

Upper Grand District School Board
Board Meeting
Tuesday, October 26, 2021
Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board was held virtually and in person on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, in the Board Room at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, starting at 7:12 p.m. All Trustees were present. Student Trustees Emilie Hill and Vikasni Kuganesan were also in attendance.

Traditional Greeting – Trustee Campbell

Opening Prayer / Reading – Trustee Bailey

Trustee Bailey read a poem called From the First Water is the Body by Natalie Diaz.

Condolences

Trustee MacNeil, Chair, reported that condolences were sent on behalf of the Board to the following: Pat Hamilton, Secondary Superintendent of Education, on the loss of his father.

Good News

Director of Education Sovran provided some reflections, highlights, and good news items that happened in the schools and across the board during the month of October.

School Visits

School visits were filled with highlights of students engaged and learning that promoted inclusion, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, the use of digital tools and outdoor spaces, and reflections about truth and reconciliation. Thanks were expressed to all of the dedicated staff for their focus on re engagement and for their ongoing efforts to make learning and work environments safe, excepting, supportive and inclusive spaces.

Islamic Heritage Month

Schools across the board celebrated Islamic Heritage Month this October. It was a great opportunity for all in the board to learn about the rich history of Islam, the vast diversity within Islam, and to break down stereotypes and beliefs that interrupt our goals of inclusion. Resources shared included information about Islamophobia in Canada, as well as excellent resources for learning more about Islam.

Take Me Outside Day

On October 20, schools across Canada, including many in the Upper Grand, celebrated Take Me Outside Day, which is an annual day aimed at raising awareness around outdoor learning. Upper Grand schools participate in outdoor learning year-round, and on Take Me Outside Day many schools showcased their love of outdoor education with a variety of activities. From students setting out to find if there were any purple leaves around their school, to language classes being held in outdoor learning spaces. Many students and staff celebrated outdoor learning and the environment.

High School Commencements

High school commencements have been taking place throughout October and will continue into next week. Director of Education Sovran had the opportunity to attend each event and wanted to thank the staff and student volunteers for the many hours they have devoted to making each celebration unique to their school site. Director Sovran enjoyed every moment and witnessed the pride and joy expressed by the graduates, their families, and teachers and the staff that had helped them get there.

John F. Ross CVI Graduate Awarded Nobel Prize in Economics

David Card, a graduate from John F. Ross CVI was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics earlier this fall and he was inducted in the John F. Ross CVI's first Hall of Fame ceremony back in 2017. David Card's research, known worldwide, has gone on to fundamentally change how economists look at labour economics.

Westminster Woods Student Library Advisory

Eighth grade students at Westminster Woods PS were energetic about finding ways for all students to feel included and represented within their school with the new Library Advisory Committee. The committee, alongside with the Equity Club, decided how their library's equity funding got spent. The committee is also responsible for advising on events that get hosted in the library, the displays that are shown there, and make suggestions on what reading materials are purchased. Each decision is made with their mission in mind: that all students feel included and represented. Many of the students have found the committee and its work beneficial. A quote from a student was, "I am feeling included and that my voice is being heard. Now I can recommend books that reflect me, for example, my religion and culture." This initiative can be found on the UGDSB website.

Athletics

Director Sovran was pleased to share the good news that athletics outdoors and indoors have resumed for secondary school students. Many thanks to our colleagues at Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health and Wellington Catholic DSB for working together to find solutions for a safe return to sports. Upper Grand DSB knows the importance of extracurricular activities to student's wellbeing and mentally healthy learning environments and will continue to work towards the resumption of more activities as well as the Community Use of Upper Grand DSB facilities.

Confirmation of the Agenda

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved, seconded by Trustee Topping, that the agenda be confirmed as printed.

The motion carried.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting Held September 28, 2021

Trustee Campbell moved, seconded by Trustee Bailey, that the minutes of the meeting held September 28, 2021, and the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held immediately prior to the Board meeting, be approved as printed.

The motion carried.

Ratification of Business Transacted by the Committee of the Whole In Camera

Trustee Topping moved, seconded by Trustee Edwards, that the business transacted by the Committee of the Whole In Camera be now ratified by the Board.

The motion carried.

Motion to Rise and Sit in Committee of the Whole

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

The motion carried.

