January 28, 2026

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 February 24, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and was held in closed session as per Section 207 (2) of the *Education*

Act. All board members were present. Trustee Mesenbrink declared a conflict of interest regarding Finance and Facilities confidential Item 7.1 – Property Matter as a family member is a member of Guelph City Council. Trustee Mesenbrink left the room during consideration of this item and did not participate or vote.

RESOLUTION #26-40:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Hanenberg

That the Upper Grand District School Board approves the business of the Committee of the Whole -Closed Session of February 24, 2026, with the exception of Item 7.1 of the closed session Finance and Facilities Committee report to be separated due to a conflict of interest.

CARRIED

Chair Mesenbrink passed the Chair to Vice Chair O'Hara-Stephenson for the consideration of closed session Item 7.1 – Finance and Facilities Committee report.

RESOLUTION #26-41:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the Upper Grand District School Board approves the remainder of the business of the Committee of the Whole – Closed Session of February 24, 2026, and specifically closed session Item 7.1 – Property Matter of the Finance and Facilities Committee report.

CARRIED

(Trustee Mesenbrink did not vote due to the declared conflict of interest.)

Chair Mesenbrink resumed as the Chair.

9.2 Standing Committees

a) Finance and Facilities Committee – February 3, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-42:

Moved by: Trustee Topping

Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the recommendations of the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting of February 3, 2026 be approved as follows:

Item 6.1 Trustee Honoraria

That the Trustee Honoraria report dated February 3, 2026, be received.

Item 6.2 Trustee Expenses

That the Trustee Expenses report dated February 3, 2026, be received.

Item 6.3 New School Build in Mansfield

That the verbal update regarding the New School Build in Mansfield be received.

CARRIED

b) Policy and Priorities Committee – February 10, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-43:

Moved by: Trustee Topping

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the recommendations of the Policy and Priorities Committee meeting of February 10, 2026 be approved as follows:

Item 6.1 French Immersion Program Update

That the UGDSB French Immersion Program Review Update report be received.

Item 6.2(a) Policy 413 Behaviour Prevention and Intervention

That Draft Policy 413 titled Safety (Behaviour Prevention and Intervention), attached as Appendix A to the report dated February 10, 2026, be released for public consultation for a period of 30 days.

Item 6.2(b) Policy 517 Service Animals for Students

That Draft Policy 517 titled Service Animals for Students, attached as Appendix A to the report dated February 10, 2026, be released for public consultation for a period of 30 days.

Item 6.2(c) Policy 518 Students with Life-Threatening Medical Conditions

That Policy 518 titled Supporting Students with Serious and Potentially Life-Threatening Medical Conditions, attached with revisions as Appendix A to the report dated February 10, 2026, be approved.

Item 6.2(d) Policy 302 Purchasing

That Draft Policy 711 titled Procurement, attached as Appendix A to the report dated February 10, 2026, be released for public consultation for a period of 30 days.

Item 6.3(a) Policy 324 Data Governance and Security

That Draft Policy 324 titled Data Governance and Security, attached as Appendix A to the report dated February 10, 2026, be released for public consultation for a period of 30 days

CARRIED

c) Student Trustees and Student Senate Report – February 9, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-44:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

1. That the Student Trustees and Student Senate Report of February 9, 2026 be received; and
2. That Keira Perot be appointed as the Upper Grand District School Board Student Trustee for Rural Schools for a term commencing August 1, 2026 to and including July 31, 2027; and
3. That Tavleen Rattan be appointed as the Upper Grand District School Board Student Trustee for Urban Schools for a term commencing August 1, 2026 to and including July 31, 2027.

CARRIED

9.3 Statutory Committees

a) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – February 11, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-45:

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

That the Special Education Advisory Committee minutes of February 11, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.4 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council (FNMIEC) – February 2, 2026

RESOLUTION #25-46:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the February 2, 2026 report of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council, be received.

CARRIED

9.5 Advisory Committees

a) Sustainability MYP Advisory Committee – January 19, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-47:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the January 19, 2026 report of the Sustainability MYP Advisory Committee, be received.

CARRIED

b) Equity and Access of Outcomes MYP Advisory Committee – January 28, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-48:

Moved by: Trustee Topping

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the January 28, 2026 report of the Equity and Access of Outcomes MYP Advisory Committee, be received.

CARRIED

9.6 Ad Hoc Committee(s)

- a) Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee – January 28, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-49:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg

Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee report of January 28, 2026, be received.

CARRIED

9.7 External Appointment

- a) Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

RESOLUTION #26-50:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

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

CARRIED

10. Report from Chair

Chair Mesenbrink welcomed incoming student trustees Keira Perot from Erin District High School and Tavleen Rattan from Guelph CVI, noting that, in accordance with the *Education Act*, student trustees are elected by their peers before the end of February. Appreciation was extended to all student candidates for their courage and commitment to representing the student voice. The new student trustees' term will run from August 1, 2026 to July 31, 2027. Gratitude was also expressed to current student trustees, Elisa Emini and Wreighn Fetalcorin, for their leadership and contributions.

