

**Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 27, 2024**  
**Boardroom and Microsoft Teams**

Trustees: Ralf Mesenbrink (Chair), Katherine Hauser (Vice Chair), Jen Edwards, Irene Hanenberg, Alethia O’Hara-Stephenson, Martha MacNeil, Robin Ross, Lynn Topping, Luke Weiler, Laurie Whyte, Brooke Hartley (Student Trustee), Paige Knight (Student Trustee)

Administration: Director of Education Sovran, Executive Superintendent of School Services McDonald, Superintendent of People, Leadership and Culture Pyke, Superintendents of Education Blair, Donaldson, Hamilton, Heaslip, and Taha, Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility Commissioner Ralph, Communications and Public Relations Manager Loney, Manager - Trustee Secretariat Vorkapic

The regular monthly meeting of the Upper Grand District School Board was held virtually and in person on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, in the Board Room at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, starting at 7:00 p.m.

**1. Meeting Called to Order**

Board Chair Mesenbrink presided and called the meeting to order.

**2. Land Acknowledgement**

Trustee Topping 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 Edwards highlighted the Board’s commitment to equity and anti-racism/anti-oppression.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

RESOLUTION #24-61:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Weiler

THAT the Upper Grand DSB approves the agenda of February 27, 2024, meeting as printed.

**Carried**

**4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest.

**5. Confirmation of Minutes of the Board**

5.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting held February 13, 2024

RESOLUTION #24-62:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

Seconded by: Trustee Topping

THAT the Upper Grand DSB approves the minutes of the February 13, 2024, meeting of the board.

**Carried**

**6. Student and Staff Recognition**

Director of Education Sovran provided some highlights and good news items that took place across Upper Grand DSB.

Celebrating Black Joy this February

As we near the end of Black Heritage, Black Brilliance and Black Joy months, the board appreciates the work undertaken by Upper Grand students, who since 2021, have inspired the focus on the history, reality, and future of the people of the African diaspora. This month in the Upper Grand, schools celebrated Black Heritage, Black Brilliance and Black Joy with guest speakers and presentations with themes such as

celebrating African Culture and Dance, Black excellence in STEM, diverse culinary heritages, Black community, and contributions made in the Canadian military.

### Students Learn about Black Canadian History through Engaging Presentations

Many students throughout the Upper Grand DSB have been learning about Black Canadian history, through engaging presentations by Tracy Cain. Tracy is a 5th generation Black Canadian living in Guelph. Her passion is uncovering Black Canadian history through telling stories of her ancestors coming to Canada, by way of the Underground Railroad. Tracy's presentations touch on more than 200 years of family history.

### Social Media Used to Help Student Interested in the Trades

For decades, women of the skilled trades have had to wear ill-fitting gear that isn't made for the female body. As a result, some women are discouraged from entering the trades as a career path. Recently a female Upper Grand student approached her teacher, Geoff Patterson with an interest in welding but was unable to find a pair of work boots that would adequately fit her to safely begin her welding journey. Not to be deterred, her teacher reached out to several peers, who then put the call-out on social media. One of those people who posted on social media was former Upper Grand DSB employee and Skills Ontario Director of Competitions Jennifer Green. In just two short weeks these posts had over 40,000 views, 371 likes, many comments with leads, and 33 reposts. These posts reached far beyond Ontario and Canada, into the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, with so many reaching out to offer support.

### Grade 2 Student Writes Book About Helping the Environment

A second grade student at the Elementary Remote Learning Program named Jacob is making a positive impact within his school and local community through his writing and commitment to environmental conservation. As a young author and advocate for the environment, Jacob has written a book detailing his experience as an "eco-hero". In his book, *The Adventures of the Eco Heroes*, Jacob shares his journey from a nervous newcomer attending his first pick up in Deer Path Park, to a confident eco-hero determined to make his community a cleaner and greener place, one park at a time.

### Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) Students Take Virtual Tour of Egypt

A few weeks ago, a group of SHSM students from Centre Wellington DHS sat on the edge of their seats with their eyes fixed on a screen as they were transported thousands of miles away to the land of Egypt. The SHSM event featured a live-streamed presentation from Egypt, which promised to take the students on an

immersive exploration of some of the most iconic historical sites in the world. Assem Nabih, a distinguished expert in Egyptology, appeared on the screen, his voice carrying the weight of centuries of history, and greeted the students and introduced them to the wonders they were about to witness. The live stream began with a virtual tour nestled along the banks of the Nile River. The experience was made possible by a mix of modern technology and the expertise and passion of an Egyptologist halfway across the globe.

### Wellington Heights SS Students Participate in Vocal Training Day

Earlier this month, SHSM students from Wellington Heights SS had the unique opportunity to improve their singing skills, thanks to Canadian Idol Season 6 winner, Theo Tams. This workshop couldn't have come at a better time, as students are diving into rehearsals with enthusiasm, focusing on honing their vocal techniques and understanding the emotions of their characters. As they learned during their workshop with Theo, it is not just about singing. It is about learning teamwork, perseverance, and self-expression through music and performance.

## 7. **Delegation(s)**

## 8. **Response to Delegation(s)**

## 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 Hauser presented the Committee of the Whole (Closed Session) report held on February 27, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM and was held in closed session as per Section 207 (2) of the Education Act. All board members were present and there were no declarations of conflict of interest.

### RESOLUTION #24-63:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

Seconded by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

THAT the Upper Grand DSB approves the business of the Committee of the Whole - Closed Session of February 27, 2024.

**Carried**

## 9.2 Policy and Priorities Committee – February 6, 2024

The Policy and Priorities Committee held a hybrid meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup> and Chair Ross presided the meeting. There were no conflicts of interest declared. Items for monitoring were the Safe Schools Report presented by Executive Superintendent McDonald, and the school year calendar which was presented by Director Sovran. There was a question of clarification regarding Policy 200 – Community Use of Schools.

### RESOLUTION #24-64:

Moved by: Trustee Topping

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

THAT the Upper Grand DSB approves the Policy and Priorities Committee report of January 6, 2024, including the following recommendations:

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board approve Policy 200 – Community Use of Schools and Facilities; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board rescind Policy 202 – Community Use of E.L. Fox Auditorium; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board approve Policy 216 – Communications; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board rescind Policy 209 – Distribution of Materials in Schools from External Organizations; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board rescind Policy 312 – Website and Social Media Management; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board approve Policy 322 – Safe Operation of Schools and Board Sites; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board rescind Policy 104 – Access to School and Board Premises; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board approve Policy 520 – Continuity of Learning; and

THAT the Upper Grand District School Board approve Policy 709 – School Generated Funds.

**Carried**

### **9.3 Special Education Advisory Committee – February 14, 2024**

The SEAC Committee held a hybrid meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup> and Chair Whyte presided the meeting. Items for monitoring included: the Special Olympics, where various sports events held at secondary schools in the Upper Grand DSB for students with special needs was shared; a Summer Programming Consultation, where a proposal for 2024 programming was shared and suggestions and feedback were requested; and an overview of Classroom 180, a trauma-informed framework and how it is linked to Upper Grand's current practices and the Multi-Year Plan.

#### RESOLUTION #24-65:

Moved by: Trustee Hauser

Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

THAT the Upper Grand DSB approves the Special Education Advisory Committee report of February 14, 2024.

**Carried**

### **9.4 Student Trustees and Student Senate Report – February 2024**

Student Trustees Brooke Hartley and Paige Knight presented the Student Trustees and Student Senate Report. The February Student Senate meeting was the annual election meeting for Student Trustees for the 2024-25 school year. The voting process was explained, and four candidates were welcomed to introduce themselves and each gave a brief speech. All Student Senators voted, and votes were scrutinized by Chair Mesenbrink and Frances Norlen. The following election results were shared: the Rural Student Trustee elected was Hiba Mangat, a Centre Dufferin DHS student, and the Urban Student Trustee elected was Zechariah Nasir, a Guelph CVI student. Both students are currently in grade 11 at their respective schools. The meeting ended with Student Senate feedback on various topics.

