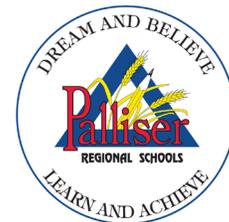


# Highlights of the Board of Trustees meeting

Tuesday, February 14, 2012



Calgary Christian Elementary students perform a song for trustees.

## Board enjoys Valentine's Day fun at Calgary Christian Elementary School

The Board of Palliser Regional Schools held its regular February meeting at Calgary Christian Elementary School at 2839 49 Street SW, Calgary. This is the first of four meetings this year the Board will hold in schools. Many students dressed in red for Valentine's Day. Students shared expressions of their faith with trustees, sang about the planets and quizzed the Board about Canada's Arctic.

The Board expressed appreciation for the student presentations and the accommodations provided by the staff.



Trustee Jean Mrak and Principal Harry Fritschy talk with students during a tour of the school.

## Kudos from the Trustees

The monthly roundtable during which trustees discuss the events and issues from their school communities highlighted some of the good things happening around Palliser.

Trustee Jean Mrak offered kudos to Jennie Emery Elementary School student Ethan Meyer, who grew his hair out for more than two years until it was long enough to donate for the making of a wig. Inspired by his selfless effort, dozens of other students from the school joined in by donating their own hair, having their heads shaved or spraying their hair pink to raise money for charity. "That little boy had a huge impact," Mrak said.

Trustee Mrak also applauded the professional development session Palliser initiated and offered in partnership with the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium. On Jan. 31, Dr. Marcia Tate, a leader in brain-based learning, spent the day with more than 200 staff from Palliser schools. Mrak, who took part in the workshop, said she's seeing teachers already implementing Tate's strategies for engaging students and appealing to how the human brain learns.



Dr. Marcia Tate

Superintendent Kevin Gietz said Palliser principals who saw Tate at a conference last year were so impressed with her workshop that they wanted to give their staff access to her expertise. As a result, many Palliser schools had their entire staff take part, and teachers from other jurisdictions were also able to attend.

## Meeting with the Minister

The Board of Palliser Regional Schools has been invited to meet with Education Minister Thomas Lukaszuk. The meeting is scheduled for March 1 in Calgary. The trustees are looking forward to discussing education issues with the minister.

## Reminder from Elections Alberta

The Board received a letter from Elections Alberta regarding Alberta's Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, which prohibits school boards from making

*Together we will ensure learning success for all students  
to develop their unique potential as caring citizens in a changing world.*

political contributions or reimbursing individuals for a political contribution.

Chairman Don Zech said years ago, the Board had discussed whether trustees should attend political events as a group from Palliser but opted against using public money in that way.

## **Rural education symposium March 2**

Palliser will send a delegation to Alberta Education's Rural Education Sustainability Symposium, scheduled for March 2 in Red Deer. A draft program for the day-long symposium includes a discussion of rural education research and findings as well as a showcase of best practices from school jurisdictions.

## **Class size numbers to be updated**

Superintendent Kevin Gietz, reporting on behalf of Associate Superintendent (Human Resources) Kevin Garinger, said Palliser added 20.2 full-time equivalent teachers with the restored education funding announced by the province in November. Every school received some increase in teaching time, with priority given to schools with class sizes larger than the provincial guidelines. Class size statistics are being collected from every school again, and will be updated with Alberta Education soon. The statistics on Palliser's jurisdictional profile posted on Alberta Education's website earlier this month do not reflect the additional teachers hired with the restored funding. Those figures were accurate as of the end of September. Profiles of school jurisdictions across Alberta can be viewed [here](#).

## **School calendar approved**

The Board adopted a divisional calendar for next year that will see students start school on September 4, 2012, after the Labour Day weekend. The calendar establishes the dates of division-wide professional development days and sets the last day for students on June 27, 2013.

With the divisional calendar approved, administrators at individual schools across the division can begin to work on their own calendars for 2012-13. Individual school calendars will be reviewed by Palliser's Central Office administrators to ensure instructional hour requirements are met before the calendars are presented to the Board for approval at regular Board meetings this spring.

Although the Board had considered changing its policy on school calendars, the existing policies and procedures remain unchanged. For schools in Coaldale, Coalhurst and Sunnyside, that means Administrative Procedure 111 School Calendar applies. Families at these schools voted to adopt early Friday dismissals in the 2010-2011 school

year for a two-year pilot period. Following the two-year trial, the schools are to administer a survey this spring to determine whether 70 per cent of families support continuation of the shortened Friday hours. The schools can now begin planning their survey of parents as per the administrative procedure.

The Board thanked Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Dale Backlin, Director of Learning Dan Ryder and Corporate Secretary Linda Poirier for their work the past several months on the 2012-13 school calendar.

The divisional calendar can be viewed at Palliser's website by clicking [here](#). Individual school calendars will be posted online as they are approved by the Board.

## **Locally developed courses approved**

The Board passed a motion approving the use of locally developed courses Forensic Sciences 25-3 and 35-3, acquired from Edmonton School District No. 7, for the period of September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2014.

## **Board supports letter on education of Hutterite children**

The Board passed a motion endorsing a draft letter about the education of children attending Hutterian colony schools.

The letter, signed by Superintendent Kevin Gietz and his counterparts from five southern Alberta school jurisdictions, is to be distributed to leadership on Hutterian Colonies across the six school divisions.

The letter acknowledges that traditional schooling at the schoolhouse for colony children will not continue after age 15.

"The vision of the superintendents is that the education these young adults receive would be out on the colony," the letter states. "There would be work in child care, sewing, in the gardens, and with cooking. There would be work in the fields, in the shops and in the barns. The evaluation for the work would be done by the adults with whom the 16 and 17 year olds are working along with an English teacher. They are in the best position to know if the work has been done well. They also will know if the values that are critical to the Hutterite religion, language and culture are being developed."

Education may take the form of work experience of Career and Technology Studies.

The letter says the superintendents are working with Alberta Education to learn and think about approaches to education young adults on colonies outside the schoolhouse.

**Next meeting Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at Milo School, First Street South, Milo.**