

**Upper Grand District School Board**  
**Final Meeting of the 2016 2017 Board**  
**Minutes**

December 5, 2017

The final meeting of The Upper Grand District School Board for the period December 1, 2016 to November 30, 2017 was held on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 in the Board Room at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, starting at 7:00 p.m.

The Chair, Trustee Bailey, presided. All members were present. Student Trustees Caitlin Ennis and Allison Cai were not in attendance.

**Confirmation of the Agenda**

Trustee Bailey requested that the agenda be changed to include the Traditional Greeting, and under Trustee Questions and Reports, add Chair's Closing Remarks.

Trustee Fairbairn moved, seconded by Trustee Cooper that the agenda be confirmed as amended.

**The motion carried.**

**Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

**Motion to Rise and Sit in Committee of the Whole**

Trustee Topping moved, seconded by Trustee White that the Board rise and sit in Committee of the Whole, with the Chairperson presiding.

**The motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes of the Board Meeting Held November 28, 2017**

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved, seconded by Trustee Busuttil, that the minutes of the Board meeting held November 28, 2017 and the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held immediately prior to the Board meeting be approved.

**The motion carried.**

## **Trustee Direction Regarding Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG) and Community Planning and Partnership Guidelines (CPPG) Response**

Trustee Busuttil moved that the Board direct the Chair to send a letter to the Ministry of Education no later than December 6, 2017, in response to the consultation on proposed changes to the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline and Community Planning and Partnership Guideline.”

**The motion carried.**

## **Expressions of Appreciation of the Board**

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved, seconded by Trustee White that the Official Appreciation of this Board be expressed to the representatives of the media for coverage of educational matters during the past year; and that sincere appreciation be expressed to the various radio stations for their co-operation and help in broadcasting school bus information on the inclement weather days which occur during the school year.

**The motion carried.**

Trustee Topping moved, seconded by Trustee Busuttil that the Official Appreciation of this Board be expressed to Martha Rogers, Director of Education, for her co-operation and assistance during the past year, and to all staff members for their loyalty and dedication, and that the Board's best wishes be extended to all staff for the coming year.

**The motion carried.**

Trustee Fairbairn moved, seconded by Trustee Cooper that the Official Appreciation of this Board be expressed to Mark Bailey, Chair of the Board, for his leadership and guidance in the past year, and to all Committee Chairs and members for their services and dedication.

**The motion carried.**

## **Board Correspondence**

Trustee Topping moved that the Board Correspondence dated December 5, 2017 be received.

**The motion carried.**

## **Trustee Questions or Reports**

Trustee MacNeil advised that the Trustee Code of Conduct policy review should be done by the end of March, 2018 and that the workshops would likely be scheduled

for either late January or early February 2018. She also advised that Dave Walpole had been contacted regarding the workshops.

### **Chair Bailey's Closing Remarks for 2016 2017 Year**

Trustee Bailey expressed sincere thanks and heart felt appreciation to his family, Director of Education Rogers, each Trustee, Senior Administrators, and staff for his opportunity and honour to serve this Board for the past number of years. He reflected on the Board's vision and praised the Board for its progress in the areas of mental health, environmental sustainability, and Indigenous education. He proudly stated that this Board is on the right path. He expressed best wishes to the next Chair of this Board, and success to all for the upcoming year. A copy of Mr. Bailey's closing remarks are attached to the minutes.

### **Adjournment and Closure**

Trustee White moved, seconded by Trustee Schieck, that having now officially completed its business, Upper Grand District School Board close this meeting at 7:30 p.m. and that the Board as constituted for the period December 1, 2016 to November 30, 2017 be now dissolved.

**The motion carried.**

**Closing Remarks, Chair Bailey, Final Board Meeting 2017 12 05**

Fellow trustee colleagues, Director Rogers, Senior Administration, and members of the gallery, and more specifically Julian, Jack, and Heidi, Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to make my closing comments as Chair of the Upper Grand District School Board.

To say that it has been an honour to serve this board in the capacity as Chair is an understatement. Under the direction of Dr. Rogers, our board has earned and maintained the highest reputation and recognition from the Ministry of Education and fellow English Public boards across the province. Our leadership, actions, and advocacy in the areas of fiscal stewardship, information technology, capital projects, environmental education, and mental health have enhanced services for students within our board, and inspired fellow boards and the Ministry to follow suit.

Before taking a few moments to express my gratitude to this board and individuals who supported me in my role, I'd like to express a vision for the potential of public education in the Upper Grand, in the hopes of inspiring other boards and the Ministry to follow suit.

