

Highlights of the Board of Trustees meeting



Monday, February 6, 2012

Special meeting addresses confusion over school calendars

The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools held a special meeting on Monday, Feb. 6, 2012 to discuss the ongoing debate about school calendars for 2012-13 and address confusion in our schools on this matter.

The contentious issue of school calendars stemmed from a Board resolution last year calling on an examination of the organization of the school year and school day to ensure both are research-based and in the best educational interests of students.

The Board's hope was that there could be more unity in calendars across the division to encourage delivery of programming through videoconferencing. This year, there are 20 different school calendars in use across the division.

Confusion over the calendars and the process for seeking deviations from the presented drafts led the trustees to agree unanimously to holding a special meeting Feb. 6 to clarify the Board's position.

Following a debate, the Board passed a motion to return to the "status quo" process of school calendar approval, passing one divisional calendar and then considering individual variations from schools. The motion effectively abandons the various drafts that had been circulated for consideration.

The Board will consider a division calendar at its Feb. 14th regular board meeting, and is likely to approve a

calendar at that time in order to meet its obligation to the Alberta Teachers' Association.

As has been the practice in past years, the divisional calendar will be provided to all schools who can then work on their own school calendars. Each school principal will be required to submit their draft calendar, complete with start and end times, as well as instructional minutes and hours, to Central Office administration for review. That review will ensure that instructional hour requirements are met. If the documentation is in order, the school's draft calendar will be presented to the Board for approval at regular Board meetings in March and April, as calendars are submitted.

The Board acknowledged this likely means Palliser will continue to have a wide diversity of calendars across the region.

The Board continues to strongly recommend that all schools provide at least 45 minutes for lunch, and for elementary students, two 15-minute recesses, one morning and one afternoon. The trustees also encouraged administrators to collaborate with each other in the hopes of arriving at a common calendar wherever possible to facilitate videoconferencing options.

Vice-Chair Colleen Deitz could not attend the meeting due to a family emergency. She made her opinions known by email to the rest of the board and administration.

The next meeting of the Board will be at 10 a.m., Feb. 14 at Calgary Christian Elementary School. The school is located at 2839 49 Street SW, Calgary.