



# Palliser Regional Schools

**Palliser Centre**

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Staff Members, Municipal Authorities, Media

**FROM:** Kevin Gietz, Superintendent of Schools

**DATE:** June 18, 2008

**RE: BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS – AUGUST 19, 2008**

### **BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF MINUTES**

- a) Book/Article Study** – The Board selected the book entitled *The Baptist Health Care: Journey of Excellence* for their book study for the 2008-09 school year.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- a) ADM Appointment Announcement** – The Board was advised that Michael Walter was recently appointed to the position of Assistant Deputy Minister – Strategic Services Division. Mr. Walter has served in several capacities of leadership with Alberta Education.
- b) Updated Remuneration Schedule Effective September 1, 2008** - As per Board policy, Palliser will adopt the new Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expense Rates effective September 1, 2008.
- c) Provincial Curriculum Implementation Dates** – The provincial implications dates for changes to curricula was recently released and was shared with the Board. Areas of focus for 2008-09 include Kindergarten; K&E courses; Grade 6 language; math at the Kindergarten and Grades 1, 4 And 7 levels; Biology 30; Chemistry 30; Physics 30; and Social Studies 20-1 and 20-2.
- d) UNICEF** – The Board was advised that during the 2007-08 campaign, schools within Palliser raised \$780 for UNICEF, with Sunnyside being the top Palliser fund-raiser at \$474.01.

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- e) **Alberta Education re Lease Funding** – Palliser has been notified of lease funding support for Brant Christian, Menno Simons Christian, Heritage Christian and the LGM program for the 2007-08 school year.
- f) **Note of Appreciation re Innovative Project Funding** – Trustees received a note of appreciation from Noble Central School for the Innovative Project Funding they received during the 2007-08 school year.
- g) **University of Alberta re Student Teacher Placements** – Palliser recently received a letter of appreciation from the U of A for the willingness to support student teachers within Palliser schools, and for the commitment of Palliser teachers in this regard.
- h) **Alberta Schools' Athletic Association re Hosting Provincial Championship** – Trustees reviewed correspondence directed to John Seaman at County Central High School thanking the school for hosting the ASAA 2A Girls Volleyball Provincial Championship during the 2007-08 school year. Mr. Seaman was also commended for assuming the role of Co-Chair of the Provincial Championship Organizational Committee.
- i) **Barons-Eureka-Warner Family & Community Support Services – Commendation re Between Friends Intergenerational Program** – Palliser recently received a commendation from FCSS directed to the staff and students at Coalhurst High School for their positive involvement in the Between Friends Intergenerational Program, which aims to break down barriers between students and senior citizens through a series of visits and engaging activities. Feedback from the seniors and students involved in the program has been very positive.
- j) **Deputy Minister Update June 2008** – Trustees received a copy of the Deputy Minister's Update for June 2008.
- k) **Note of Appreciation – Michael Saad** – As a follow-up to the invitation by the Board to teachers who received special recognition during the 2007-08 school year, the Board received a note of appreciation from Michael Saad for their recognition and support.
- l) **Calgary Herald – Calgary Christian School Agreement** – The Board received a copy of a June 25 new article from the *Calgary Herald* regarding Calgary Christian joining Palliser as an alternative Christian program.
- m) **Kindergarten Program Statement** – Alberta Education has posted a revised *Kindergarten Program Statement*, which now includes an area related to Early Numeracy. In addition, the Rationale and Philosophy of the program statement has been revised to align with the *Guiding Principles for Primary Programs* (Kindergarten to Grade 3) and to include two additional principles applicable to ECS programs. The revised Kindergarten Program Statement has been posted on the Alberta Education website.
- n) **Professional Development Awards for Excellence in Teaching Finalists and Semi-finalists** – In 2007-08, the Excellence in Teaching Awards program was enhanced to include

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financial support for finalists and semi-finalists to access professional development funding. As a finalist in 2008, Myrna Dembicki is eligible to access up to \$4000 to attend an education conference of her choice.

