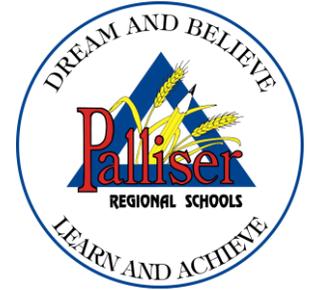


From the Chair ...

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting Tuesday, March 15, 2011



- The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools held its regular meeting at Master's Academy & College in Calgary. This marks the first of four monthly meetings the board will hold at schools around Palliser. During the visit to Master's, trustees were treated to performances by the Master's Grade 4-6 concert choir and Grade 6 choir, and they heard poetry recited by enthusiastic Grade 1 students. The students had recently performed at the Kiwanis. Master's College students also talked with the board about the high school's tradition of travelling on mission trips to help people in developing nations. More than 40 teams have made trips to other countries. This spring, 10 high school students will travel to Jamaica to build a playground and distribute goods, including more than 40 bikes, toys and books to children there. A shipping container packed with building materials and donations was packed by students Feb. 4, 2011 and was shipped rail and ship to Jamaica, arriving there March 6. The board expressed appreciation for the student presentations.
- Palliser Regional Schools will meet with representatives of Siksika First Nation to discuss the long-standing issue of a new tuition agreement for students from Siksika attending schools within Palliser. Representatives of Palliser are scheduled to meet with Siksika Board of Education officials March 28, 2011.
- The board received a report on how the Fraser Institute ranked some of Palliser's schools in the 2011 report on Alberta's elementary schools. The rankings are based on provincial tests of Grade 3 and 6 students. Schools that did not have both Grade 3 and 6 were not ranked. Palliser elementary schools were ranked as follows: Master's Academy (5); Glenmore Christian Academy (33); Calgary Christian School (94); Heritage Christian Academy (107); Coalhurst Elementary (126); Vulcan Prairieview and Sunnyside (227); Menno Simons Christian School (269) of 654 schools in the rankings. This was the highest ranking Master's has achieved.
- A picnic for teachers organized jointly by the ATA and the Board, which was not held in the 2009-10 school year, will return this year. Given the geography of the division, two events will be held in hopes teachers across the division can attend. A picnic for teachers in the northern half of Palliser will be held at 6 p.m. June 13 at Heritage Christian Academy. An event for those in the southern half will be held at 6 p.m. June 22 at the newest picnic area in Lethbridge, the Rotary Picnic Shelter, located near the Wal-Mart in North Lethbridge. More details will follow as planning proceeds. The first step was finding suitable locations.
- Superintendent Kevin Gietz updated the board on the ongoing work with the bond company to restart construction on the Picture Butte High School modernization project. The major

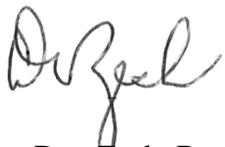
modernization project has been stalled since December when the general contractor and its parent company applied for protection from creditors. In April, the board meeting will be held at Picture Butte High School where they hope to see first-hand the status of the project and the results of the construction delay. That meeting will be April 19, 2011.

- The board passed its capital plan for 2011-12. With no funding available provincially for new capital projects, the Palliser priorities remain the same as in last year's plan. Priorities are a feasibility study of the possible modernization of Noble Central School in Nobleford, followed by the feasibility study of the possible modernization of County Central High School in Vulcan. In addition to those schools, modernization of Coalhurst High School has also been identified as a division priority. The plan will be submitted to Alberta Education.
- The board and administration have an opportunity to meet with municipal representatives from across Vulcan County later this month. This follows a recent meeting the trustees enjoyed with the Town of Coaldale's council. This is part of the board's effort to report to stakeholder communities about the region's schools. The board hopes to continue holding such meetings across Palliser with municipal partners.
- Superintendent Kevin Gietz, Associate Superintendents Dale Backlin and Kevin Garinger reported on the recent Effective Schools Conference in Scottsdale, Ariz. This conference, only offered in Arizona for the past 28 years, offered great information about research on what makes schools effective and how to engage learners. Palliser has incorporated the seven correlates of effective schools into its school review process for continuous improvement. During the conference, the Palliser administrators were granted an exclusive 90-minute session with Dr. Larry Lezotte, one of the original researchers involved in identifying the characteristics of effective schools, and his Canadian counterpart Wayne Hulley. During this session, the two gurus of effective schools heard about the Palliser school review process and shared their ideas for the continued evolution of that process.
- Palliser Board Vice-Chair Colleen Deitz led the group through book study of the second secret in Michael Fullan's 6 Secrets of Change. The group discussed the value of meaningful collaboration among staff, the trustees and administrators. Trustee Joe Watson will continue the discussion of Chapter 3 next month, "Capacity Building Prevails."
- The Board discussed a proposal to return as a partner in the television production called "A Public Education." The Board had supported the program in Season 1 but withdrew in Season 2 due to budget reasons. While the Board supported the quality of the production and the concept, it again opted not to commit funds to the next season due to budget constraints.
- Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) Barbara Gammon provided an update on the Coaldale Play program, a before- and after-school program in Coaldale. She said the program is well utilized and provides a much needed service in the community. In order to ensure the continued success of the program as a revenue neutral operation for Palliser, administration has met with program staff about establishing an hourly rate of pay for out-of-school care staff, separate from the learning assistant pay grid. This will align remuneration with what similar program pay their staff. Palliser also plans to apply for accreditation of the program. Once accredited, program staff can have access to top-up pay, retention bonuses and funds for professional development.
- The Board passed a motion to establish a committee to conduct a comprehensive study of the organization of times of school operations for implementation in September of 2012. The study is to be research based and comprehensive in its examination of start and end times of the school day,

length of lunch hours, length of recess and length of time between classes. Public and stakeholder input will be part of this process.

- Meanwhile, the Board began approvals of individual school calendars for the 2011-12 school year. Approved were calendar submissions for Huntsville School, Iron Springs; Champion School; Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary; Coalhurst Elementary School; Glenmore Christian Academy, Calgary; John Davidson School, Coaldale; Sunnyside School, northeast of Lethbridge; Jennie Emery Elementary School, Coaldale; and Brant Christian School.
- Superintendent Kevin Gietz updated the Board on a review of the transportation department being conducted by two independent consultants who have extensive experience in school transportation. A report of findings should be delivered to the Board in May. As part of the review, data is being collected from school staff, bus drivers, parents of bused students and transportation staff. Other jurisdictions who contract busing services from Palliser will also be asked to provide input.
- The Board passed a motion dissolve its busing agreement with the Town of Coaldale, addressing in-town busing of students. Trustees had discussed this possibility earlier with municipal officials. By providing notice of termination of the 1995 agreement, the trustees have set the stage to begin talks with the town about the transportation needs of students living in the town.
- Associate Superintendent (Human Resources) Kevin Garinger reported to the Board on a number of programs supporting beginning teachers, beginning administrators and teachers interested in becoming administrators. For new teachers, induction programs are available for teachers in the first-, second- and third-years in the profession. Administrator Induction and Mentorship programs support administrators in their first and second years when they are either new to Palliser or new to administrative positions. New this year, a Lead Teacher Cohort will be created to identify and support teachers interested and capable of careers in school administration.

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