Delegation #1, Lee Cross and Pamela Greiger, Regarding Cohort Zones when Outside

Lee Cross, co-chair for the Brisbane Parent Council, and Pamela Geiger, treasurer for the Brisbane Parent Council both have children who attend Brisbane PS. They were informed by their children after school had already started, that the children's school had outdoor cohorts, designated squares where the children rotate weekly, so each class has a turn on the new play structure at the school. Ms. Lee also mentioned that Public Health does not recommend designated outdoor cohorts, but they do suggest the children wear masks when interacting with others not in their cohorts.

Earlier in the day Superintendent McCutcheon spoke with Ms. Cross and believes the cohorts started at the beginning of the school year until everyone was situated and comfortable and then they would all come together in a certain area of the schoolyard, where all kids could play together with their masks on if they were not in their designated cohort. Superintendent McCutcheon would look more into this matter and clarified for Ms. Cross that when the kids are in their cohort zone, they can be unmasked to allow them to have more freedom to interact and not feel isolated from each other.

Ms. Greiger raised a concern regarding children still being in cohorts and if they were not in their designated cohort they were still masked and defeated the purpose of having a mask break when outdoors. Ms. Greiger also addressed children who are already intertwined outside of school in the community, are then being separated at school and no longer able to interact with the people they do on a normal basis and may become very traumatic to the children.

Delegation #2, Lee Cross and Pamela Greiger, Regarding Screen Time during Snack Breaks

Ms. Cross shared that parents were not officially informed that at every snack break in schools across the board, the children watch movies during the time they eat so they do not talk to each other while unmasked. Ms. Cross added that many kids are not eating their lunches because they are too busy watching the TV and the kids have been told they are not to be talking during snack breaks as well. Ms. Cross found this to be an issue because children will not speak with the parents when at home during mealtimes because they have been told they cannot talk while they are eating. She understands that there are times where screen time is needed, but not always and it should not be every day and at every snack break. Ms. Cross shared that Superintendent McCutcheon spoke to the principal of Brisbane PS and the staff had been notified that they are not to discourage the children from talking and mentioned other schools will be notified soon that screen time would be getting scaled back. Trustees asked questions of clarification.

Delegation #3, Lee Cross and Pamela Greiger, Regarding Masks and Face Coverings

Ms. Cross reported parents have been coming to her with concerns about mental health and the anxiety the children have now started showing by wearing a mask all day at school, especially the JK and SK students. She mentioned parents sharing stories that if their children don't have a mask on, panic sets in and they break down if they go near a building without a mask on. She noted that the Ministry of Health requires that grades 1-12 wear a mask and encourage kindergarteners, but that it's not a requirement. Ms. Cross also stated the public health website states that wearing a face covering will not stop a person from getting COVID-19, so then why do the kids then need to wear masks. Ms. Greiger expressed that it is also very difficult to see signs and symptoms of illness if a child wearing a mask, and also how important it is for children to breathe and to get enough oxygen in order to learn and develop properly. Ms. Greiger expressed how important it is for the children's learning to be able to see smiles and the whole facial expression and to be able to see how the educators are pronouncing words and being able to see their lips move when speaking. Both Ms. Cross and Ms. Greiger asked the Board to revisit the requirements to have children's faces covered for 8 hours a day at school.

Response to Delegations

Trustee Busuttill thanked both Ms. Scott and Ms. Greiger for sharing their concerns and confirmed the Board must follow the guidelines from Public Health. Trustee Busuttill asked Director of Education Sovran to raise these comments and concerns in his next meeting with Public Health and to report back to the Board.

Director of Education Sovran informed he would take these comments to his frequent meetings with Public Health and report back to the Board.

Trustee Foley thanked Ms. Cross and Ms. Greiger for bringing their concerns forward and that it will be shared with Public Health.

Program Committee

Trustee Topping moved that the minutes of the Program Committee held October 5, 2021 be received and considered.

The motion carried.

Trustee Busuttill requested that item # 4 be considered separately.

The motions were placed, with the exception of # 4.

Trustee Topping moved that:

1. The verbal update from Student Trustees be received, with thanks.

2. The verbal update on Mental Health be received, with thanks.
3. The verbal update on Wellness Work/Umbrella Project be received, with thanks.
5. The verbal report on Camp Discovery be received, with thanks.