Thanks were expressed to the current Student Trustees Brooke Hartley and Paige Knight for all their fantastic work they had done this past year. Congratulations were expressed to the incoming student trustees.

#### RESOLUTION #24-66:

Moved by: Trustee O'Hara-Stephenson

Seconded by: Trustee Ross

THAT the Upper Grand DSB receives the Student Trustees and Student Senate report of February 2024 be received; and

THAT the Upper Grand DSB appoints Hiba Mangat as Student Trustee for Rural Schools and Zechariah Nasir as Student Trustee for Urban Schools for a 1 year term beginning August 1, 2024.

**Carried**

### **9.5 Re-naming of Guelph Board Office Ad Hoc Committee**

Superintendent of People, Leadership and Culture, Ad Hoc Committee Chair Pyke presented the Renaming the Guelph Board Office report, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee which met for its final meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, correspondence was received by the board requesting the Guelph Board Office be renamed. The matter was referred to the Finance and Facilities Committee, which recommended at an April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting, that a committee be struck to consider a name for the Guelph Board office at 500 Victoria Road North, and to consult with stakeholders, and recommend a name following the Procedures Manual 303A Section 3 which is the procedure for naming of schools.

A committee was struck, which included trustees, a representative from the Parent Involvement Committee, and Superintendent of People, Leadership and Culture Pyke as Chair of the Committee. The committee met on 3 occasions and carried out the following activities including the development and communication of a thought exchange survey to gather community feedback, receipt of a presentation from the Board's Human Rights Equity and Accessibility Commissioner, deliberation on the feedback received from the community, and a determination that the requirements to rename the Guelph Board Office as per policy 303 had not been met.

Superintendent of People, Leadership and Culture Pyke noted that while not within the mandate of the committee, she shared that the committee members discussed and unanimously agreed on a desire to honor the legacy and the contributions of former Director of Education Martha Rogers. Various options were discussed, including the opportunity to strike a committee and engage with staff, students, and community in this process.

#### RESOLUTION #24-67:

Moved by: Trustee Hauser

Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

THAT the Upper Grand DSB approves the report entitled "Renaming the Guelph Board Office" dated February 27, 2024; and

THAT the Guelph Board Office not be renamed.

**Carried**

Trustee Whyte shared a few comments that were received from the public throughout this process which ranged from concerns over the cost of renaming the Board Office, concerns about equity from the point of view of historically under representative groups and learning that a number of school boards have implemented naming policies that focus on names based on location and/or geography and are respectful of Indigenous and other communities.

Trustee Topping shared that all committee members recognized Dr. Martha Rogers as an education ambassador and leader. Dr. Rogers created a school board of success, innovation, and respect and was well known provincially across Ontario and nationally across Canada. Every member of the committee felt that Dr. Rogers should be recognized and be remembered by all, for her contributions to education.

Trustee Ross expressed that when she thinks of Dr. Rogers, she does not think of something that is static or limited to one place. Having Dr. Rogers' name on a building is very limiting and she believes that the Board can do a significantly better job at honouring Martha Rogers in a way that is living and is active and engaged as she was as a director.

Trustee MacNeil shared that Dr. Martha C Rogers was an unforgettable person and her influence can be felt to this day in all areas of the education world and beyond. During the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, a desire was expressed to recognize Martha in ways that match her far reach in education and other areas of importance to her. Suggestions that came up during the work of the committee were awards, scholarships, fundraisers to support the scholarships, and conferences and learning opportunities with an emphasis on areas that were deeply important to Martha. A common idea that came up repeatedly was support for women in leadership programs to acknowledge the incredible trailblazer that she was for women's role in leadership. An appropriate recognition of her talents and contributions will be as multifaceted as she was and will touch a wide range of people as varied as her interests were.

