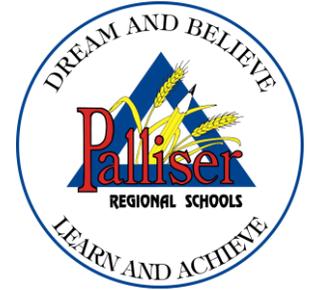


# From the Chair ...

## Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting Friday, April 8, 2011

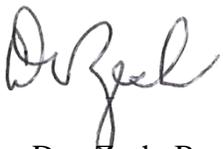


- The Board of Trustees held a special meeting Friday at Palliser Centre to receive an updated 2010-11 budget, prepared by Nieta World, the consultant who has been working with us on a contract basis since the departure of our Secretary-Treasurer. Nieta brings a wealth of experience with school finance and she has been working with Palliser in recent weeks to update our budget document, to ensure we embark on next year's budget with the most accurate financial picture possible. She went through our various sources of revenue and expenditures to date and projected for the remainder of the year. The Board approved the revised 2010-11 budget as presented which projects we will end this year with a surplus of about \$44,485. Compared to the budget we accepted and submitted to Alberta Education in November, revenues are higher but so are salaries and accrued outstanding vacation days. According to the revised budget, salaries and benefits are 79.4 per cent of our spending. When examined by type of expenditure, 78.5 per cent of all spending is in instruction; 12.5 per cent in maintenance; 4.8 per cent in transportation; and 3.7 per cent in administration. Current budget projections for the 2010-11 school year indicate Palliser will have an overall operating deficit of \$470,314.
- The Board accepted Nieta World's recommendation to purchase school premise enhanced insurance coverage for students, teachers and non-teachers at a cost of \$7,814.10. This insurance, at a cost of about \$1 per student per school year, provides accident insurance from the minute an individual leaves home for school to the minute they return home from school. It covers school days and board-sanctioned events such as school sporting events and field trips. Nieta provided an example where a student was injured in a school gym, suffering trauma to the mouth and losing teeth. The entire bill for care was \$30,000 that was covered by the insurance policy.
- The Board commended interim transportation co-ordinator Hans Hulstein, for his quick thinking and speedy response in providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation to a man who fell ill in Lethbridge earlier this week. Hans and Palliser mechanic Tim Klein were called to the scene of a minor collision between a Palliser school bus and a car in Lethbridge. The collision itself was minor and led to no injuries. While the drivers and others were waiting for police to arrive, the driver of the car collapsed and the Palliser pair sprung to action, calling 911 and providing care. Hans had completed first-aid training offered by Palliser just a year ago.
- The Board adopted two motions to create the positions of Corporate Treasurer and Corporate Secretary, splitting the roles and responsibilities of the traditional Secretary-Treasurer role. Superintendent Kevin Gietz said about 20 per cent of the province's boards have moved to this

model, in part due to the limited number of people with the qualifications and interest in serving as Secretary-Treasurer.

- Associate Superintendent (Alternative Programs and Technology) Dale Backlin gave the Board a report on an alternative to the planned expenditure of \$300,000 to revitalize Palliser's network, which provides Internet and computer network access to schools from Coaldale to Arrowwood. Instead of investing in the towers, this proposal would see Palliser pay for schools to access the province's Supernet system of high-speed Internet at a 20 MB connection, a considerable improvement from the 5 MB connection most of our schools have through Supernet. The tower system, which still functions quite well at the southern end of the division, serving five Coaldale schools, would continue using Palliser's towers. The Supernet, however, would be a backup plan should the equipment on the towers fail. The maximum cost of putting all schools on the 20 MB Supernet plan would be \$70,000 for the year, marking a considerable savings. Palliser's network revitalization could be delayed temporarily. Another possibility is that the province could increase the Supernet to 20 MBs for all users to keep up with the pace of technology, eliminating the need for Palliser to pay extra for the higher data transfer rate. The network and tower system were built in the late 1990s using grant money. The Board agreed with the wisdom of delaying revitalization for now.
- Dale Backlin also reported on efforts to bring Dr. Marcia L. Tate to Palliser for two days of professional development with teachers. Tate was a keynote speaker at a recent Effective Schools conference attended by a number of Palliser administrators. They returned to Palliser eager to share Tate's strategies for use in classrooms to promote student engagement. If her schedule allows, Tate has been invited to Palliser for a divisionwide PD day early in the 2011-2012 school year to present to all division teachers. The plan would be to invite her to stay for a second day of working with staff in individual schools. Tate specializes in student engagement and offers intensely practical strategies that can immediately be introduced to the classroom. The Board supported this PD idea and is awaiting word on Dr. Tate's schedule.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be April 19 at Picture Butte High School, Picture Butte.



Don Zech, Board Chair  
Palliser Regional Schools