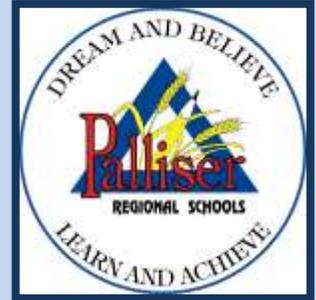


From the Chair ...

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting held Tuesday, April 27, 2010



- The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools held its regular meeting in the familiar surroundings of Palliser Centre in Lethbridge after a series of three meetings on the road at various school sites. This meeting was originally scheduled for Heritage Christian Academy in Calgary, but the board had to change locations to accommodate a visit by Education Minister Dave Hancock, who was in southern Alberta as part of a fact-finding mission. In addition to the Education Minister's visit, Palliser was pleased to have Minister of Children and Youth Services Yvonne Fritz visit John Davidson School in Coaldale. The minister had expressed an interest in learning about Palliser's programs for students from the Low German Mennonite community. Palliser was thrilled for the opportunity to share this success story.
- Secretary-Treasurer Terry Kirkham presented the Board the Palliser Capital Plan for 2010-2011. Although Alberta's school boards have been advised not to expect any capital funding for the next few years, the province still requires boards to submit capital plans annually. Palliser identified the priority for next year is to do a feasibility study of modernization of Noble Central School in Nobleford, if resources are available for such a study.
- District Principal Dan Ryder made a presentation to the Board about the Technology Review that was conducted this winter. An appreciative inquiry method was used to examine the Technology Department, its use and how different schools use technology. Data was collected from staff and students using online surveys and one-on-one interviews to identify areas of strength and improvement. One recommendation was to enable access to parents by email by ensuring schools are collecting home email addresses for school and divisional purposes. Identified strengths were high student engagement, increased learning opportunities, enhanced lesson delivery options and use of technology to differentiate instruction. Improvement areas included reliability of technology, increased website access, building instructional capacity and measured expectations regarding technology growth. The Technology Department will report back on its response to the review in six months.
- The Board approved a number of locally developed courses for a one-year period: T.E.A.M. Leadership; Instrumental Jazz; Vocal Jazz. These courses were developed by the Calgary Board of Ed. Locally developed courses approved for three years were Public Presentation Leadership (developed in Palliser Regional Schools at Brant Christian School); as well as Technical Theatre EPS and Theatre Performance (developed by Edmonton Public Schools).

- The Board discussed a proposal from the Glenmore Christian Academy School Council to create a “Council of School Councils” for Palliser’s Christian alternative programs operating in Calgary. The Board asked Associate Superintendent Dale Backlin to organize a meeting with representatives of school councils in Calgary this spring to provide an opportunity for all trustees to meet with these councils. The Board reiterated its stance that all trustees represent all students in Palliser.
- The Board passed a motion to support the schools in Coalhurst in their move to a shortened school week. The motion followed a process initiated by the school councils at Coalhurst High School and Coalhurst Elementary School to determine whether parents were in favour of early Friday dismissal. The vote showed more than 80 per cent of parents who voted were in favour of the change. School staff and Coalhurst Town Council were also asked for their input on the change. The Board’s approval means students and staff will be done school by 12:15 p.m. on Fridays starting in September 2010. The shortened week will be for a two-year trial basis, at which point there will be another effort to determine whether parents and the community continue to support the change.
- Early Friday dismissal was also the subject of parent votes in all four Coaldale schools and Sunnyside School, north of Lethbridge. These schools share busing so a schedule change at one would require a schedule change for all. The vote showed mixed results with two of the five schools votes showing less than 65 per cent in favour of the change. The Palliser administrative procedure governing changes to the calendar says 65 per cent must be in favour to be considered an affirmative vote. The board passed a motion to ask the school councils at all five schools to hold the vote again to address the high number of spoiled ballots. The trustees expressed concern that there may have been a problem with the voting process to have so many ballots spoiled.
- The board made minor changes to Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent/CEO as a result of discussions with an ASBA consultant who was facilitating the annual evaluation process. The Board also added an appendix to Board Policy 2: Role of the Board to adopt a Performance Assessment Guide for the Board to consider in its own annual self-evaluation.
- The Board decided not to renew its partnership with Erv Fehr who produces the television show “A Public Education.” In light of budget considerations, the Board opted not to commit for a second season. The show highlighted a number of Palliser programs and initiatives in its first season.
- The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held at 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 18, 2010 at Heritage Christian Academy, 2003 McKnight Boulevard NE, Calgary.



Don Zech, Board Chair
Palliser Regional Schools