Firstly, in the area of mental health. We have come so far, so quickly-- just a few short years. When I became a trustee, a decade ago, mental health was an afterthought, something acknowledged but rarely discussed as a component critical to student success. Since then, we have hired a capable mental health lead who has implemented many changes, and the Ministry has made trustees directly responsible for the well-being of students. What does accountability for wellbeing really mean, especially given that the Ministry has given it equal weight to student success in our mandate as trustees? My honest assessment is that our province, and our boards, including the Upper Grand, are still in the initial stages of grappling with this central

question. If we were to truly prioritize wellbeing with the same energy and focus as student success, what would our schools look like? What qualities would our graduates have that they do not have today?

In a nutshell, our efforts in the area of student wellbeing have with rare exceptions been reactive. We are, so far, focused on reacting to 'unwellness' in the few, rather than promoting wellness for the many. We have equipped our system to become the first line of defense, in identifying possible issues and working with families to connect them with the appropriate professional services. Our system has become efficient at doing so, and our assessment process has been so successful that other boards have adopted it. We are also doing incredible work in reducing stigma, and this cannot be overlooked either. This is great work, and we should congratulate ourselves for it, but what are the next steps? How can we turn from identifying wellbeing issues, to effectively promoting wellbeing for all of our students, as our mandate so clearly asks of us?

Our culture places a great many demands on us. We are expected to increasingly earn more, buy more, upsize, and increase our social stature. We are expected to look beautiful all the time, and our self-image consumes us, our young women especially but increasingly our young men as well. The myth that we are taught is that if we can make ourselves look beautiful, find the right mate and job, buy the right house and car, and have kids who grow up to do the same, we will eventually feel fulfilled. The absolute falsehood and tragedy of this formula is that it assumes that there is something wrong with us now, and that we must take these steps for any hope to improve our condition. "You are not good enough now, but don't worry, follow the formula and you will be! One day you will be content, happy, fulfilled, you just need to get the right stuff first!" The destructive power of this myth is only

increasing, thanks to the rise of social media and our instant ability to compare ourselves with others. Between 2005 and 2014, major depression has increased in numbers of Canadian youth affected by a staggering 37 percent. Unless we begin equipping our youth not just with mental health literacy, but with their own independent and intrinsic feelings of self-worth, I suspect these statistics will only continue to grow. We tell our students, “work hard and learn, you will thank us for it one day”, what we are not telling them is “you already are the person you wish to become, embrace who you are and treat yourself kindly, for who you already are is enough. You already have all that you need inside of you to find happiness now--and learning will be your tool to open the paths that you wish to use to explore the world.” It is easy enough to say this, but the process for training our children to become equipped with effective tools for wellbeing is every bit as complex and involved as the time, tools, and processes we use to focus on student success. I urge this board to accept the mantle of this challenge, and begin earnestly treating wellbeing with the same passion and efforts that we have traditionally employed for student success. Let us quit speaking about mindfulness and self-compassion as interesting novelties, and begin speaking about them as important priorities. I wish to briefly touch on two other topics, although there are certainly many more I would love to address tonight. Environmental education and sustainability training is yet another successful initiative for our board. In 2017 88% percent of our schools were certified as EcoSchools, including 100% of our high schools. This is an astounding accomplishment both locally and provincially, and while we must congratulate ourselves we cannot rest on our laurels. As the world’s climate continues to change around us in spectacular and devastating fashion, our children will one day pose the question, “Did our parents

do enough to equip us?” I fear the answer is currently no, we have not yet, but we are on the promising path to yes. What are the next steps for our board? How can we truly support training our students to become stewards? What would it look like for our staff and students to consider ecological issues to be of much greater importance than standardized test scores? How can we expand our programs that naturally connect our students with their environment so that every student is meaningfully engaged in outdoor learning experiences? How can we do this in a working environment that is already over saturated in initiatives, and under resourced in funding? I submit that with the current group we can, and we will, through resource prioritization, strategic problem solving, and by attracting outside stakeholder investments by proving to boards and particularly a sympathetic Ministry of Education what is possible without breaking the bank. I want to be able to look those two boys in the eye in 30 years (point to Julian and Jack), and tell them how proud and amazed I am that their generation stepped up to creatively and effectively tackle the greatest challenge facing them.

Finally, in the area of indigenous education, our board has come a long way. With our self-identification process, our territorial acknowledgement, and our board’s commitment to a true partnership with our FNMI advisory committee and communities, our board is again well positioned for transformation, but we have much to do to honour our commitments. What is the end goal of a meaningful and authentic partnership? It is one thing to pledge to increase the knowledge and awareness of all of our students, but quite another to have the spirit of the traditional greeting become part of our school and classroom culture. **“From the Anishinaabe to the Haudenosaunee and the Métis, these treaty lands are steeped in rich indigenous history and modern traditions. As**

**a community, we have the responsibility to honour and respect the four directions, land, waters, plants, animals and ancestors.”** These words are read in the boardroom every month. What steps are we taking not to simply make our students aware, but to explore these values, live them, make them part of the cultural fabric of board? I would argue that our path to authentic partnership lies not in acknowledgement, but in transformative integration. Not the historical one sided and tragic integration of one culture in to another, but the meaningful marriage of cultures that meet and engage each other in the spirit of mutual trust, respect, and dialogue. What would this kind of classroom actually look like? In what ways can we explore the natural connections between student wellbeing, environmental stewardship, and indigenous education, to enhance all of them while honouring our territorial acknowledgement and indigenous partners, and making Upper Grand student experiences more meaningful, rich, and holistic as a result? My dear colleagues we are on the right path, but the road is long, and there are many we must still invite to travel alongside us.

