UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NEWS

For Immediate Release

July 6, 2026

UGDSB appoints long-time employee as new Director of Education/CEO

GUELPH, Ontario – The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) is excited to announce that long-time employee Brent McDonald will be the new Director/Chief Executive Officer of the board.

McDonald started his career in education in 1995 as a teacher at Arthur Public School. In 2001 he became a Vice-Principal in the board, and became the Principal of Priory Park Public School in 2003.

His most recent roles have been serving as Associate Director and Chief Operating Officer of the UGDSB, overseeing Families of Schools, Facility Services, Safe Schools and more.

Prior to that, McDonald served as Executive Superintendent of School Operations and Student Support Services, supervising a senior team of superintendents for effective school improvement, creating inclusive learning environments for student achievement, leading the implementation of the Operational Plan, overseeing Indigenous Education planning, and engaging student and community voices.

Throughout his career, McDonald has demonstrated a deep commitment to developing people, strengthening leadership, and creating the conditions for students and staff to thrive. He led the development of leadership and mentoring programs that support educators and administrators at every stage of their careers, while advancing recruitment and succession planning to ensure strong leadership across the system. His focus on building leadership capacity, fostering inclusive learning and working environments, and supporting continuous growth has helped create a strong foundation for student success and reflects the UGDSB's commitment to putting students at the centre of everything we do.

In addition to his roles at UGDSB, McDonald also was the President of Educational Computer Network of Ontario (ECNO) from 2016-2020, providing leadership in setting direction for Information Technology in education across the province.

“It is an incredible honour to serve as the next Chief Executive Officer of the Upper Grand District School Board,” said McDonald. “Having spent over 30 years in a variety of roles across the organization, I am grateful for the opportunity to build on the

outstanding achievements of our students, staff, and school communities as we advance the priorities of Vision 2026+ and the Board's Multi-Year Plan."

"I look forward to strengthening relationships with all stakeholders across the system, supporting innovation including the responsible use of AI, and continuing to advance our student achievement progress in literacy and numeracy. Most importantly, I am excited to work alongside our students, staff, families, trustees, and community partners as we continue to implement recommendations from the independent Human Rights review and harness the incredible talent and potential that exists throughout the Upper Grand DSB."

The announcement of McDonald's appointment as CEO follows the announced retirement of UGDSB Director/CEO Peter Sovran.

Congratulations to Brent on his new role and to Peter on his retirement.

About the Upper Grand District School Board

The Upper Grand District School Board serves more than 35,000 students through 65 elementary schools and 11 secondary schools in the City of Guelph, County of Wellington and County of Dufferin. The UGDSB covers the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Six Nations of the Grand River, and Saugeen Ojibway Nation Territories. Inspiring a love of learning and developing engaged, globally literate citizens is the shared purpose of our Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and more than 4,000 dedicated education and support staff who are aided by the contributions of caring volunteers and community partners.

Our Purpose: To inspire a love of learning and develop engaged, globally literate citizens.

Our Vision: To be recognized as leaders in creating unparalleled, agile, and inclusive learning experiences for all.

Our Plan:

We will…

- *Deliver foundational education and student achievement*

We will…

- *Inspire a love of lifelong learning*
- *Champion health and wellbeing*

- *Ensure equity of access and outcomes*
- *Lead through sustainability*

We will…

- *Foster engaging and supportive learning environments*
- *Strengthen and grow community relationships*
- *Continuously learn, evaluate and improve*

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