- o) Special Education Program Review** – Trustees received a copy of a news release related to a complete review of special education in Alberta – “Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta.” The intent of the Steering Committee is development of a new special education policy supporting accountability measures and a funding model. An interim report is expected by September 2009, with a final report before September 2010. Initial consultation sessions will begin this October. Trustees also reviewed a special education funding comparison developed by Rocky View School Division indicating the percentage of severe student identified as a subset of total enrolment for jurisdictions across the province. Palliser has identified 232 students as having severe needs in a total system enrolment of 4192 students, or 5.53%, which is higher than the provincial average of 3.72%.
- p) Grade Level of Achievement Update** – Trustees reviewed an e-mail message from the Deputy Minister related to GLA, acknowledging the efforts of school authorities in providing this information to parents. In the spring of 2009, Alberta Education will be reviewing the results of the *Alberta Student Assessment Study*, which will provide additional insight into the merits of reporting GLA in social studies and science.
- q) Letter of Appreciation** – Randy Wittal, Transportation Supervisor, recently received a letter of appreciation from the Raymond Alberta Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for his assistance in organizing transportation for a recent youth activity.
- r) Private School Funding Increase** – Trustees discussed the increase in funding to private schools from 60 to 70% effective the 2008-09 school year. Organizations representing public schools across the province, including ASBA and CASS, will be sending a joint letter to Premier Ed Stelmach expressing their concerns and requesting reconsideration of the decision to increase public funding for private schools. It was noted that any private schools that continue to not meet Alberta Education standards , i.e., not using Alberta Education curriculum, and those that do not participate in the government accountability structure will not receive 70% of funding, but will remain at 60%; any schools not meeting accreditation standards do not receive any provincial funding.
- s) Note of Appreciation – Les Greeno** – Mr. Gietz shared with the Board a note of appreciation from Les Greeno for the opportunity to attend the Start Right Program for new administrators.
- t) Village of Champion re Preschool Program at Champion School** – Trustees received a copy from the Village of Champion regarding the new preschool program being implemented at Champion School, and for the support and energy that Palliser has put into the community.

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## 9. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

### A. Administrative Services

- a) **University of Lethbridge Request for Nominations – Honourary Degree Awards** – The U of L Senate is currently seeking nominees for Honourary Degree Awards for 2009. An Honourary Degree is the highest honour the university can bestow upon an individual. Nominations must be submitted by November 1, 2008.
- b) **Letter from Minister of Education re Budget 2008 Teleconference** – Trustees reviewed a letter from the Minister of Education dated June 12, 2008 indicating a participant in an embargoed teleconference prematurely shared budget information before the Minister officially announced the budget. The letter, which was sent to all participants in the call, was a reminder to all boards that the sharing of budget details with boards prior to the public release is a courtesy, and in turn, there is a level of confidentiality expected.
- c) **Updated Financial Reporting Profile for Palliser to August 31, 2007** – Mr. Marston reviewed an updated financial reporting profile provided by Alberta Education for the years 2002-03 to 2006-07.
- d) **Vulcan Prairieview Elementary School Review Final Report – June 2008** – Dr. Garry Andrews, who chaired the review of Vulcan Prairieview Elementary School, joined the meeting to highlight key points identified in the review report. He noted that school administration will use the report's findings to formulate the next 3-year school plan. Despite recent years of leadership/personnel uncertainty, the quality of education is perceived by all stakeholders is perceived to be very high.
- e) **Alberta Children and Youth Services – Funding for Teens Helping Teens Peer Mentorship Program** –Palliser has been notified that the Teens Helping Teens Peer Mentorship Program will receive grant funding in the amount of \$20,570 through the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Incentive Fund.
- f) **Participation in CSA Research Project – Kate Andrews High School** – Beginning in 2008-09, Kate Andrews High School will be involved with the Canadian Space Agency Research Project – the same project that R.I. Baker Middle School has participated in for the past couple years.
- g) **Alberta Education re Approval of Outreach Programs** –Palliser was advised June 25, 2008 through a public news release that the Picture Butte Outreach School was approved as presented. This program will begin operation this fall in a storefront location.
- h) **Building Communities through Local Government Resource for Teachers** – Alberta Municipal Affairs has developed the "Building Communities Through Local Government" resource for teachers in an effort to further the connection between students and their communities. Every school in Alberta with Grade 6 social studies will receive a copy of this resource.