Acknowledgement was given to Black History Month and to Muslim students, staff, and families observing Ramadan. Chair Mesenbrink recognized the stress many families may be experiencing due to economic uncertainty and global concerns and thanked staff for their ongoing care and compassion. Chair Mesenbrink concluded with a request for a moment of silence to reflect and extend strength and compassion to those experiencing loss or trauma within the school communities.

11. Report from Director

Director of Education Sovran extended congratulations to new student trustees-elect for the 2026-27 school year: Tavleen Rattan and Keira Perot, with encouragement to use the transition period to learn alongside the current student trustees. The importance of student voice was reaffirmed, recognizing Student Senate and school visits as invaluable sources of insight and inspiration regarding system well-being and effectiveness.

Reference was made to the Board's "*Let's Go UGDSB*" goals, including every student earning each credit in which they are enrolled, supported by a focus on monitoring attendance and intervening early when concerns arise.

With over 6,000 staff, numerous volunteers, and ten elected trustees serving approximately 35,000 students, Director Sovran acknowledged that the organization's collective role in guiding and supporting students is both a privilege and a profound responsibility.

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

None.

13. Notice of Motions (Discussion for Next Meeting)

a. Moved by: Trustee Reaburn

WHEREAS the achievements of Canadian athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games exemplify perseverance, excellence, and national pride;

AND WHEREAS such achievements provide meaningful inspiration to students and align with the Upper Grand District School Board's commitments to student well-being, engagement, and globally literate citizenship;

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education write a letter, on behalf of Upper Grand District School Board students, staff, and Trustees to the President, Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Olympic Committee expressing congratulations on the success of Canadian athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games; and
2. That the letter include an invitation to Olympic athletes who reside within UGDSB boundaries or who previously attended UGDSB schools to connect with the Board or individual schools, should they wish to share their experiences with students.

Motion to Waive Notice

RESOLUTION #26-51:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the Notice of Motion respecting a letter of congratulations to the Canadian Olympic Committee be waived such that it is considered this evening due to the time sensitive nature of the matter.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-52:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

WHEREAS the achievements of Canadian athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games exemplify perseverance, excellence, and national pride;

AND WHEREAS such achievements provide meaningful inspiration to students and align with the Upper Grand District School Board's commitments to student well-being, engagement, and globally literate citizenship;

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education write a letter, on behalf of Upper Grand District School Board students, staff, and Trustees to the President, Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Olympic Committee expressing congratulations on the success of Canadian athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games; and
2. That the letter include an invitation to Olympic athletes who reside within UGDSB boundaries or who previously attended UGDSB schools to connect with the Board or individual schools, should they wish to share their experiences with students.

RESOLUTION #26-53:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the words "all" and "including those" be added to clause 2 of the main motion such that it reads:

2. That the letter include an invitation to **all** Olympic athletes, **including those** who reside within UGDSB boundaries or who previously attended UGDSB schools to connect with the Board or individual schools, should they wish to share their experiences with students.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-54:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That clause 1 be amended to include the words 'and the Canadian Paralympic Committee such that it read as follows:

1. That the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education write a letter, on behalf of Upper Grand District School Board students, staff, and Trustees to the President, Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Olympic Committee **and the Canadian Paralympic Committee** expressing congratulations on the success of Canadian athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games; and

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-55:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

WHEREAS the achievements of Canadian athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games exemplify perseverance, excellence, and national pride;

AND WHEREAS such achievements provide meaningful inspiration to students and align with the Upper Grand District School Board's commitments to student well-being, engagement, and globally literate citizenship;

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education write a letter, on behalf of Upper Grand District School Board students, staff, and Trustees to the President, Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee expressing congratulations on the success of Canadian athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games; and
2. That the letter include an invitation to all Olympic athletes and Paralympic athletes, including those who reside within UGDSB boundaries or who previously attended UGDSB schools to connect with the Board or individual schools, should they wish to share their experiences with students.

CARRIED AS AMENDED

14. Other Business

14.1 School Year Calendar 2026/2027

RESOLUTION #26-56:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the draft 2026-2027 Upper Grand District School Board elementary and secondary school year calendars, as attached in Appendices B and C to the report dated February 24, 2026, be approved by the Board for submission to the Ministry of Education for final approval in accordance with Regulation 304.

CARRIED

14.2 Trustee Determination and Distribution for the Upper Grand District School Board 2026

RESOLUTION #26-57:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

1. That the Upper Grand District School Board approve the determination of 10 trustee positions for the board, the same number who were elected to the board at the previous regular elections.
2. That the Status Quo trustee distribution, as outlined in Appendix "B" of the report be approved and submitted, no later than April 3, 2026 to the Ministry of Education, the election clerk for all municipalities within the board's jurisdiction; and the secretary of every other board that is wholly or partially within the board's area of jurisdiction.
3. That the Board approve that no areas in the jurisdiction of the Upper Grand District School Board be designated as low population areas.

CARRIED

15. Correspondence

None.

16. Information Items

None.

17. Adjournment

RESOLUTION #26-58:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the February 24, 2026 Upper Grand District School Board meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.