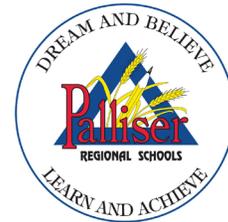


Highlights of the Board of Trustees meeting

Tuesday, October 18, 2011



Don Zech returns as Chairman

The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools held its annual organizational meeting Oct. 18 at Palliser Centre, Lethbridge.

Don Zech was returned as Board Chair by acclamation. He has served in this capacity since 2004. Colleen Deitz was returned as vice-chair by acclamation also. She has served in this position since 2001.

Trustees also took on their committee assignments for the year. External committees and their trustees representation are as follows:

- Alberta School Boards' Association: Esther Willms
- Public School Boards' Association of Alberta: Don Zech
- Interjurisdictional Resource Centre, formerly the Southern Alberta Learning Resource Centre: Jean Mrak
- County of Vulcan Adult Learning Council: Colleen Deitz
- County of Lethbridge Community Learning Council: Jean Mrak
- Cultural Recreation Centre Joint Use Committee: Robert Strauss
- Vulcan and District Recreation Board: Robert Strauss

Representation on Palliser's internal committees is as follows:

- Labour Relations Committee: Joe Watson, Jean Mrak and Board Chair.
- Board-Teacher Advisory Committee: Colleen Deitz, Board Chair and Chair of the Labour Relations Committee
- Audit Committee: Robert Strauss, Colleen Deitz and Board Chair
- Communications Committee: Joe Watson, Colleen Deitz, Esther Willms and the Board Chair
- Transportation Committee: Joe Watson, Robert Strauss and Esther Willms
- Wall of Fame Committee: Esther Willms, Joe Watson and Don Zech
- School Calendar Committee: Colleen Deitz and Jean Mrak
- Wellness Advisory Committee: Joe Watson and Esther Willms
- Health and Safety Committee: Joe Watson and Robert Strauss
- Technology Advisory Committee: Colleen Deitz, Robert Strauss and Jean Mrak
- Inclusive Education Advisory Committee: Jean Mrak and Colleen Deitz
- Effective Governance Committee: Robert Strauss and Esther Willms.
- Facilities Committee: Jean Mrak, Joe Watson and Robert Strauss

Trustees compared per diem rates with other boards using survey information from the Alberta School Boards' Association as well as a comparison with other Boards in the province with similarly sized divisions. The Board voted to increase trustee for attendance at meetings less than four hours to \$110; meetings of four to eight hours to \$220; and meetings exceeding eight hours to \$260. The new rates represent an increase of less than five per cent. Payment for preparation time for trustees was increased to \$450 a month from \$400; for chairperson \$700 a month, up from \$600. Meals and mileage expense rates remain the same as rates adopted by the province.

The Board's regular meetings are scheduled as follows: November 15; December 20; January 17; February 14; March 20; April 17; May 15; June 19; and August 21. Four meetings each year are held in schools on a rotating basis. This year, the Board intends to hold meetings at Calgary Christian Elementary School, Milo School, Coalhurst Elementary and one of the colony schools. The dates for these off-site meetings have not been decided.



**Chairman
Don Zech**



**Vice-Chair
Colleen Deitz**



Jean Mrak



Robert Strauss



Joe Watson



Esther Willms

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

Restored education funding

The Board discussed the provincial government's decision to restore \$107 million in education funding. Palliser's portion will be \$1,193,314, according to Alberta Education. Superintendent Kevin Gietz said the division is still awaiting details of how much of that money will be allocated to specific areas, such as AISI (Alberta Initiative for School Improvement), which would dictate how the money can be reinvested.

Thanks to admin and staff for excellent results

The Board was congratulated on its latest results. The latest Accountability Pillar, produced by Alberta Education, is the best yet, said Superintendent Kevin Gietz. The results in last year's provincial achievement tests and diploma exams were excellent. Chairman Don Zech expressed his thanks to the administration and staff whose efforts are supporting student learning. The results can be viewed at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/docs/library/results%20for%20web1.pdf>.

Three Palliser Schools recognized with Awards for Excellence in Education

Three Palliser schools have been named Schools of Distinction in this year's Awards for Excellence in Education, previously known as the Garfield Weston Awards.

Coalhurst Elementary School is being honoured in the Improvement in Academics category. Glenmore Christian Academy is named in the Excellence in Language Arts category. Master's Academy is one of just two elementary schools in Alberta named in all three award categories: Excellence in Language Arts; Excellence in Science; and Improvement in Academics.

The awards were last presented in 2009 when Coalhurst Elementary, Picture Butte High School and Master's College were honoured. Since then, the award categories have changed and the program this year is focusing on elementary schools. The award ceremony is Tuesday, Nov. 8 the Westin Calgary.

Palliser shares its school review process

Palliser has been invited to present information about its school review process at the November meeting of Alberta School Boards' Association in Zone 6. The division's school review process collects data from students, staff and parents at a school, as well as observations conducted by Central Office administrators and visited principals and

vice-principals from other Palliser schools. The team looks for evidence of the correlates or characteristics of effective schools. The collected data is then shared with school staff who can then identify areas of success and areas for improvement. The staff then comes up with strategies for school improvement.

Board wants ASBA to represent its interests in talks

Palliser's Board voted unanimously in support of a motion that it wants the Alberta School Boards' Association to represent its interests in discussions with the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Teachers' Association with the aim of concluding a provincial framework agreement addressing: term; school board funding; teacher salaries; and a dispute resolution mechanism.

