

**Board Minutes
Tuesday, May 26, 2026
Boardroom and Virtually**

The Upper Grand District School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, in the Board Room at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, and virtually via Microsoft Teams, starting at 7:17 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, 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
- 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

A video recording was shared of Grade 3 class at Drayton Heights Public School performing O Canada in sign language.

3. Land Acknowledgement

Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson 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 Hanenberg highlighted the importance of the Board's commitment to equity and anti-racism/anti-oppression.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Mesenbrink shared that recently passed Bill 101 introduced several amendments to the *Education Act* including that of the title and role of the Director of Education which now is Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In accordance with Bill 101, the CEO role carries the responsibilities and privileges of a Board member, excluding the binding vote.

RESOLUTION #26-101:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That the Upper Grand District School Board agenda for the May 26, 2026 meeting, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

6. Confirmation of Minutes of the Board

6.1 April 28, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-102:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the minutes of the April 28, 2026 meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, be approved.

CARRIED

7. UG Ovation

Chief Executive Officer Sovran presented recognition of four UG Ovation recipients, an initiative that celebrates and recognizes outstanding achievements of students and staff across the Upper Grand District School Board.

- Nancy Culham – Upper Grand District School Board staff
- Charis Alabi – Upper Grand District School Board student
- Taylor Krueger and Kennedy Ray – Upper Grand District School Board students

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 May 26, 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*. Trustees Ross and Topping sent regrets, and all other board members were present. No declarations of pecuniary interest were declared.

RESOLUTION #26-103:

Moved by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the Upper Grand District School Board approves the business of the Committee of the Whole -Closed Session of May 26, 2026.

CARRIED

9.2 Standing Committees

a) Policy and Priorities Committee – May 5, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-104:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the recommendations of the Policy and Priorities Committee meeting of May 5, 2026 be approved with the exception of Item 6.1(a) Policy 302 Purchasing, to be separated for discussion.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-105:

Moved by: Trustee Weiler
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

1. That Policy 711 entitled Procurement attached with revisions as Appendix A to the report dated May 5, 2026, be approved, save that first bullet in section 3.2 be amended as follows:

3.2 Integrity and Ethics

All decisions will uphold ethical standards in accordance with Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS) Supply Chain Code of Ethics and will comply with any Code of Ethical Conduct for Procurement approved by the Board.

That the Policy and Priorities Committee be tasked with the development of a binding Code of Ethical Conduct for Procurement.

That the University of Guelph's Code of Ethical Conduct for Suppliers and Subcontractors may be used as a reference model.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-106:

Moved by: Trustee Weiler
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

Item 6.1(a) Policy 302 Purchasing

1. That Policy 711 entitled Procurement attached with revisions as Appendix A to the report dated May 5, 2026, be approved, save that first bullet in item 3.2 be amended as follows:

3.2 Integrity and Ethics

All decisions will uphold ethical standards in accordance with Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS) Supply Chain Code of Ethics and will comply with any Code of Ethical Conduct for Procurement approved by the Board.

That the Policy and Priorities Committee be tasked with the development of a binding Code of Ethical Conduct for Procurement

That the University of Guelph's Code of Ethical Conduct for Suppliers and Subcontractors may be used as a reference model.

2. That Policy 302 titled Purchasing, attached as Appendix B to the report dated May 5, 2026, be rescinded.
3. That Policy 708 titled Allowable Expenditures, attached as Appendix C to the report dated May 5, 2026, be rescinded.
4. That Policy 706 titled Corporate Credit Card, attached as Appendix D to the report dated May 5, 2026, be rescinded.

CARRIED AS AMENDED

b) Student Trustees and Student Senate Report – May 11, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-107:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the Student Trustees and Student Senate Report of May 11, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

Student Trustees left the meeting for school obligations.

9.3 Statutory Committees

- a) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – May 13, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-108:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

1. That the Chair of the Board and the Chair of SEAC be requested to send a letter to the Minister of Education regarding the recurring unmet needs of students on behalf of UGDSB Special Education Advisory Committee.
2. That the Special Education Advisory Committee report of May 13, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.4 Advisory Committees

- a) Equity of Access and Outcomes MYP Advisory Committee – April 22, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-109:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Hanenberg

That the April 22, 2026 report of the Equity of Access and Outcomes MYP Advisory Committee be received.

CARRIED

9.5 Ad Hoc Committee(s)

None.

9.6 External Appointment

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

RESOLUTION #26-110:

Moved by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

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

CARRIED

- b) Autism Ontario SEAC Appointment – Alternate Member Representative

RESOLUTION #26-111:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That Tina Macpherson be appointed as the alternate member representative to SEAC for Autism Ontario effective immediately.

CARRIED

10. Report from Chair

Chair Mesenbrink highlighted attending several recent community and school events, including the Upper Grand District School Board and Wellington Catholic Special Olympics Track and Field Days, school celebrations, and community engagement activities with trustees, staff, local officials, and students. Appreciation was expressed to organizers, volunteers, families, and student athletes for their contributions. Chair Mesenbrink also noted upcoming Pride and Indigenous History Month events, encouraged schools to continue inviting trustees to celebrations and graduations, and referenced recent developments related to Bill 101 and upcoming education funding analysis. Chair Mesenbrink concluded with a moment of reflection for those experiencing loss or trauma within schools and communities.

11. Report from Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer Sovran acknowledged the ongoing work and dedication across Upper Grand District School Board, including support for students participating in EQAO assessments and Grade 9 math testing. Recognition was given to the board's continued efforts in the areas of human rights and artificial intelligence, with community members encouraged to review resources and updates available on the UGDSB website. Chief Executive Officer Sovran highlighted ongoing work to develop the 2026–27 budget amid projected enrolment declines and related funding challenges. Updates regarding the implementation of changes arising from Bill 101 were noted, along with recognition of the upcoming observances of Pride Month and National Indigenous History Month as the school year draws to a close.

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

Notice of Motion Introduced at April 28, 2026 Board Meeting.

RESOLUTION #26-112:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

12.1 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.

RESOLUTION #26-113:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

1. That the ~~Director of Education~~ **Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Board** 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.

CARRIED AS AMENDED

13. Notice of Motions (Discussion for Next Meeting)

None.

14. Other Business

None.

15. Correspondence

- 15.1 Correspondence from Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education Paul Calandra regarding Student Evacuation Data and Request for Provincial Action
- 15.2 Correspondence from Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Education Paul Calandra regarding Bill 101, Putting Student Achievement First Act 2026
- 15.3 Correspondence from Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to Ombudsman of Ontario Board regarding Bill 101, Putting Student Achievement First Act 2026
- 15.4 Correspondence from Halton District School Board to Minister of Health Sylvia Jones regarding Vaccination Reporting Process

RESOLUTION #26-114:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Hanenberg

That correspondence Items 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, and 15.4 be received.

CARRIED

16. Information Items

None.

17. Adjournment

RESOLUTION #26-115:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the May 26, 2026 Upper Grand District School Board meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.