The motion carried.

Trustee Busuttil thanked staff for the verbal report and the update on Police Presentations in Schools. Trustee Busuttil expressed wanting time to evaluate those programs that came from the May 11th Next Steps – Police Presentation in Schools report including alternate suspensions. Trustee Busuttil suggested an update and a report on those alternate suspensions and discipline at some later date.

Director of Education Sovran confirmed an update to the actions that have come out of that work will be brought and shared with the Board.

Item # 4 was placed after the others carried.

Trustee Topping moved that the verbal report on Police Presentation in Schools be received, with thanks.

The motion carried.

Business Operations Committee

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved that the minutes of the Business Operations Committee held October 12, 2021 be received and considered.

The motion carried.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved that:

1. The memo PLN: 21-15 “West Guelph Consolidated JK-8 FI Feasibility Study – Final Report” dated October 12, 2021 be received for information.
2. The Board does not proceed at this time with a public review process to create a consolidated JK-8 FI program in West Guelph due to a lack of sufficient capacity in existing schools.
3. The minutes of the Trustee Climate Emergency Committee (TCEC) held dated September 21, 2021 be received and considered.
4. That Secondary Enrolment Update dated October 12, 2021 be received.

5. The report "Resignations and Retirements" dated October 12, 2021 be received.

The motion carried.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy took the Chair for the consideration of this item.

Chairs' Committee Meetings

Trustee MacNeil moved that the minutes of the Chairs' Committee meetings held September 28, 2021 and October 12, 2021 be received and considered.

The motion carried.

Trustee MacNeil returned to the Chair.

Special Education Advisory Committee

Trustee Edwards moved that the minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting held October 13, 2021 be received and considered.

The motion carried.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy took the Chair for the consideration of this item.

Policy Management Committee

Trustee MacNeil moved that the minutes of the Policy Management Committee held October 5, 2021 be received and considered.

The motion carried.

Trustee MacNeil moved that:

1. Policy 504 – Equity and Inclusive Education be received and released for public consultation.
2. Report "Policy Public Consultation Plan for 504 – Equity and Inclusive Education" dated October 05, 2021 be received.
3. Report "Policy Public Consultation Plan for 504 – Equity and Inclusive Education" dated October 05, 2021 be approved.
4. Policy 104 – Access to School and Board Premises be approved.

The motion carried.

Trustee MacNeil returned to the Chair.

Planning Department – West Guelph Consolidated JK-8 FI Feasibility Study – Supplemental Information

Superintendent of Finance Regier presented additional information on a breakdown of Regular Track (RT) and French Immersion (FI) students for Gateway Drive PS, Paisley Road PS, and Victory PS. Additionally, information related to participation rates and retention rates for the dual track schools were also shared. Trustees asked questions of clarification.

Trustee Edwards moved that the memo PLN: 21-28 “West Guelph Consolidated JK-8 FI Feasibility Study – Supplemental Information” dated October 26, 2021 be received for information.

The motion carried.

First Nations, Métis, Inuit Education Advisory Council

Trustee Campbell moved that the minutes of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit Education Advisory Council minutes dated September 27, 2021 be received.

The motion carried.

Monthly COVID-19 Update

Superintendent Heaslip, Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke, Executive Superintendent McDonald, and Superintendent of Program Lindsay collectively presented the monthly COVID-19 update. The presentation shared updates related to COVID-19 cases in schools, the current status of vaccination disclosures, essential school visitors, and continued teamwork to support mentally healthy schools. Trustees asked questions of clarification and expressed thanks for the update.

Trustee Topping moved that the verbal monthly COVID-19 update dated October 26, 2021 be received.

The motion carried.

Staff Retirements and Resignations

Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke presented the Staff Retirements and Resignations report dated October 26, 2021.

Trustee Lustgarten Evoy moved that the Staff Retirements and Resignations report Appendix A and Appendix B dated October 26, 2021 be received.

The motion carried.

Board Correspondence

Trustee Campbell moved that the Board Correspondence dated October 26, 2021 be received.

The motion carried.