The goal of establishing a framework agreement dealing with these issues is to achieve workforce stability and resolve a long-term commitment that will permit planning based on predictable costs.

According to ASBA policy, this motion must receive support by 60 per cent of the school boards who vote, representing 60 per cent of the students. If that level of support is reached, the ASBA will participate in the provincial level talks.

Data analysis as a tool for improvement

The Board welcomed County Central High School Principal Ken Garinger to the meeting to present on how he and his staff analyze data from Alberta Education to deepen understanding of student achievement and identify areas for improvement.

Palliser administrators invited Alberta Education officials to lead sessions on data analysis in 2009-2010, but have now built capacity within the system to lead data analysis workshops internally.

In October, administrators and some teachers spent a day examining Alberta Education data from the most recent diploma exams and provincial achievement tests.

Garinger provided trustees an abbreviated version of his workshop which involves a statistical analysis of how an individual school's results compare to provincial results on various test questions.

Although administrators are never given the actual test question, they are told what curriculum outcomes the question sought to measure. That information can then help teachers identify areas that need to be addressed in a different way.

At County Central High School in Vulcan, Garinger said teachers are expected to develop a plan of improvement

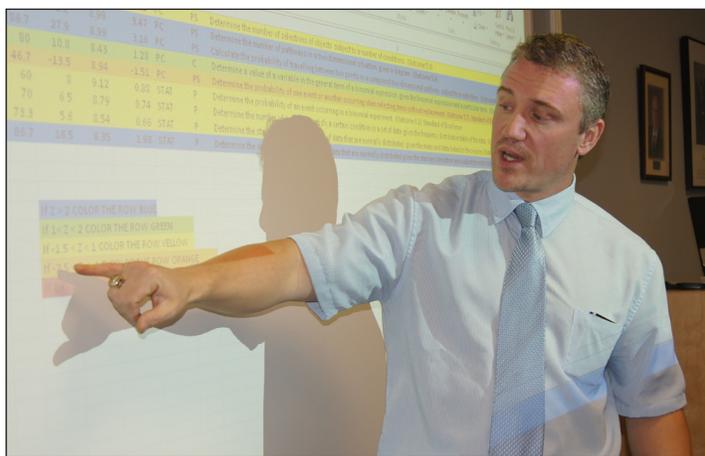
based on the analysis of data.

The results are also presented in histogram format and compared from year to year. The histogram, which looks like a curve, should move to the right over time to indicate more students are achieving at the acceptable and excellent level.

“At the end of everything, we turn our teachers loose with their data and loose with their outcomes,” Garinger said. “The day is spent looking at the data. What is the data telling you and what are some of the things you can do as a plan of improvement?”

The principal said he appreciates having that analysis day to work with staff.

“It’s about trying to give your kids a better chance of success in our courses,” he said.



County Central High School Principal Ken Garinger leads the Board through a statistical analysis of recent provincial exam results.

Enrolment is official

Palliser’s official enrolment for 2011-2012 is 6,787 students. Kevin Garinger, Associate Superintendent (Human Resources) said Palliser has 987 students who are “exceptional.” This would include students who have mild moderate special needs, have severe disabilities or are gifted.

Garinger said an analysis of Palliser’s class sizes will be completed in coming weeks.

Colony schools post-review update

The Board welcomed Colony Principal Wayne Tate to the meeting to provide an update on the work that has

occurred since the colony schools were reviewed in November 2009. That review consisted of visits to all 16 Hutterian Colony schools across Palliser.

Tate explained that the colonies are not all alike. Each colony is unique and strategies that might be successful at one colony may fall flat at another. As such, the strategies and efforts have varied from one colony school to another to ensure the work meets the needs of the particular school and its students.



**Colony Principal
Wayne Tate**

He said a subcommittee was struck in fall 2010 to examine the wording of some of the questions used in the review data collection. Some questions were reworked to better fit with colony language and culture. New questions were administered in February 2011, at the same time as the provincial Accountability Pillar survey was issued. The survey had an 86 per cent return rate among parents and students Grades 4 to 9. Respondents overwhelmingly rated their school as good or excellent.

He said staff has been working on ensuring safe and caring schools, adopting assessment for learning practices and improving communication.

Challenges facing the colony schools include geography (the schools are quite far apart colony school staff often work in isolation) and data on achievement comes from very small sample sizes because the schools are quite small. In any given year there may be only one or two students writing a particular exam. The sample size makes tracking results over several years even more important, he said.

Student art to be highlighted

Palliser will invite its student artists to submit art work for display in Central Office.

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Dale Backlin proposed the idea to the Board, which supported the concept.

With a modest budget of no more than \$2,000 for framing and matting, the division will showcase student art through the year. At the end of the year, the framed work, complete with an engraved plate of the student’s name and school, will be returned to the student.

Parent delegation applauds Palliser staff

Tracy Taylor and Janelle Fyfe, whose children attend Jennie Emery Elementary School in Coaldale, were welcomed to the Board table where they expressed their appreciation for Palliser's inclusive education system and the staff at JEES.

The women said they found the administration, teaching staff and learning assistants provided an exceptional education for their respective children, both of whom have special needs.

Taylor, whose son is in Grade 2, and Fyfe, whose son is in Grade 1, expressed appreciation for Principal Dave

Fender, learning support teacher Laverne Bryant and learning assistants Ivy Alvarez and Tammy Reum.

They thanked the Board for its support of all students, and the staff at Jennie Emery for nurturing the students' educational and social growth.

Chairman Don Zech, the trustees and administration thanked the moms for taking the time to meet the Board in person and offer such kind words.

Next meeting

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Tuesday, November 15 at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge.