

Executive Report to Board

Trustee Vacancy

To: Board of Trustees
From: Peter Sovran, Director of Education
Prepared by: Nancy Fiorentino, Manager, Board Secretariat
Date: July 29, 2025
Report Type: ACTION

Recommendation

1. That one of the four options, outlined in the report titled Trustee Vacancy from the Director of Education dated July 29, 2025, be selected for next steps in filling the trustee vacancy for the electoral area of Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch.

Rationale

At its meeting on July 23, 2025, City Council at the City of Guelph appointed Katherine Hauser to fill the Ward 6 Council vacancy on City Council. Katherine Hauser is an Upper Grand District School Board Trustee for Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch and is also Vice Chair of the Board.

[Section 219\(7\)\(c\) of the Education Act](#) notes that “a person is not qualified to be elected in a by-election or to act as a member of a district school board if the person is:

- (c) a member of the council of a municipality or an upper-tier municipality, all or part of which is included in the area of jurisdiction of the district school board...”

As such, the Upper Grand District School Board Trustee seat for Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Town of Puslinch is now deemed vacant and the Board of Trustees is required to make a determination on how to fill the vacancy. The vacant office has a remaining term left until November 14, 2026 (for the 2022-2026 term of office).

In accordance with the [Education Act, Section 221\(1\)](#), the Board has two options: to fill the vacancy by appointment of a candidate within 90 days (by October 21, 2025) from the date the office becomes vacant, or to hold a by-election. In either case, the successful candidate will have a term ending November 14, 2026.

As the *Education Act* does not provide for guidance on how an appointment should be made, this report provides for several possibilities under the option of appointments for the Board's consideration in addition to the option for a by-election.

As such, four options are explored in detail in this report:

Option A: Appointment of Candidate from previous Election Candidates

Option B: Appointment of Candidate from a Member of the Community

Option C: Appointment of Candidate by Open Call for Nominees/Application

Option D: By-election

Option A – Appointment of Candidate from Previous Election Candidates

One option, should the Board choose the appointment process, is to appoint a candidate from the roster of candidates who ran in the UGDSB school board race in the 2022 election. For Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch specifically, the next place finisher from the 2022 regular municipal election was Lily Klammer-Tsuji who received the second highest number of votes of the total of the candidates running for the office of school board trustee at 24.90% of the total votes. There were also two other candidates who ran for this seat in the 2022 municipal election: Cliff Pereira (3rd place at 9.54% of total votes received) and Allen Remley (4th place 6.13% of total votes received). Alternatively, the Board may choose to appoint another individual who ran in the 2022 municipal election for the Upper Grand District School Board. All 2022 election results and candidates can be viewed at www.guelph.ca.

It is important to note that should the Board decide to go with this option, the individual selected will need to be contacted to determine if they wish to proceed with filling this trustee vacancy. To ensure efficiency and meeting the 90 day timeline, staff recommend that should this option be selected, an alternate option listed in this report also be

selected if the individual is contacted and declines taking the role of this trustee vacancy.

If the individual selected is agreeable to filling the trustee vacancy, the selected individual to fill the vacant seat would be sworn in at the next regular Board meeting held on September 23, 2025 which would meet the 90 day required appointment timeline under the *Education Act*.

There would be no financial implications to this option and the following wording is advisable for this recommendation:

1. That _____ be appointed to fill the newly vacated seat for Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch and be sworn into office at the Board meeting to be held on September 23, 2025; and
2. That staff be requested to proceed with alternative option _____ should _____ not agree to proceed with the appointment to fill the newly vacated seat for Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch, or be deemed not qualified.

Option B – Appointment of Candidate from a Member of the Community

Option B offers the appointment of a candidate from a member of the community to fill the trustee vacancy provided they are deemed qualified. A qualified person is:

- a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years of age and residing within the jurisdiction of the board;
- not a current employee of the Upper Grand District School Board, or any other district school board or school authority in Ontario;
- not disqualified by any legislation from holding office.

There would be no financial implications to this option.

The selected individual to fill the vacant seat would be sworn in at the next regular Board meeting held on September 23, 2025 which would meet the 90 day required appointment timeline under the *Education Act*.

