

# Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

September 25, 2012



The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools met on September 25, 2012 at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge. Trustee Joe Watson was unable to attend.

## Congratulations

Trustee Robert Strauss and the board congratulated Kathy Perley, a Palliser employee at Champion School, for receiving the prestigious Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Award.

## Wall of Fame well received again

Trustees shared positive comments about this year's Wall of Fame inductees and the ceremony that was held during Palliser's Opening Day celebration Aug. 30th. This year's inductees were: Ian Martens, a photojournalist who attended Palliser schools in Coaldale; Dr. David Tano, a forensic psychiatrist, who attended Calgary Christian School; Jason Turner, a former Olympic figure skater who attended Barons School; and Larry Vannatta, a nationally and internationally recognized singer and songwriter who attended schools in Milo and Vulcan.

The Board's Wall of Fame committee will resume meeting this fall and is always looking for former students of Palliser schools to honour. Nomination information is available on Palliser's website at [www.pallisersd.ab.ca](http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca).

## Vulcan Prairieview presents response

The Board welcomed Shane Cranston, principal of Vulcan Prairieview Elementary School, who provided the school's response to a school review conducted there Jan. 19.

The school has about 250 students from kindergarten through Grade 6. It has a combined grade structure so Grades 1 and 2 students are in class together, as are 3s and 4s, and 5s and 6s.

The review found the school's strengths include high expectations for all students, effective communication, strong results, and the maintenance of strong and meaningful partnerships between the school, community and volunteers.

Issues to be addressed included bullying and respect of students for one another. Questions were raised about whether the multi-age classrooms are effectively meeting

student learning needs. The review team also found a desire for French instruction.

To address those issues, Cranston said the school has reviewed its supervision efforts and created clear expectations for supervision and behaviour to address issues of bullying or disrespect. The school is also promoting cross-graded activities in school "families" to build relationships among students. Activities focus on a monthly theme, such as manners. The school also offers leadership development to students in Grades 5 and 6.

Regarding questions about multigrade classrooms, Cranston said the staff is investigating whether the practice is ineffective or whether the issue might be that benefits are not being communicated effectively.

The school continues to look for volunteers in the community who might help provide second language instruction.

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Dale Backlin commended Cranston and his staff for digging into the data collected during the review.

## Heritage Christian Academy responds to its school review

The Board welcomed Heritage Christian Academy Principal Ryan Brennan to the meeting to provide his response to the school review conducted there Feb. 9.

Heritage Christian Academy is a K-12 school in north Calgary serving about 580 students. They have been part of Palliser for seven years.

Brennan said, "The review document was an excellent window into our school."

Areas of strength identified in the school include its strong focus on Christian education, effective leadership, caring staff and excellent extracurricular programs. Brennan said the school has a family atmosphere and students respect each other.

Areas of growth identified during the review include consistent school discipline, a need for more instructional materials, better home-school communication, and a stronger student voice for the academy's junior high and high school students.

Brennan said strategies for improvement include creation of a centralized discipline database (most discipline issues relate to the school's uniform and dress

policy); a clearer process for ordering resource materials; use of social media and the school's phone message service to better communicate with parents; and monthly firepit sessions at which students can talk about issues with the principal.

## **Think of Us on the Bus wraps up**

Dawn Sugimoto, executive assistant communications, provided the Board a brief overview of the division's four-week school bus safety campaign called "Think of Us on the Bus."

The campaign was conducted from Aug. 27 through Sept. 21 in partnership with the RCMP, Alberta Sheriffs, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement and the Office of Traffic Safety. The campaign attempted to both personalize the school bus and address the shared responsibility for safe student transportation carried by bus drivers, other motorists and students themselves.

Elements included improved reporting of close calls involving Palliser buses, a print and radio awareness campaign, student safety assemblies and an enforcement blitz during which law enforcement officers travelled aboard some of Palliser's buses.

The Board thanked Dawn Sugimoto, Transportation Services Supervisor David Shaw and Director of Learning Dan Ryder for their work throughout the campaign, as well as the participating bus drivers and other program partners.

## **Playground audit completed**

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard said an audit of playgrounds has been completed by Palliser's Facility Services staff. Needs were characterized from Class A to D in order to ensure priority issues are addressed.

## **Arrowwood nears completion**

Restoration work on Arrowwood Community School continues with a goal of completion by Oct. 15. The school has been under re-construction since a fire severely damaged the structure in April.

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard said Palliser has received a recommendation that the portables now being used to house students not be used on a long-term basis. The portable units were donated to Palliser by the Calgary Catholic School Board in the wake of the fire.

Students missed just two days of instruction last year as a result of the fire.

## **Next meeting set for Calgary**

The Board of Trustees will next meet on Oct. 16 at Glenmore Christian Academy in Calgary. The annual organizational meeting will start at 10 a.m., with the regular board meeting to follow.