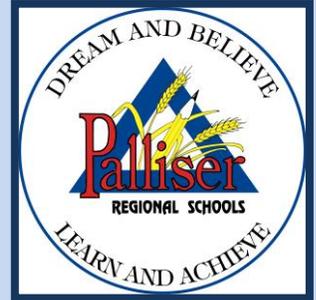


From the Chair ...

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting held Wednesday, November 19, 2008



- Trustees and administration visited a class of Grade 7 students engaged in a lesson using one-to-one laptop computers, and they had a chance to individually interact with the students regarding the lesson they were working on and glean their perceptions related to the one-to-one project.
- Michael Shain, Principal of Vulcan Prairieview Elementary School, presented to the Board a comprehensive action plan developed collaboratively with the VPES staff following the school review which took place during the 2007-08 school year.
- Ron DeMaere, Principal of Coalhurst High School, shared with the Board his action plan resulting from the review which took place at CHS during the previous school year. Input from staff and student was considered in development of the plan.
- On November 12, southern Alberta school jurisdictions received the Minister's Excellence in Leadership Recognition Awards at the ASBA Zone 6 meeting. Palliser received recognition for improvement in 19 of 20 possible areas. Following the presentations, the Minister met with superintendents and board chairs to discuss common concerns and issues.
- The Western Communities Foundation has offered to provide automated external defibrillators to interested schools free of charge, including training for staff on how to use the device. The Board approved the placement of AED's in interested schools in Palliser.
- The Board approved changes to Board Policy #7 (Board Operations) to reflect changes to the Board agenda format.
- The Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Board Audit Committee and directed administration to draft Board Policy #21 (Board Fiscal Oversight) based on these terms.
- The Board approved providing funding from Board priority funds to cover the cost of transporting students from across the division to the band workshop at Glenmore Christian Academy on December 9, 2008.
- Trustees were advised that trustee Colleen Deitz was recently elected Chair of ASBA Zone 6, the zone covering school jurisdictions in southern Alberta.
- The Board approved, in principle, an amended draft school calendar for the 2009-10 school year, which will be distributed to school staffs, school councils and ATA Local #19 or feedback.
- The Board will tour several Palliser schools on November 25 (Barons School/Glenmore Christian Academy/Menno Simons Christian School/Brant Christian School) and December 8 (Heritage Christian Academy/Master's Academy & College/Calgary Christian School). Another group of schools will be selected for tours by the Board during 2009-10.

- The Board approved the tender submitted by Reive Plumbing & Heating for remediation of the drainage issue at Coalhurst High School of \$42,795 plus GST. It was noted that MPE Engineering will be cost sharing the project with Palliser.
- The Picture Butte High School Modernization Design Team will meet on November 27, and the Steering Committee will meet next on December 17. The project is on schedule, and schematic designs are available on the PBHS website.
- The Board supported the signing of a “Letter of Intent – Amendment to Extend” which confirms their intent to continue as a member of the Alberta Schools for Sustainable Energy consortium during the time of negotiation of a new agreement.
- The Board approved an addendum to the 2007-12 ATA Collective Agreement to reflect salary increases effective September 1, 2008.
- Palliser is below government class size guidelines in all core subject areas.
- The Board discussed the possibility of changes to the Transition to Retirement Program. The Board will discuss this issue further at the December 16 regular meeting.
- Palliser is currently in the process of hiring the Maintenance Helper, Transportation Secretary, Human Resources Assistant, and OH&S Coordinator.
- Further to recently being advised that some universities do not require student teachers to provide a criminal record check before they are placed in classrooms, Palliser will be instituting a policy requiring that all practicum students have a CRC in place before entering a Palliser classroom.
- Administration will be presenting to the Board at their December 16 meeting proposed changes to Board Policy #16 (Recruitment & Selection of Staff) to require new employees to provide proof of having applied for a Criminal Record Check (CRC) prior to receiving a contract of employment, and secondly, that they provide a Criminal Record Check by no later than one month after their employment start date. Board policy already requires that current staff advise the Superintendent if there is any change in their criminal record status.
- Palliser will provide release time for a limited number of teachers to attend the provincial consultation on “Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta.” As space is limited for these sessions, a jurisdiction process has been developed to obtain feedback from certificated and non-certificated personnel supporting students with special education needs, including discussions with teachers through their staff meetings, school administrators, consulting teachers and learning assistant staff groups.
- The Boys and Girls Club of Lethbridge has provided notice that it can no longer sustain and deliver a quality child care program at Jennie Emery Elementary School in Coaldale. Options for continuing the before- and after-school program are being researched, including the possibility that Palliser operate the program utilizing grant and parent funding.
- The Board reviewed proposals for Innovative Project Funding from almost every school, and in some cases, several teachers of a school submitted proposals. In a number of instances, teachers have collaborated to propose purchase of more costly resources. The Board approved priority funding to a maximum of \$69,000 to support innovative projects.
- Plans are already underway to have Palliser students, particularly Grades 10-12 students, participate in the WorldSkills 2009 competition in Calgary September 1-7, 2009. The deadline for transportation grants is November 30, 2008.

Don Zech, Board Chair
Palliser Regional Schools