Board Minutes
Tuesday, October 27, 2026
Boardroom and Virtually

The Upper Grand District School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, October 27, 2026, in the Board Room at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, and virtually via Microsoft Teams, starting at 7:01 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
- Keira Perot (Student Trustee)
- Tavleen Rattan (Student Trustee)

Absent:
- None

Administration:
- Brent McDonald, Chief Executive Officer
- Scott Keys, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer
- Deirdre Pyke, Superintendent of People, Leadership and Culture
- Roy Cousins, 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

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Mesenbrink presided and called the meeting to order.

2. O Canada

A video recording was shared of students at Laurelwood Elementary School performing O Canada.

3. Land Acknowledgement

Trustee Hanenberg 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.

4. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #26-180:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the Upper Grand District School Board agenda for the October 27, 2026 meeting, be approved as amended by adding Item 9.1(a) – Report from Committee of the Whole – Open session of September 29, 2026 before Item 9.1(b) – Report from the Committee of the Whole – Closed Session of October 27, 2026.

CARRIED

5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

6. Confirmation of Minutes of the Board

6.1 June 23, 2026 Board

RESOLUTION #26-181:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the minutes of the June 23, 2026 meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

6.2 June 29, 2026 Special Board

RESOLUTION #26-182:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the minutes of the June 29, 2026 special meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

6.3 August 13, 2026 Special Board

RESOLUTION #26-183:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the minutes of the August 13, 2026 special meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

6.4 September 29, 2026 Committee of the Whole (Open)

RESOLUTION #26-184:

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

That the minutes of the September 29, 2026 Committee of the Whole open session meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board, be approved as presented.

CARRIED

7. UG Ovation

CEO McDonald presented recognition of an UG Ovation recipient, an initiative that celebrates and recognizes outstanding achievements of students and staff across the Upper Grand District School Board.

- Wesley Goodridge – UGDSB student

8. Delegation(s)

There were no delegations.

9. Committee Reports

9.1(a) Committee of the Whole – Open Session – September 29, 2026

Vice Chair O'Hara-Stephenson presented the Committee of the Whole – Open Session report for the session which met on September 29, 2026. Vice Chair O'Hara Stephenson presided over the meeting. All board members with the exception of Trustee Ross were present, and no declarations of pecuniary interest were declared.

RESOLUTION #26-185:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the Upper Grand District School Board approves the business of the Committee of the Whole -Open Session of September 29, 2026.

CARRIED

9.1(b) 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 October 27, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 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 #26-186:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the Upper Grand District School Board approves the business of the Committee of the Whole -Closed Session of October 27, 2026.

CARRIED

9.2 Standing Committees

a) Governance Committee – October 6, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-187:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg
Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That the report of the Governance Committee meeting of October 6, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

b) Policy and Priorities Committee – October 6, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-188:

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

That the recommendations of the Policy and Priorities Committee meeting of October 6, 2026 pertaining to Items 6.1, 6.2(a)(b)(c)(d)(e), and 6.3(a) be approved.

CARRIED

c) Student Trustees and Student Senate Report – September 21 and October 5, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-189:

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

That the Student Trustees and Student Senate Report of September 21, 2026 and October 5, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.3 Statutory Committees

a) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – September 9, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-190:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the Special Education Advisory Committee minutes of September 9, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

b) Audit Committee – September 22, 2026

Chair Mesenbrink passed the Chair to Vice Chair O'Hara-Stephenson in order to present the next item - Audit Committee report.

RESOLUTION #26-191:

Moved by: Trustee Hanenberg
Seconded by: Trustee Weiler

That the report of the Audit Committee meeting of September 22, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

Chair Mesenbrink resumed as the Chair

c) Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) – September 28, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-192:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the Parent Involvement Committee report of September 28, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.4 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council (FNMIEC) – October 5, 2026

RESOLUTION #25-193:

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

That the October 5, 2026 report of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council be received.

CARRIED

9.5 Advisory Committees

None.

9.6 Ad Hoc Committee(s)

None.

9.7 External Appointments

None.

10. Report from Chair

Chair Mesenbrink acknowledged that this was the first Board meeting of the 2026-27 school year and Chief Executive Officer McDonald's transition to his new role. Chair Mesenbrink recognized the openings of Two Rivers Secondary School and the Rickson Ridge Public School edition. Thanks were expressed to all municipal election candidates for their commitment to public education and emphasized the importance of collaboration, equity, sustainability, well-being, and student success amid ongoing changes in education. A moment of silence was observed in recognition of those experiencing loss or trauma.

11. Report from Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer Brent McDonald delivered his first report to the Board, expressing appreciation for the support of trustees, staff, student trustees, families, and community partners. CEO McDonald acknowledged outgoing and incoming trustees, reaffirmed the Board's commitment to its Multi-Year Plan, student achievement in literacy and numeracy, and implementation of the Human Rights Review recommendations. CEO McDonald acknowledged both the opening of Two Rivers Secondary School and the addition at Rickson Ridge Public School and recognized the positive EQAO results and efforts of students and staff.

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

Key points expressed during the discussion included: a policy gap, student learning and risks, potential benefits, consultation and stakeholder input, current use and training, responsible implementation, and further considerations as reviewing practices at other school boards and how AI is being used in workforces.

Notice of Motion Introduced at June 29, 2026 Special Board Meeting.

RESOLUTION #26-194:

Moved by: Trustee Luke Weiler
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

12.1 BE IT RESOLVED:

That staff shall prepare a policy detailing those circumstances in which AI may and may not be used in the education of students, in which ways and for which purposes, for submission to the Policy and Priorities Committee. Staff shall conduct robust consultations with parents, guardians, community stakeholders, and students on the use of AI in schools, such consultations to include surveys and town halls, and shall take those views into account in preparing the policy. Staff shall conduct a survey of the scientific literature on the subject and consider both potential benefits and harms to students from the use of AI and shall summarize this work in its report. Both harms to the environment from the use of AI and consequences (including externalized consequences) for the Board's sustainability objectives shall also be considered.

CARRIED

13. Notice of Motions (Discussion for Next Meeting)

None.

14. Other Business

None.

15. Correspondence

15.1 Correspondence from Halton District School Board to Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Diab regarding IRCC Funding

15.2 Correspondence from Limestone District School Board to Premier Ford, Minister of Education Calandra and Deputy Minister Cole regarding Funding

15.3 Correspondence from Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education Calandra regarding 2026-27 Budget

15.4 Correspondence from Halton District School Board to Minister of Education Calandra regarding Special Education Funding

15.5 Correspondence from Halton District School Board to Minister of Education Calandra regarding School Closures

RESOLUTION #26-195:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That correspondence Items 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, and 15.5 be received.

CARRIED

16. Information Items

None.

17. Adjournment

RESOLUTION #26-196:

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

That the October 27, 2026 Upper Grand District School Board meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.