

**Committee of the Whole - Open Minutes
Tuesday, September 29, 2026
Board Room and Virtually**

The Upper Grand District School Board met in Committee of the Whole - Open session on Tuesday, September 29, 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
 - Keira Perot (Student Trustee)
 - Tavleen Rattan (Student Trustee)

Absent: - Robin Ross

Administration: - Peter Sovran, Chief Executive Officer
 - Brent McDonald, Chief Executive Officer (Designate)

1. Call to Order

In accordance with Section 3.3 of By-law 1, Vice Chair O'Hara-Stephenson presided and called the meeting to order.

2. Land Acknowledgement

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

3. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #26-167:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

That the Upper Grand District School Board agenda for the September 29, 2026 Committee of the Whole – Open meeting, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

5. Delegation(s)

There were no delegations.

6. Agenda Item(s)

6.1 Discussion of the recommendations contained in the June 2, 2026 report to the Governance Committee titled 2026-2027 Governance Calendar and Structure Report.

Trustee Edwards expressed concern that holding meetings during the day is impractical, as trustees often have full-time employment and the current honoraria do not adequately compensate for time away from work.

Trustee Mesenbrink acknowledged that there is no meeting time that works for everyone, noting the differing needs of trustees with work and family commitments. Trustee Mesenbrink suggested that, given the upcoming change in Board membership, recommendations on meeting schedules should be left for the new Board to consider.

Trustee Weiler expressed appreciation for the work undertaken but opposed the meeting structure proposed back in June, particularly daytime meetings, consolidation of committees, and reduction in Board meetings. Concerns were raised about accessibility for working trustees, workload, and public engagement.

Trustee MacNeil agreed with Trustee Weiler's comments and supported discontinuing the closed-session Board meeting model. Concerns were expressed about changing meeting times after nominations closed and opposed having committee meetings immediately followed by Board meetings, citing impacts on trustee review, public input, and delegation opportunities.

Trustee Reaburn expressed agreement with colleagues, noting that the proposed meeting times would be challenging for trustees with young children and full-time employment. Trustee Reaburn supported proceeding with changes to the Committee of the Whole model before the new term, while leaving other recommendations for consideration by the incoming Board.

RESOLUTION #26-168:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

That Committee of the Whole Closed Session Board meeting model be discontinued effective September 2026.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-169:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

That the Governance Committee be asked to investigate whether any changes are required to the Board By-law No. 1, as a result of the resolution adopted by the Committee of the Whole on September 29, 2026.

CARRIED

7. Adjournment

RESOLUTION #26-170:

Moved by: Trustee Weiler

That the September 29, 2026 Upper Grand District School Board Committee of the Whole - Open meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.