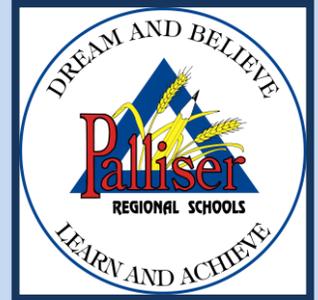


From the Chair ...



Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting held Tuesday, November 2, 2010

- The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools met at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge beginning with an organizational meeting, at which Don Zech and Colleen Deitz were returned as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. There were no other nominees for these positions. The board also held nominations for various committees. Palliser's representation on a number of external committees is as follows:

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

Palliser trustees also took on their responsibilities with various internal committees:

- Labour Relations Committee: Don Zech, Joe Watson and Jean Mrak
 - Board-Teach Advisory Committee: Don Zech, Joe Watson and Colleen Deitz
 - Audit Committee: Don Zech, Robert Strauss, Colleen Deitz
 - Wellness Advisory Committee: Esther Willms and Joe Watson
 - Health and Safety Committee: Joe Watson and Robert Strauss
 - Technology Advisory Committee: Tabled for now
 - Inclusive Education Advisory Committee: Esther Willms and Joe Watson
 - Communications Committee: All trustees
 - Wall of Fame Committee: Esther Willms, but open to all trustees
 - Transportation Committee: Robert Strauss, Joe Watson and Esther Willms
- The Board established its remuneration schedule. For meetings of four to eight hours, trustees will receive a per diem of \$210, an increase of five per cent from the per diem rate two years ago. Last year, the board took a pay cut of five per cent, amid cost-cutting measures that affected all other sectors of Palliser.
 - Moving on to regular business, the Board welcomed Dorothy Dalgliesh Elementary School Principal Jason Neville to present his school's action plan, developed in response to the review of the school conducted in May 2010. Strengths of the school included its caring and approachable staff, the welcoming atmosphere, community support and pride in the school. Areas for improvement included communication, consistent discipline in response to bullying and playground equipment. Mr. Neville explained the staff has adopted a number of strategies to address areas of improvement.

On the communications front, use of student agendas is being emphasized as a tool of communication between school and home; letters are being sent home with students in advance of school council meetings to let parents know agenda items in hopes of encouraging participation; a “celebration of learning” showcase event will be held so parents can visit the school, in addition to the regular meet-the-teacher night and parent-teacher interviews; school goals are a topic at every school council meeting; and both the principal and teachers are tracking the number of positive communications they have with parents to share student successes. To address bullying issues, the principal has increased classroom discussion of bullying, what it is and what to do about it, and has added a section on bullying to every newsletter. To increase the number of non-athletic activities offered to students, the school is restarting its Drama Club, has invested in Lego Robotics sets, and has engaged staff in setting up lunch-hour clubs on topics of interest they can share with students. The Board thanked Mr. Neville for his presentation and for the work he continues to do at his school.

- Superintendent Kevin Gietz provided the board the official student count as of September 30, 2010. Palliser has 6,619 students, the most the division has ever had.
- Chairman Don Zech reported on a videoconferencing session offered by the Alberta School Boards Association on October 15, 2010 regarding best practices for handling expulsion hearings. He noted there are few expulsion hearings in Palliser and he credited Palliser principals for the work they do to keep students in their schools.
- Superintendent Kevin Gietz reported on the Assessment Institute in Calgary, attended by a contingent of Palliser administrators. The speakers included some of the leading experts on assessment. During the conference, the Palliser delegates engaged in a pair-and-share exercise discussing instructional leadership and instructional supervision to share ideas on how the division can move forward on improving support to teachers in the classroom.
- The board debated a proposal to install an ATM machine at Kate Andrews High School in Coaldale. The school had been approached by a parent seeking to install a banking machine at the school with some of the proceeds being donated to the KAHS graduation committee. Trustees and administration discussed security of the machine, whether the machine would be in students’ best interest or whether it would encourage poor money management habits. The motion to allow installation of an ATM machine at the school, subject to the tendering process, was defeated in a tie vote.
- Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) Barbara Gammon reported work has begun on installation of new modulars near County Central High School in Vulcan. The modulars will house day care spaces in Vulcan.
- Barbara Gammon also reported on the results of the 2009-2010 provincial survey results of the Westview Student Health Partnership and the Chinook Country Student Health Partnership. In both partnerships, parents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality of services provided to students with special health needs.
- Dale Backlin, Associate Superintendent (Alternative Programs & Technology) presented the board with a draft policy proposal for the Southern Alberta Learning Resource Centre, a Lethbridge-based service which is in the process of transforming from being a source of film and video resources to one which facilitates access to digital media content, supporting the Alberta curriculum in member schools. The Board supported the draft proposal from SALRC.
- Dale Backlin also informed trustees that the Palliser-organized Western Canada Character Education Conference, in Calgary November 4-5, 2010, has 95 registrants, up from 70 in 2009. This is the second annual conference focusing on character education. This year’s keynote speaker is Michele Borba, an internationally renowned educator and award-winning author. Her proposal on ending school violence was adopted into California law in 2002.
- The Board was also reminded of a special event at County Central High School in Vulcan. On November 4, 2010, junior and senior high students from eight other Palliser schools were planning to travel to County Central to take part in Rachel’s Challenge. The program, started by the father of

Rachel Scott, a teenager killed in the Columbine school shooting, encourages participants to live their lives with empathy, compassion and kindness. The program was also being offered to the public through an evening session. The powerful program was made possible through fundraising by the CCHS school council and partners in the community.

- The Board rescinded a motion passed at its September 21, 2010 meeting that set the Early Childhood Services ineligible rider transportation fee at \$95 per child. The Board then set that fee at \$92.50 per child per year. The original ineligible rider fee for all Palliser students had been \$185 a year. The Sept. 21st motion reduced that for kindergarten students because they don't attend school full-time. However, that motion did not reduce the fee by exactly half, which meant parents of ECS children who had already paid the original fee for half the year would have been left owing \$2.50. Secretary-Treasurer Terry Kirkham said the new fee of \$92.50 means many parents of ECS students had already paid in full for the year, and there would be no need to go back to them for \$2.50. Ineligible riders are those who live within 2.4 kilometres of their school. That distance limit is set out in the School Act and Alberta's Student Transportation Regulation. School jurisdictions do not receive funding for transporting students who live within the 2.4 km limit.
- The board's next regular board meeting was set for November 25, 2010 in Lethbridge at Palliser Centre.



Don Zech, Board Chair
Palliser Regional Schools