Trustee MacNeil proposed several motions to help the Board accomplish this goal of honouring Dr. Martha Rogers and her astounding legacy.

RESOLUTION #24-68:

Moved by: Trustee MacNeil

Seconded by: Trustee Ross

THAT an Ad Hoc committee be struck to consider ways to recognize Dr. Martha Rogers' passion, commitments, and contributions to the Upper Grand District School Board and education across the province: and

THAT the membership of the committee be composed of 3-5 trustees who may request the addition of other members through a report to the Board; and



THAT the committee consult with a wide range of stakeholders both inside and outside the Upper Grand DSB; and

THAT the committee report back to the Board with recommendations by the end of September 2024.

**Carried**

Trustee Mesenbrink indicated that volunteers were needed for the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee. He reminded the public that all trustees can attend and ask questions at this committee meeting and that the Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Trustees MacNeil, Topping, Ross, Whyte, and Hauser volunteered for this Ad Hoc committee.

RESOLUTION #24-69:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Topping

THAT the Upper Grand DSB close nominations for the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee.

**Carried**

RESOLUTION #24-70:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Edwards

THAT the Upper Grand DSB appoint Trustees MacNeil, Topping, Ross, Whyte, and Hauser to the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee.

**Carried**

The Board proceeded to the election of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee. Chair Mesenbrink called for nominations for the position of Chair.

Trustee Whyte and Ross nominated Trustee MacNeil as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee. Trustee MacNeil agreed to stand as Chair of the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee.

RESOLUTION #24-71:

Moved by: Trustee Topping

Seconded by: Trustee Hauser

THAT the Upper Grand DSB close nominations of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee.

**Carried**

RESOLUTION #24-72:

Moved by: Trustee Topping

Seconded by: Trustee Hauser

THAT the Upper Grand DSB appoint Trustee MacNeil the Chair of the Honouring Martha Rogers Ad Hoc Committee.

**Carried**

Trustee Whyte remarked that given the feedback and learning that was experienced through this process, and that Upper Grand has two new schools opening in the next few years, she would like to place the following motion.

RESOLUTION #24-73:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee Hauser

THAT that the Upper Grand DSB review Policy 303 - Naming of Schools and Board Facilities in time to name the new schools.

**Carried**

**10. Report from Chair**

Chair Mesenbrink announced that student trustee elections took place last week and explained that according to the education Act, student trustees are chosen by students through an election, which must happen before the end of February. Chair Mesenbrink and Vice Chair Hauser were excited to watch the election, and meeting the work of past and current student trustees which has been critical to bringing student voice forward. He looks forward to continuing to work with current student trustees Brooke Hartley and Paige Knight and looks forward to working with the newly elected trustees in the coming year.

Chair Mesenbrink shared that a number of trustees have attended events over the past few weeks celebrating Black Heritage, Black Brilliance and Black Joy Month. He joined Trustees Topping and O'Hara-Stephenson in Shelburne for an event held at Grace Tipling Hall put on by the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association, where stories, artwork and performances were truly a celebration of Black Brilliance, Joy, and Heritage.

Chair Mesenbrink acknowledged that tonight is the last board meeting before March break, and on behalf of all trustees, he wished students and all Upper Grand staff a safe and restful break.

Chair Mesenbrink mentioned that March 8<sup>th</sup> marks International Women's Day. The United Nations has proclaimed the theme as Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress. As trustees, he is confident that as educators, Upper Grand staff live that theme every day.

Chair Mesenbrink asked that everyone take a silent moment to reflect with compassion and send strength to all those who have suffered loss in their personal lives, across all Upper Grand schools, and in the community.