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- i) **Meeting with Minister of Education** – Mr. Gietz and Mr. Zech report on their meeting with the Minister of Education in Medicine Hat on June 18.
- j) **Rural Alberta Development Fund Announces Four New Alberta Projects** – Mr. Gietz presented two media releases regarding the recent funding announcement issued by Rural Alberta's Development Fund. This fund will support four new rural Alberta Projects directed at improving the quality of life for rural Albertans. The Vulcan Business Development Society will receive \$1.448 million dollars over the next 3 years to fund their project: Sustaining Rural Development through Technology. This project will be a partnership between several local organizations, including Palliser Regional Schools, the Vulcan community and Lethbridge College.
- k) **Barons Historical Society – Request for Letter of Support** – Mr. Zech presented a request from the Barons Historical Society for support by the Board of Trustees with regard to their application to have the Barons School named as a provincial historical site. There is some uncertainty whether an operating school can be designated an historical site. Administration will explore with Alberta Infrastructure the possibility and implications of establishing Barons School as an historical site.
- n) **Siksika First Nation Negotiations** – Mr. Marston provided a brief update regarding the status of negotiations with Siksika First Nations related to a new tuition agreement.
- o) **School Opening Celebration – August 29** – Mr. Gietz provided an update regarding the agenda for the School Opening Celebration on August 29 in Vulcan. He noted that the majority of staff from two of the new Calgary schools will not be in attendance, as their school calendars for this year have students in attendance that day. Of particular note is the induction of the 2008 Palliser Wall of Fame
- p) **Board Year Plan 2008-09** – Trustees received a draft of the Board Year Plan for 2008-09 for trustee review and feedback.
- q) **Picture Butte High School Modernization** – Mr. Marston presented three concept drawings for consideration of the Board. Due to the current level of deterioration, the 1948 and 1952 sections of the school will be demolished. One additional classroom has been added for the ACHIEVE program; however, a rationale has been developed to request additional space for this program. Boyd Nummi, currently a member of the Picture Butte Town Council, will Chair the PBHS Steering Committee. Consensus of the Board was to support the Steering Committee's recommendation for Concept 1. The architect will now proceed to schematic drawings.

## B. Instructional Services

- a) **Attendance of Delegation from County Central High School to National Leadership Conference** – Mr. Gietz reported that following the June Board meeting, it was determined that individual students who have attended national conferences in the past have been supported by the Board with a \$200 donation; therefore, the same donation will be provided to the delegation of four students and one teacher who will

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represent County Central High School at the National Leadership Conference being held in PEI this fall.

- b) Staffing Update** –Mr. Garinger confirmed that teacher staffing for the 2008-09 school year is nearly complete. Additional hirings for counselors and learning assistants will take place over the next couple of weeks.
- c) Innovative Classrooms Technology Funding – Palliser Allocation** – In Budget 2008, the Alberta government committed \$18.5 million in new funding in each of the next 3 years to support integration of technology into Alberta classrooms; Palliser's allocation for the next 3 years is \$442,224 (\$147,408 per year for 3 years). The Technology Advisory Committee will consider appropriate use of the funding to meet the needs within Palliser.
- d) New Teacher Orientation/Mentorship Program** – Mr. Gietz provided information regarding the format of the New Teacher Orientation/Mentorship Program for the 2008-09 school year. Hopefully, this program will ensure that first-year teachers are successful and stay in the teaching profession, and it is a powerful incentive to draw new teachers to the system. In addition, Mr. Gietz noted a mentorship program is being developed for first-year school administrators as well.
- e) Back-to-School Information** – In lieu of the previous practice of publishing a full-page ad in the *Sunny South News* and *Vulcan Advocate* advertising back-to-school information, this year a booklet highlighting system information, as well as specific information related to each school, will be an insert in each of the two newspapers, which have wide circulation with the Palliser system. Copies of the booklets were provided to the Board. In addition, the two-page flyers specific to each site will be provided to schools to distribute within their communities as well.
- f) Palliser Leadership Team Retreat** – Mr. Gietz reported on the Palliser Leadership Team Retreat held August 13-14. At that time, the team reviewed the Palliser core values, and analyzed the Fernie retreat summary, the organizational review final report and the 3-year education plan. It was a great opportunity to get everyone on the same page, as well as providing an opportunity to develop relationships within the team as many of the members assume new roles. The retreat also offered an opportunity for units to break out and meet as smaller groups and develop priorities for the 2008-09 school year. The group will meet regularly throughout the year to continue this process.

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