

# Local school board approves nearly \$500 million budget for 2023-24

Written By Paula Brown

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) has approved its budget for the 2023-2024 school year.

The board passed the budget at the final board meeting for the 2022-2023 school year on June 27.

The approved budget for 2023-2024 has an operating expenditures budget of \$455,486,186 and a capital project budget of \$38,074,756.

The combined total is \$493,560,942.

The budget looks to reflect the priorities of the UGDSB's multi-year plan (MYP), which include delivering foundational education, inspiring a love of learning, championing health and wellbeing, ensuring equity of access and outcomes, and leading with sustainability.

"By focusing our investments on Upper Grand students and on the priorities of the MYP, we hope to achieve Vision 2026, which is to be recognized as educational leaders in creating unparalleled, agile, and inclusive learning experiences for all," said Ralf Mesenbrink, UGDSB chair, in a press release.

The budget also includes additional spending to support math and literacy over and above the committed funding provided by the Ministry of Education. The board will use its available accumulated surplus to address a budget shortfall of \$6.5 million.

"We have seen incredible progress made this year with our focus on literacy supports and Early Reading Teachers, both in gains made by students and rich learning among staff," said Peter Sovran, director of education for the UGDSB. "This budget will allow us to continue that focused work in literacy and increase our focus on math instruction."

The funding to school boards from the Ministry of Education is largely based on student enrolment numbers. The 2023-2024 budget for the Upper Grand District School Board projects an increase of more than 200 students for the next school year.

There is an increase in the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) from the province, which is \$14.8 million higher than the previous school year. The allocation of the Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF) has an increase of \$2.8 million and includes additional support for math, reading, supporting de-streaming, and transition to secondary school.

Other funding sources due to a lack of enrolment of international students.

The full budget report for 2023-2024 is available on the UGDSB website at [www.ugdsb.ca/board/finance/](http://www.ugdsb.ca/board/finance/).