## **11. Report from Director**

Director of Education Sovran highlighted that last week the Upper Grand hosted the annual midyear System Leaders Meeting. Joining the meeting were all the Upper Grand DSB Supervisors, Managers, Principals, Vice Principals, Labor Partners, Student and Elected Trustees. Time was spent together reviewing the collective "Let's Go UGDSB" as all worked towards realizing Vision 2026.

A moving presentation by Michael Jacques entitled "Can't Read, Can't Write, Here's My Book" started the day, where the author shared his story about his experience living with Autism. Director Sovran expressed that his message was inspiring and a reminder of why Upper Grand's collective efforts will always focus on supporting all students to achieve ambitious and attainable goals.

Director Sovran congratulated the newly elected 2024-25 student trustees, and mentioned he has appreciated time spent with Student Senate each month and hearing from student leaders who always provide thorough feedback.

## 12. Other Business

### 12.1 School Year Calendar 2024-2025

Director Sovran presented the School Year Calendar Report. An ad hoc committee was formed to review the elementary and secondary calendars for 2024-25 and consisted of representation from employee groups, elementary and secondary principals, student transportation services along with parent representatives. The draft school year calendars were posted on the Upper Grand DSB website for 10 days with an opportunity for public comment and feedback. Once approved by the Board, the school year calendars must be submitted for review and approval by the Ministry of Education by March 1, 2024.

#### RESOLUTION #24-74:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards

Seconded by: Trustee Ross

THAT the report entitled "School Year Calendar 2024-25" dated February 27, 2024, be received; and

THAT the proposed school calendars for the 2024-25 school year for the Upper Grand District School Board's elementary and secondary schools, as outlined in Appendix B and C respectively, be approved by the Board for submission to the Ministry of Education for final approval in accordance with Regulation 304.

**Carried**

## 13. Correspondence

13.1 Correspondence from For the Fossil Fuel Out of School Planning Team regarding fossil fuel heating.

13.2 Correspondence from Waterloo Region District School Board regarding Special Incidence Portion Claim Funding.

13.3 Correspondence from Toronto District School Board regarding Support for National Food Program.

13.4 Correspondence from Rainy River District School Board regarding Support for National Food Program.

13.5 Correspondence from the Township of Amaranth regarding Primrose Elementary School.

RESOLUTION #24-75:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte  
Seconded by: Trustee Weiler

THAT the Upper Grand DSB receives all correspondence.

**Carried**

Trustee Edwards read a portion of the letter from the Toronto DSB regarding support for a National School Food Program. She placed the following motion.

RESOLUTION #24-76:

Moved by: Trustee Edwards  
Seconded by: Trustee Whyte

THAT the Upper Grand DSB also write a letter of support for a National School Food Program.

**Carried**

Trustee Weiler addressed the correspondence regarding eliminating fossil fuel heating in new and existing facilities. In the correspondence, they requested the Board to pass a resolution directing staff to eliminate fossil fuel heating in all upcoming new and existing board facilities. Trustee Weiler asked if there was any support from the trustees to refer the request in the correspondence to the appropriate committee for consideration.

RESOLUTION #24-77:

Moved by: Trustee Weiler  
Seconded by: Trustee Hauser

THAT the Upper Grand DSB refer the request to direct staff to eliminate fossil fuel heating in all upcoming new and existing board facilities to the Finance and Facilities Committee for consideration.

**Carried**

**14. Information Items**

Trustee MacNeil reminded trustees about the emails they received regarding the April 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> 2024 OPSBA Education Labour Relations and Human Resources Symposium registration, and the upcoming OPSBA Annual General Meeting (AGM) requesting any policy resolution submissions and suggestions for changes for the coming year.

**15. Adjournment**

RESOLUTION #24-78:

Moved by: Trustee Whyte

Seconded by: Trustee MacNeil

THAT the Upper Grand DSB adjourns at 7:55 p.m.

**Carried**

**This document is available in alternative formats upon request.**