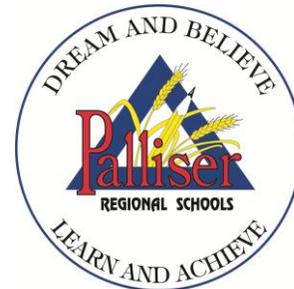


From the Chair ...



- The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools held its regular meeting at County Central High School in Vulcan, the final of four Board meetings this school year held at our schools. Trustees were treated to a rousing start to our meeting with several songs performed by Grade 10 and 11 students who are part of CCHS Rocks, a band led by music teacher Brian Rodgers. The band, which performs locally, has a dozen members this year, but Grade 12 musicians were tied up in diploma exams when the Board visited. The Board thoroughly enjoyed the performances.
- The Board welcomed Joanne Kettenbach to the meeting, representing the County Central High School Sport Council. The council expressed its concerns about what's known as the Canadian Standards Association D270 standard, a new standard of multi-functional activity bus. D270 buses are structurally similar to the CSA D250 standard school bus, featuring the same reinforced roof and side structural requirements. In July 2009, Alberta's Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation and Vehicle Equipment Regulation came into effect, recommending multi-functional activity buses that mirror the requirements outlined by the CSA. Before these changes to national safety recommendations and unaware this new class of vehicles was coming, the Sport Council completed a fundraising campaign in the community of Vulcan and purchased a bus that does not meet the new standard. The council has been using the bus to transport student athletes to events. In December 2010 and in light of the CSA regulation and legal advice, the Board passed a motion to cease use of buses that do not comply with D270 regulations by the end of 2010-2011. That motion would apply to the 28-passenger vehicle purchased by the council. The council asked if the trustees would consider grandfathering the Vulcan bus as the council works on a plan to purchase a D270 vehicle, at an estimated cost of \$140,000, in the next five to 10 years. Following a discussion, the Board voted to rescind the December 2010 motion, and the vote passed by the required two-thirds majority. Next, the Board passed a motion approving use of the council-purchased bus, known locally as CCHS No. 28, for a one-year period, at which time the issue will be revisited. Finally, the Board passed a motion that any organization which purchases a vehicle with the intent of transporting Palliser students and which insures that vehicle under Palliser's insurance policy, must ensure the vehicle complies with D270 safety standards.

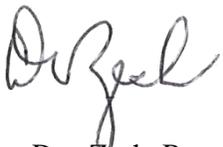
- The Board welcomed Dan Ryder, Co-ordinating Principal of School Development, who presented data collected through the school review at John Davidson School in Coaldale April 7, 2011. John Davidson School is an alternative program for students from the Low German Mennonite community. The school opened in fall of 2009. The review included a site visit, classroom observations, a facility walkabout, surveys of parents, students and staff, interviews with teachers, examination of school documents and focus groups with students and staff. The data will be presented to school staff June 29, at which time administration and staff will analyze the findings, celebrate successes and identify issues requiring action. Mr. Ryder explained that the school review surveys and process were altered to address the specific needs of the Low German Mennonite community, particularly regarding areas of technology and language. Instead of conducting online surveys of parents, as normally occurs as part of a school review, the surveys were provided in hard copy following an evening school concert. As a result, there was an 88 per cent response rate from families. The review also enjoyed great parent participation in the focus group. The data collected identified school strengths including a caring and dedicated staff; sensitivity to Mennonite culture and faith; and engaging learning activities. Areas of improvement include communication with parents; more technology in the classroom (identified by teacher and students), and a concern about literacy (parents wanted more German language instruction, while teachers identified English language literacy as a priority). The staff will have an opportunity to dig into the findings and comments collected in the review process June 29th and Principal Janice Loitz will be invited to present to the Board an action plan of response to the review findings at a meeting next school year. The Board thanked Dan Ryder for his presentation and his continued work on school reviews.
- The Board adopted its 2011-2012 Board Year Plan, a document updated as necessary and outlining key dates and responsibilities for the Board. This document is posted online if you're interested.
- The Board passed a motion to continue to serve as the banker board for the Chinook Country Student Health Partnership for the 2011-2012 year.
- Four students and an advisor from County Central High School in Vulcan will attend the Canadian Student Leadership Conference in Corner Brook, NL, September 27 to October 1, 2011. The Board was asked to provide financial assistance to cover the cost of one of the students to attend. Instead of making a motion to provide support to this one specific trip, the Board supported a motion that establishes guidelines for financial support for this trip and other similar requests. That motion states the Board will provide support for Palliser students to attend school-sponsored national events to a maximum of \$200 per student, to a maximum of \$1,000 per site per event, as requested by school administration.
- Superintendent Kevin Gietz shared with the Board that he attended a ceremony organized by the Lethbridge Regional Police Service Monday, June 20, at which Police Chief Tom McKenzie presented Palliser employees Hans Hulstein and Tim Klein certificates of merit for their efforts to provide first-aid to a man in medical distress this spring. Sgt. Craig Deimuth, the first police officer on the scene, also received a certificate for his efforts.
- The Board passed a motion approving the Board self-evaluation report as developed June 15. The Board's self-evaluation process involves trustees looking back on its work this past year and then identifies priorities and growth goals for the coming year. The Board Chair was authorized to monitor the priorities and suggestions agreed to and bring items forward for Board consideration as deemed appropriate. The Board's self-evaluation is conducted annually.

- Similarly, the Board approved the Superintendent's Evaluation Report as developed in the evaluation workshop held June 15. The report was accepted as an accurate accounting of the Superintendent's performance for the period April 1, 2010 to May 31, 2011; and further, the Board authorized the Chair to make any required technical edits and to sign the report on the Board's behalf. The Superintendent's evaluation is conducted annually.
- The Board amended an appendix to Board Policy 12. This was a housekeeping matter and updated the dates for upcoming Superintendent/CEO evaluations.
- The Board voted to change the date of its August meeting. Normally that meeting would be held on the third Tuesday of the month, August 16th. With the Board decision, the meeting will be held August 23rd. That meeting will be held at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge, starting at 9 a.m.
- The Board acknowledged receipt of letters from parents at Heritage Christian Academy in Calgary, expressing concerns about learning assistant hours at the school.
- The Board commended Trustees Esther Willms and Jean Mrak as well as Associate Superintendent (Alternative Programs, Technology and Transportation) Dale Backlin and Co-ordinating Principal of School Development Dan Ryder for their efforts working with officials from the Town of Coaldale to arrive at a new in-town busing agreement. Palliser's team met with Coaldale's Mayor and CAO on June 13. Council later voted to accept the agreement which takes effect this fall. This agreement takes the place of an in-town busing agreement signed in 1995 between the town and Palliser to address the safe transportation of kindergarten to Grade 8 students who may face crossing a major highway to reach school. The agreement will see Palliser provide bus drivers, support, mechanical and administrative services for two charter buses to the Town of Coaldale for transportation of in-town students who live within 2.4 kilometres of their designated school. Students living within 2.4 km of school do not receive transportation grant funding from the province. The agreement covers busing for 75 students. Should the student numbers exceed 75, the fees would need to be revisited with the view to adding additional bus service. Under the agreement, the cost for in-town busing will be \$185 per school year, payable to the Town of Coaldale. The responsibility for collection of the fee falls to the Town under this agreement.
- The Board welcomed Principal Dave Fender, of Jennie Emery Elementary School in Coaldale, who presented an action plan in response to a school review conducted at Jennie Emery in December 2010. He applauded Palliser's school review process. He said at the end of the review day, everybody walked out of that building feeling good about themselves. The review found evidence of many positive aspects of the school which has about 450 students from kindergarten through Grade 4. In terms of areas of improvement, the principal focused on development of school mission and vision statements; concerns about safety and congestion on the street in front of the school; continuing to address bullying and teasing; and improving communication with staff and parents. Mr. Fender said his goal is to consult with staff and parents and develop a school mission and vision by April 2012. To address issues of the drop off area in front of the school and issues with so many vehicles in front of the school at the start and end of the day, the school worked with the Town of Coaldale and the school's resource officer, a no-parking zone has been created at the start and end of the school day. The constable worked in the zone to educate parents about the new no-parking rule and the congestion issue has greatly improved since. To address bullying and teasing, the school continues to model respectful behavior and continue to address any issues that arise with children who may not even realize the impact of their words and actions. The school has a Positive Playground program, in which students are taught non-competitive games to play at recess. Next year, the school will be part of the One School, One Book program. Every student will receive the same book to read and will share the experience in cross-graded groups. It's a good way to build community in a school, Mr. Fender said. To address communication issues, the school will provide

both a long version of the newsletter and a highlights package for people who may not have the time to read the full version. An archive of information will be available online, and the school is experimenting with a “morning news” program. Three students provide the morning news which is uploaded on the Internet which can be accessed at a convenient time by teachers and, eventually, but parents and grandparents who might want to see what’s happening at the school. The school is also adding a flat-screen TV display in the school atrium, thanks to financial support from the school council, to provide visitors highlights of what’s happening at the school. Next year, teachers will also be expected to have at least once a month contact with every student’s parent to share student achievement. To improve communication with support staff, an allocation of hours will be used to enable learning assistants to participate in the professional development portion of the monthly staff meetings. To address concerns about supports to students with special needs, Mr. Fender said Jennie Emery will participate in two pilot projects in 2011-2012. First, the school is part of a wraparound services pilot project. In this project, therapists, learning support teachers and teachers will meet twice a week to discuss any issues teachers are experiencing with students, and the experts will share strategies for supporting the students. The sharing of expertise will benefit not only the specific student but potentially all students in the classroom, the principal said. The second pilot project is of the Individual Education Planning Tool, an online resource developed by Alberta Education. The tool has been used elsewhere and has been found to be a tremendous resource for students of all abilities. As part of his action plan, Mr. Fender says he hopes to survey parents at the beginning and end of next year to gauge progress in improving communications.

- The Board adopted its 2011-2012 budget, with projected revenue of \$69.1 million and expenditures of \$69 million. The budget revenue estimates are based on projected enrolments for the fall, and expenditures were tallied from a zero-based budget process. Rather than moving forward expenses from last year to next year, we started the budget process by revisiting, department by department, and school by school, every predictable and necessary expense. This needs-focused approach helped Palliser focus resources on areas of priority. The new budget predicts a reduction of teaching staff by 10.3 full-time equivalent positions, and learning assistants by 7.4 FTEs. The reductions will occur as much as possible through attrition. This spring, the system will see 23 teachers and 10 learning assistants retire or resign. The Board thanked Palliser staff and administration for their ongoing efforts to find efficiencies and direct resources to meet student needs. This budget will be revisited again this fall and revenues and expenditures will be adjusted as needed to reflect actual enrolment.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be August 23 at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge. We wish our students, staff, parents and other stakeholders a great summer.



Don Zech, Board Chair
Palliser Regional Schools