Similar to Option A in this report, the selected individual would need to be contacted to seek their interest in filling this vacancy. As such, staff are recommending that if this option is selected, an alternative option also be selected in the event that the chosen individual indicates they are not interested in filling the vacancy and/or they are deemed not qualified. The following wording is advisable for this recommendation:

1. That _____ be appointed to fill the newly vacated seat for Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch and be sworn into office at the Board meeting to be held on September 23, 2025; and
2. That staff be requested to proceed with alternative option _____ should _____ not agree to proceed with the appointment to fill the newly vacated seat for Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch, or be deemed not qualified.

Option C - Appointment of Candidate by Open Call for Nominees/Application

The third option is to appoint a candidate through an open call for nominees process by way of application. UGDSB's By-law 1, Appendix H in Section 6.6, provides for the process for this type of appointment which includes the advertisement of the vacancy, submission of applications from interested candidates indicating why they are interested in the position, their background, qualifications, interests, experience and concerns regarding the position and any other information that is pertinent. Once applications are received, interviews will be conducted by an ad hoc selection committee of the Board. The members of the ad hoc committee will need to be selected at the July 29, 2025 Special Board meeting. The ad hoc selection committee will have a membership of a minimum of 3 Board members but no more than 4 Board members. The ad hoc selection committee will then provide its recommendation to the full Board wherein the successful candidate is chosen and sworn in to office.

The following chart illustrates the associated timeline should Option C be selected.

Chart A: Trustee Vacancy Time Line for Option C

Date:	Action:
July 29, 2025	Special Board Meeting For consideration of Vacancy Options
August 25 to Sept 19	4 Week Advertisement of Vacancy & Submission of Applications
September 22, 2025	Deadline for Application Submissions
Week of September 29, 2025	Ad hoc Cttee Meeting to Review Applications
Week of October 6, 2025	Ad hoc Cttee Meeting for Interviews
Monday, October 20, 2025	Special Board Meeting to Consider Ad hoc Committee Recommendation regarding appointment of candidate & swearing in of candidate as Trustee

There would be no financial implications to this option.

Should the Board approve this option, staff suggest the following recommendation:

1. That Option C - Appointment of Candidate by Open Call for Nominees/Applications, as outlined in the Trustee Vacancy report dated July 29, 2025 from the Director of Education, be approved as the process to fill the newly vacated seat for Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch;
2. That the following Board members be appointed as members of the Ad hoc Committee to review applications and provide a recommendation to the Board:

Trustee _____
 Trustee _____
 Trustee _____
 Trustee _____

Option D – By-election

The final option (Option D) will fill the vacancy through a by-election held by the City of Guelph and the Township of Puslinch. If this option is selected, the City and the Township is responsible for conducting the by-election including determining the nomination date and voting date. In accordance with the [Municipal Elections Act](#), Section 65(4), the Clerk must set the nomination date not less than 30 days and not more than 60 days after the by-election is ordered by the board and the voting date would be set 45 days following the nomination date. Therefore, voting day would take place sometime between October 12, 2025 and November 11, 2025.

As per the [Municipal Elections Act 7\(3\)](#) the municipality shall bear the cost of a regular election, but boards shall bear the costs of by-elections.

The City of Guelph has estimated the cost of a by-election at \$125,000.

At the time of writing this report, the Township of Puslinch did not yet provide a cost.

A by-election option would allow the public to directly select an individual to act as their representative for the trustee seat. While this option is the most democratic, the following considerations must be taken into account:

- The date of the by-election would leave approximately one year until the next municipal election.
- A by-election would be the third election in 2025 for eligible voters in Ward 6 and Puslinch given the early 2025 provincial election and the spring 2025 federal election. Voter fatigue and low voter turnout should be anticipated. Voter turnout following the 2022 regular municipal election was 27.54%, the lowest turnout since before 1988.
- The cost associated with the by-election which the Board is responsible for.

Should the Board approve this option, staff suggest the following recommendation:

1. That a by-election be called to fill the vacancy of the Ward 6 – City of Guelph and Township of Puslinch Upper Grand District School Board Trustee vacancy; and
2. That staff be requested to notify the City Clerk at the City of Guelph and the Township Clerk at the Township of Puslinch of the Board's resolution by certified copy.