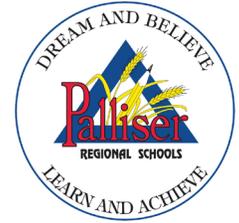


Highlights of the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees



Tuesday, May 29, 2012

Special meeting held to deal with time-sensitive issues

The Board held a special meeting on May 29, 2012 at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge to discuss several time-sensitive issues, including the division's preliminary budget and a request from Trinity Christian School in Calgary, seeking to join Palliser as an alternative program for the 2012-2013 school year.

Board approves in principle accepting Trinity Christian School

Chairman Don Zech said he joined Superintendent Kevin Gietz, Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Dale Backlin and Associate Superintendent (Human Resources) Kevin Garinger at a meeting May 16 at Trinity Christian School where members of the school community were asked to vote on the society board's recommendation to join Palliser Regional Schools as an alternative program for the 2012-2013 school year.

The vote was 91 per cent in favour of joining Palliser.

Prior to the May 16th vote, the society held town hall meetings to give parents and others an opportunity to ask questions and get more information about what joining Palliser would mean.

At the town hall meetings, individuals from one of Palliser's other Calgary schools were invited to share their experience about joining the public school system.

Superintendent Kevin Gietz thanked Calgary Christian Secondary School Principal Gwen Uittenbosch and Calgary Christian School's executive director Scott Hickling for speaking so highly of their relationship with Palliser.

At the May town hall meeting, Calgary Christian's representatives said they were facing financial pressures and the prospect of dramatically increasing tuition before they joined Palliser, factors Trinity Christian officials cited as among their reasons for seeking a partnership. They said the benefits of joining Palliser go beyond financial, and include supports to administrators and staff professional development. Uittenbosch's and Hickling's comments are cited on Trinity Christian's website.

Trinity Christian School had considered joining Palliser a few years ago, but the vote at that time was in favour of remaining independent.

The school expects to have about 350 students this fall from ECS to Grade 9 and has hopes of expanding to grades 10 to 12 at some

Trustees spent time reviewing a draft master agreement between Palliser and the society at Trinity.

As in other faith-based alternative programs in Palliser, the society would retain the right to determine and establish policies related to the school's Christian mission and focus, facilities and land owned by the society, society employees, admission requirements and society membership requirements. Among admission requirements is that students must have one parent who is Christian.

The school is interdenominational.

The agreement would give the society input on recruitment, selection and hiring of the principal, and preserve the society's right to administer and collect fees for capital expansion and related salaries, facility and maintenance-related salaries, supplements to instructional staffing and costs and programs related to the school's vision and mission statements.

If the master agreement is reached between Palliser and Trinity, school staff will become Palliser employees and be paid at levels established in Palliser. The society could also employ its own staff in support of the Christian mission and vision, such as youth pastors.

Certificated staff at the school would be subject to the Alberta Teachers' Association collective agreement and would be required to meet Palliser's employment terms, including supplying a criminal record check.

The draft agreement clarifies that lease monies for alternative programs are the responsibility of Alberta Education, and whenever such funding is received by Palliser, 95 per cent of that funding will be forwarded to the society, which remains responsible for facilities. Currently, some of Palliser's faith-based alternative programs receive lease funding, while others do not.

The draft agreement states that either party can give

18 month's notice of termination by January 1 of the year. That would then end the relationship between the school and Palliser by the end of the following school year.

Having reviewed the draft agreement, the Board voted in favour of accepting Trinity Christian School as an alternative program for the 2012-2013 school year, subject to the satisfactory negotiation of a master agreement.

Board selects KPMG for auditing services

The Board received a verbal report from its audit committee which met May 25th. The committee reviewed three tenders submitted for financial auditing services and recommended the acceptance of a proposal from KPMG. Board Chair Don Zech and Trustee Joe Watson declared a conflict of interest because both use the firm for their own accounting needs. Trustee Robert Strauss, who was not present due to illness, joined the meeting by phone for the discussion of auditing services. With a quorum of four trustees, the Board voted to accept the audit committee's recommendation and to use KPMG for Palliser's auditing needs next year.

Textbook and technology fees unchanged

The Board reviewed its current textbook and technology fees.

For the last several years, textbook fees have been unchanged, set at \$49 a year for students Grades 7-9 and \$59 a year for students in Grades 10-12. The textbook fee of \$39 a year for students from Grades 1-6 has been paid by the Board and not charged to parents for several years.

A technology fee of \$25 is charged to Grade 1-12 students across Palliser, except those on Hutterian colonies and Palliser's alternative schools for Low German Mennonite students whose use of technology is limited or completely restricted.

The Board voted in favour of leaving the fee structure

unchanged. The fees have not been increased in eight years.

Prelim budget for 2012-2013 adopted

Corporate Treasurer Michelle Gibb presented the Board the preliminary budget for 2012-2013.

The budget reflects the addition of Trinity Christian School.

The budget projects revenue of \$75.9 million, a conservative figure based on enrolment estimates and an assessment of incoming grants. The budget projects a surplus of \$5,317, on expenses of \$75.9 million.

Expenses were calculated based on an average teacher cost of \$95,000, consistent with last year. The preliminary budget projects a zero per cent increase in staff salaries. Palliser does not yet have a collective agreement in place with its unions, the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, for 2012-2013.

The budget increases teacher preparation time to 10 per cent, from 6.25 per cent, and it anticipates meeting the province's class size guidelines at all grades.

The budget projects an increase in teaching positions by 23.4 full-time equivalents. This increase reflects the addition of staff at Trinity Christian Academy and the increase in prep time to 10 per cent.

There are no large capital purchases in the budget.

The Board passed the preliminary budget. The final budget will be submitted in the fall after the actual enrolments and associated revenue are determined.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will begin at 9 a.m., Tuesday, June 19, 2012 at Palliser Centre, Lethbridge.