Board Minutes
Tuesday, June 23, 2026
Boardroom and Virtually

The Upper Grand District School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, in the Board Room at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, and virtually via Microsoft Teams, starting at 7:15 p.m.

Trustees Present:
- Ralf Mesenbrink (Chair)
- Alethia O'Hara-Stephenson (Vice Chair)
- Jen Edwards
- Martha MacNeil
- Kyle Reaburn
- Robin Ross
- Lynn Topping
- Luke Weiler
- Laurie Whyte
- Elisa Emini (Student Trustee)
- Wreighn Fetalcorin (Student Trustee)

Absent:
- Irene Hanenberg

Administration:
- Peter Sovran, Chief Executive Officer
- Brent McDonald, Associate Director and Chief Operating Officer
- Scott Keys, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer
- 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
- 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

Students from Elora Public School sang the national anthem.

3. Land Acknowledgement

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

4. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #26-127:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That the Upper Grand District School Board agenda for the June 23, 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 May 26, 2026 Board Minutes

RESOLUTION #26-128:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

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

CARRIED

7. UG Ovation

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

- Shealteile Reignstein Balmoris – UGDSB student
- Muzammil Ahmad, Seth Langlois, Karonvir Blaggan, Chelsea Khaisavang, Marc Letourneau, Denis Proskurin, Josiah Thomas-Griffith – UGDSB E-sports Team

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 June 23, 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, except for Trustee Hanenberg who sent regrets, and no declarations of pecuniary interest were declared.

RESOLUTION #26-129:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the Upper Grand District School Board approves the business of the Committee of the Whole -Closed Session of June 23, 2026.

CARRIED

9.2 Standing Committees

a) Governance Committee – June 2, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-130:

Moved by: Trustee Reaburn
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the recommendation of the Governance Committee meeting of June 2, 2026 pertaining to Item 6.2 – 2026-2027 Governance Calendar and Structure, be approved as follows:

1. That a Committee of the Whole open session meeting be convened on a mutually convenient date in September 2026 to discuss the recommendations contained in the June 2, 2026 (*2026-2027 Governance Calendar and Structure)* report with results of that consultation to inform a recommendation to be made to the Governance Committee prior to the last board meeting of the 2022-2026 term of office.

2. That a calendar of meetings (Board and Committee) for the 2026-2027 year, be prepared in accordance with By-law 1 and in similar form to that of the 2025-2026 year, for review and approval at the June 23, 2026 Board meeting.

And the remainder of the report be received for information.

CARRIED

b) Policy and Priorities Committee – June 2, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-131:

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

That the recommendations of the Policy and Priorities Committee meeting of June 2, 2026 be approved as follows:

Item 6(a) - Policy 205 School Volunteers

That Policy 205 titled School Volunteers, attached with revisions as Appendix A to the report dated June 2, 2026, be approved.

Item 6(b) - Policy 509 Health Support Services

That Policy 509 titled Health Support Services, attached with revisions as Appendix A to the report dated June 2, 2026, be released for public consultation for a period of 30 days.

CARRIED

c) Finance and Facilities Committee – June 16, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-132:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That the Finance and Facilities Committee report of June 16, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

d) Student Trustees and Student Senate Report – June 8, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-133:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Topping

That the Student Trustees and Student Senate Report of June 8, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

9.3 Statutory Committees

a) Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) – May 25, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-134:

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

That the Parent Involvement Committee report of May 25, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

b) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – June 10, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-135:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the Special Education Advisory Committee minutes of June 10, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

c) Audit Committee – June 16, 2026

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

RESOLUTION #26-136:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the report of the Audit Committee meeting of June 16, 2026 be received.

CARRIED

Chair Mesenbrink resumed as the Chair

9.4 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council (FNMIEC) – June 1, 2026

RESOLUTION #25-137:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

That the June 1, 2026 report of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Council be received.

CARRIED

9.5 Advisory Committees

a) Equity of Access and Outcomes MYP Advisory Committee – May 20, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-138:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the May 20, 2026 report of the Equity of Access and Outcomes MYP Advisory Committee be received.

