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Upper Grand District School Bord approves nearly $530 million 2026-27 budget

Written By Sam Odrowski

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) has approved a $529-million budget for the 2026-27 school year.

The budget reflects priorities outlined in the UGDSB's Vision 2026+ multi-year plan. These include student achievement, lifelong learning, health and well-being, equity and access, foundational education, and sustainability, said the board in a June 30 press release.

?Since launching our Multi-Year Plan in 2022, we have worked to build a strong foundation for student success,? said UGDSB CEO Peter Sovran.

?This budget reflects that journey. With every decision, we remained focused on protecting the programs, supports and learning opportunities that have the greatest impact on students. It demonstrates our commitment to delivering on our vision while planning responsibly for the future.?

The board said the approved budget reflects the financial realities school boards are facing throughout Ontario. These challenges include declining enrolment, rising operational costs, inflationary pressures, and increasing demand for specialized student supports.

?Developing a balanced budget in today's environment requires disciplined planning and a clear understanding of priorities,? said Scott Keys, UGDSB's Chief Financial Officer.

?By using zero-based budgeting and grounding our decisions in the board's strategic priorities, we have developed financial estimates that are aligned, balanced, and compliant while ensuring resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact for students.?

Both zero-based budgeting and the UGDSB's Let's GO! Methodology was used to create the board's 2026-27 spending plan.

The methodology is a planning framework that guides budgeting, operations and student achievement. It breaks down the board's strategic priorities into measurable outcomes and uses data to monitor progress.

?As trustees, we have a responsibility to ensure every dollar entrusted to us is invested thoughtfully and responsibly,? said Ralf Mesenbrink, UGDSB chair. ?This budget reflects careful stewardship of public funds while remaining firmly focused on student learning and well-being. We are confident this budget positions the UGDSB to continue delivering high-quality education and meaningful opportunities for every learner.?

The board said the 2026-2027 budget invests in evidence-informed literacy and mathematics interventions, strengthened human rights and equity initiatives, proactive mental health supports, and innovative sustainability projects. These projects are aimed at improving operational efficiency while reducing environmental impacts.

Approximately 97 per cent of the UGDSB's operating budget supports students, with funding allocated to areas including teaching and learning, school operations, transportation and student services.

The UGDSB's 2026-27 financial estimates include funding for teaching and learning, student services, school operations and transportation, according to the board.