Trustee Questions and Reports

Trustee MacNeil reported that during the In Camera portion of the meeting this evening, Trustees Lustgarten Evoy, Campbell and MacNeil (alternate) were chosen for the Superintendent Hiring Committee.

Trustee Foley raised a concern about masking and mentioned a number of vulnerable staff have reached out to him regarding the ability to wear their own N95 masks as well having the option to wear multiple masks, one over the blue Ministry approved mask. Trustee Foley expressed he is raising this issue to explore every possibility to create safer work and learning spaces for all staff and students.

Director of Education Sovran shared the continued work with colleagues in other jurisdictions as well as with Public Health in raising questions such as this. He reminded Trustees the current Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is supplied to all Upper Grand DSB employees is provided through the Ministry of Government Services at no cost to the Board. The Board would need to take into consideration both the Occupational Health and Safety as well as the guidelines provided by the Ministry in further exploring whether or not different types of face coverings or masks would be deemed appropriate.

Executive Officer of Human Resources Pyke clarified the current masks provided are in compliance with the Ministry of Labour and are being provided as PPE rather than simply a face covering which then falls under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Executive Officer Pyke noted that the N95 masks do require a comprehensive program with respect to fit testing, maintenance of the respirators, and requirements on staff to maintain they are clean shaven to ensure adequate fitting.

Trustee Foley moved that a letter be written to the Ministry of Education regarding an improvement of the level of PPE for staff.

Trustee Campbell suggested a friendly amendment to remove the word “regarding” and replace it with “requesting”.

Trustee Foley moved that a letter be written to the Ministry of Education **requesting** an improvement of the level of PPE for staff.

The amended motion carried.

Trustee Foley moved that senior staff prepare a report on the Upper Grand DSB staff masking and COVID protocol regarding the impact and opportunity to prepare a recommendation to explore the Thames Valley DSB motion of September 8th and other Board's actions.

Trustee Busuttil asked clarification if the motion was requesting Upper Grand DSB as an employer to provide N95 masks.

Trustee Foley clarified at this time, he is asking staff to put together a comprehensive report and a thorough examination of the concerns, as well as to reach out to other school boards that are also going through this, and report back to the Board with all the relevant information to make a proper, firm decision.

Director of Education Sovran expressed he would be pleased to prepare a report that would include the information that is being sought in the motion.

The motion carried.

Trustee Busuttil shared Candidate School for the fall 2022 municipal elections have already begun in Fergus for Wellington and asked ways to get the information out to school councils and advisory committees about the Candidate School and opportunities.

Trustee Busuttil reminded Trustees about the virtual Central West Regional meeting on November 6th and shared the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) were released earlier than usual and the deadline for submissions and comments is November 26th.

Trustee Foley inquired if CO2 testing were presently being done in other congregated areas such as maintenance, lunchrooms, and staff rooms. Director of Education Sovran informed Trustees that Upper Grand DSB has taken additional steps to do carbon dioxide tests in learning areas which are analyzed regularly and then proceed with corrective measures if needed. Director Sovran confirmed presently CO2 testing is not taken outside of specific learning classrooms, partly because it is very labour intensive both in the taking of the measures as well as the analysis afterwards. Director Sovran shared if there was a request at an Upper Grand location for CO2 readings, adjustments could be made.

Dates of Future Meetings

Trustee Topping moved that the November 2021 schedule for Board and Standing Committee Meetings be approved as follows:

Program Committee	November 2, 2021
Business Operations	November 9, 2021

Board Meeting November 23, 2021

Final/Inaugural Meeting November 30, 2021

The motion carried.

Trustee Edwards added the following to the Dates of Future Meetings:

Tuesday, November 16, 2021 Trustee Climate Emergency Committee
(TCEC) Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Virtual

Trustee Topping moved that the Dates of Future Meetings dated October 26, 2021 be received, with the above noted additions.

The motion carried.

Motion to Rise and Report to the Board

Trustee Foley moved that the Committee of the Whole rise and report to the Board.

The motion carried.

Ratification of Business

Trustee Edwards moved, seconded by Trustee Topping that the business transacted by the Committee of the Whole be now ratified by the Board.

The motion carried.

Adjournment

Trustee Edwards moved, seconded by Trustee Lustgarten Evoy that the Board adjourn and this meeting now close at 9:05 p.m.

The motion carried.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.