CARRIED

b) Sustainability MYP Advisory Committee – May 25, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-139:

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

That the May 25, 2026 report of the Sustainability MYP Advisory Committee be received.

c) Championing Health and Wellbeing MYP Advisory Committee – June 9, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-140:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Ross

That the June 9, 2026 report of the Championing Health and Wellbeing MYP Advisory Committee be received.

CARRIED

d) Inspire a Lifelong Love of Learning MYP Advisory Committee – June 10, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-141:

Moved by: Trustee Topping
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

That the June 10, 2026 report of the Inspire a Lifelong Love of Learning MYP Advisory Committee be received.

CARRIED

9.6 Ad Hoc Committee(s)

None.

9.7 External Appointment

a) Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

RESOLUTION #26-142:

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

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

CARRIED

b) Election of OPSBA Delegate

The Chair called for nominations for the position of OPSBA Delegate.

Trustee MacNeil nominated Trustee Edwards.

Trustee Edwards accepted the nomination for the position of OPSBA Delegate.

RESOLUTION #26-143:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte
Seconded by: Trustee Reaburn

That there being no further nominations for the position of OPSBA Delegate, that nominations now be closed.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #26-144:

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

That Trustee Edwards be appointed as the OPSBA Delegate for a one year term or until a successor is elected.

CARRIED

10. Report from Chair

Chair Mesenbrink acknowledged the approaching end of the school year and, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, expressed gratitude to students, families, staff, student leaders, system leaders, and trustees for their dedication and contributions throughout the year. Appreciation was extended to staff who continue to support summer learning, school operations, and capital projects, including the opening of a new secondary school in Guelph. Chair Mesenbrink recognized recent graduates, retiring staff, and the efforts made to advance the Board's multi-year plan for safe, welcoming, and engaging learning environments. Best wishes were extended to all students, staff, and families for a safe and restorative summer. Remarks concluded with a moment of reflection and support for those experiencing loss or hardship within the school communities and beyond.

11. Report from Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer Peter Sovran welcomed the Board's new Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, Scott Keys, and reflected on the achievements and growth experienced across the district during the 2025–26 school year. Recognition was given to students for their academic, leadership, and community contributions, as well as to student trustees for their exemplary leadership and advocacy. CEO Sovran also acknowledged the dedication and professionalism of staff across the district in supporting student success and navigating ongoing change. Emphasis was placed on the Board's commitment to its multi-year plan priorities, including student achievement, well-being, sustainability, and equity. CEO Sovran concluded by thanking trustees, staff, students, and families for their contributions throughout the year and extended best wishes for a restful summer and a successful return in September.

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

None.

13. Notice of Motions (Discussion for Next Meeting)

None.

14. Other Business

a. 2026 and 2027 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar

Chair Mesenbrink passed the Chair to Vice Chair O'Hara-Stephenson to comment on the new motion proposed.

Chair Mesenbrink resumed as the Chair.

RESOLUTION #26-145:

Moved by: Trustee Weiler
Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

That the draft proposed calendar be approved with the addition of a Policy and Priorities Committee meeting and a Finance and Facilities Committee meeting added to October 2026, and a Policy and Priorities Committee meeting, Finance and Facilities Committee meeting, and a Board meeting to be added to November prior to November 14, 2026.

CARRIED

b. 2026-2027 Special Education Plan

RESOLUTION #26-146:

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

That the 2026-2027 Special Education Plan of the Upper Grand District School Board attached as Appendix A to the report dated June 23, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED

15. Correspondence

15.1 Correspondence from Rainy River District School Board to Minister of Education Paul Calandra regarding Proposed Ban on Cell Phones on School Property

15.2 Correspondence from Waterloo Region District School Board to Minister of Education Paul Calandra and Premier Doug Ford regarding Proposed Changes to English Public School Board Governance

15.3 Correspondence from Waterloo Region District School Board to Barbara Finlay, Ombudsman, regarding Request for Review of Proposed English Public School Board Governance Reforms

RESOLUTION #26-147:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

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

CARRIED

16. Information Items

None.

17. Adjournment

RESOLUTION #26-148:

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

That the June 23, 2026 Upper Grand District School Board meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.