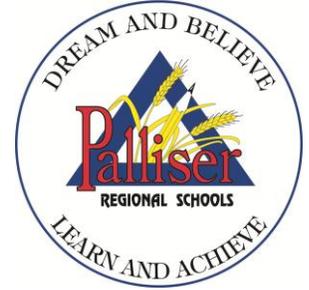


From the Chair ...

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting Tuesday, April 19, 2011



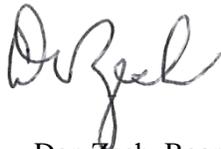
- Picture Butte High School played host to the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees this month. This is the second of four board meetings being held at schools this year. The visit to Picture Butte offered a chance for trustees to see the school where a major modernization project will soon be restarted. Work stopped in December 2010 after the general contractor went out of business. Since then, Palliser has been working with the bond company to ensure sub-trades were paid for work they've done and to prepare for re-tendering the project. We're looking forward to this modernization project moving forward. The Board was also treated to performances by the school's instrumental and jazz bands, led by teacher Travis Palsky. Principal Hank Heerze told the Board in addition to these bands, a teacher has also started a rock band for students as an after-school activity. It's been a great opportunity for students in Picture Butte. The trustees appreciated the performances.
- Trustees continued their book study of Michael Fullan's "The Six Secrets of Change." This month, Trustee Joe Watson led the discussion of Secret 3, "Capacity Building Prevails." This involves hiring the right people, continuously training them and treating them well. The Board reflected on Palliser's efforts to create a collaborative, empowered and supported workforce focused on contributing to student success.
- The Board received, discussed and approved an amended Three-Year Capital Plan. The plan had originally been approved March 15, 2011. The amendment adds lease funding to the priority list and adjusts the dates on the plan to reflect priorities for 2011 to 2014.
- The Board welcomed Donna Dalby, Director of Curriculum, as she presented the annual Curriculum Accountability Report. The report updated the Board on the mandatory implementation of Mathematics 3, 6, 9, 10C and 10-3 as of September 2010 and the variety of professional development opportunities provided to support the implementation. For example, Palliser's Math teachers in those grades were asked to join a math cohort on Palliser's four division-wide professional learning days. Teachers in the senior high math cohort were provided PD opportunities to support their transition to the new curriculum, and a number of digital and print resources were purchased for high school classrooms. Resources will be purchased to support the mandatory implementation of Math 20-1, 20-2

and 20-3 in 2011-2012. The new math curriculum involves a whole change of approach. Students are shown many ways to solve a problem and are encouraged to discover which way works best for them. Donna also explained that there are over 1,000 one-credit, 25-hour CTS courses available. If Palliser had more journeymen teachers, our schools could offer more courses. A journeyman hairstylist, for example, was engaged by Palliser in first semester to teach a Cosmetology 10 course to two schools using videoconference technology. The report also addressed the purchase of equipment to accommodate the introduction of new courses, such as animation, robotics and digital embroidery. The report included information about professional development undertaken by career and academic counselors and school librarians. The Board thanked Donna for her report.

- Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) Barbara Gammon presented Palliser's Special Education Accountability Report, updating the Board on activities in Palliser and how the work here dovetails with provincial initiatives focused on inclusion. Barbara said Palliser is well positioned for the provincial transition because the division has been providing an inclusive system for students for quite some time. She provided a jurisdictional profile of Palliser diverse learners who have been identified as have special education needs. She noted Palliser's percentage of children who have been identified as having special education needs is about 15.75 per cent, comparable to other jurisdictions. The report addressed Palliser's use of assistive technology to support students' specific learning needs; efforts to build capacity in Palliser to move forward with the new provincial approach to learning coaches and other strategies identified in Action on Inclusion; and work to support early literacy and early intervention. The Board thanked Barbara for her report and for her many years of effort on behalf of students and staff of Palliser. Barbara is retiring at the end of this school year after an outstanding career devoted to the interests of children and students in southern Alberta.
- The Board discussed a recommendation from Alberta Health Services, encouraging school divisions to adopt administrative procedures on the matter of healthy nutritional choices in school. Lethbridge School District No. 51 has adopted such a policy. The matter was discussed but no decision was made. The Board has decided to continue discussion at a later date.
- The Board heard an update from Barbara Gammon on efforts to find new funding sources for the Chinook Regional Career Transitions program. Sixty per cent of its funding came from a federal program, and that funding was eliminated in the most recent federal budget. Career Transitions is a partnership involving several school jurisdictions in southern Alberta, including Palliser. The program co-ordinates and implements career development activities for youth, promotes lifelong learning and school-business partnerships.
- The Board was presented with and approved school calendars for the bulk of Palliser's schools for the 2011-12 school year. With these approvals, only Master's Academy and College and Heritage Christian Academy in Calgary have not had their calendars approved yet for next year. Those are expected to be presented to the board at the May 17th meeting.

- The Board heard a proposal for a one-day Character Education Conference to take place in the 2011-12 school year. For the past two years, Palliser has organized a two-day conference on character education. Character education remains a priority in Palliser, however, the conference was put on hold for the coming school year, given the uncertainty about the budget and the strain on resources.
- The Board welcomed Dan Ryder, Co-ordinating Principal of School Development, to the meeting to share the findings of the school review conducted at County Central High School Feb. 10, 2011. The review collected data a number of ways, including through classroom observations, online surveys of students, staff and parents (with an excellent return rate of 71 per cent), and focus group meetings of parents and students. Interviews were conducted with teachers and school documents were reviewed. The data found the school's strengths include caring teachers, a caring principal, flexible programming and extracurricular programming, as well as high academic standards. Areas for potential improvement included timetabling of classes and lunch hour times, and concerns about short Friday classes. Issues of student respect and parking at the high school were also raised. The data is to be shared with school staff who can then celebrate school successes and focus on priorities for ongoing improvement.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be May 17, 2011 at John Davidson School in Coaldale.



Don Zech, Board Chair
Palliser Regional Schools