I submit to you all this evening that these three priorities will in time come to pass, in our board and across the province, regardless of any action taken on our part. I urge only tonight that, as we have done in so many other areas of public education in Ontario, the Upper Grand District do what we do so best, and that, is to lead the way.

Before closing my remarks, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to many who have supported me in my role these last five years.

To Director Rogers – In my work both locally and provincially I have never met a finer Director. Your utter commitment and passion for public education is unparalleled. You have forgotten more about the vast details involved in a public education system than most Directors will ever learn, and it never ceases to amaze your trustees how



intimately familiar you are with all aspects of our system. Quite simply put, thank you for helping to make your board and your board Chair so capable and effective. I wish to offer you my genuine gratitude for your effectiveness as a Director, as an advisor, and as a friend to me.

Thank you Martha.

To the senior administration, your passion and dedication is both a reflection and a testament to Martha's leadership. It is ultimately not Martha alone who steers this system so efficiently and effectively, it is the individual members of the senior admin team. Tracy, Carlo, Doug, Brent, Gary, Denis, Cheryl, Glen, Jennifer Rose, Jennifer Passy, Paul, and John, I will remember my time working with you as one of complete confidence, and admiration for a team willing to rise to any occasion, work as many hours as necessary, and collaborate only as a team of trusting team players can. It has been an honour to work with such a superb group of professionals dedicated to public service and public education.

To Heather Loney, my deepest gratitude for always being available and lightning quick to prepare me to face the media. You have brought a capable and creative skill set and a dedication to this board that has advanced our communications capabilities by years. Your knowledge of our board, your ability to identify and deal with our public challenges, and the creative passion you bring to our Annual Reports has not gone unnoticed, not by myself nor any other trustee in this room.

(Personal address to Anne and each individual trustee)

Anne. Anne, Anne, Anne. You have been my right hand.

Conscientiousness and reliability.

Trustees:

Barb E: Passion, growth as trustee, integrity.

Kathryn: Mind for analytics and assessment, always reminding us that

progress is not progress until it is measured. Sustainability propelled in this board in large part due to your advocacy.

Susan: Mental Health, French Immersion, years of experience aiding us with insight.

Marty: Huge heart, willing hand, dedicated friend.

Martha M: Heart, passion, bet on anyone to do the right thing it would be her.

Bruce: Practical and experienced, a passionate and strong advocate for public education, especially for rural equity.

Barb W: Passion is infectious, admired your growth as a trustee. Wear your heart on your sleeve, and what a mighty big and generous heart that is. For the parent perspective, a huge advocate.

Lynn: Favourite trustee. Quite wisdom. More than any other trustee in this room I would always think to myself, how is Lynn likely to vote on this one?

Linda: Mind, dedication, hard work. Your perspectives and insights have truly helped change the culture of our board table for the better.

Julian and Jack: To the most amazing boys that I know. Thank you for putting up with all the times I've had to leave to go to yet another meeting. You are both an inspiration to me, and are the reason I care so much very very much about what I do. I do truly hope that the work I have done here for you makes a difference to your public education, every decision I have made as Chair of this board has had you both in mind. I am so very proud of both of you, of who you are, as well as who you are becoming.

Heidi: For 10 years I have looked to the public for fulfillment. I thought getting elected, becoming an OPSBA executive, becoming Chair, would somehow fill that hole inside of me longing for personal recognition. I am beginning to fill that hole, but it is not because of any

public position or praise. It has taken many years, but it is your direct inspiration that has made me realize that authentic acceptance and recognition cannot come from the outside, but must come from within myself. I will remain forever grateful for the role and support you have provided me over the past few years, in particular in my roles at OPSBA and as Chair of the Board. I know the sacrifices that you have had to make, and can only humbly offer my deepest gratitude. As much as I have learned as a trustee, I thank you most of all for inspiring me to become the person I knew I could be, but was afraid to become. You are the most amazing person that I know.

To the next Chair of this board, I hope that you find the Chair's position in good standing. You have an amazing team who has your back. Focus and sustain them, and your performance as Chair will be well on the road to success.

Thank you, thank you all for everything, and best wishes this evening.

**This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.**