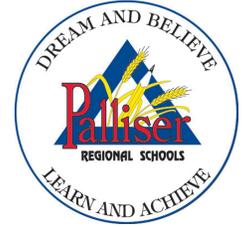


Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

November 12, 2013



Trustees tip their hats to schools for excellent Remembrance Day events

During the roundtable portion of the agenda, trustees shared some of the activities they've participated in since the last meeting. Several trustees spoke about the excellent Remembrance Day services conducted in schools. Trustee Joan Boras described the service at Picture Butte High School, for students from PBHS, Dorothy Dalglish School and Huntsville School, as "exceptionally well done." Vice-Chair Don Zech said the Coalhurst High School Remembrance Day ceremony featured former student Jeremy Leblanc, who was decorated with the Medal of Military Valour for his actions in Afghanistan in October 2006.



In other activity, Trustee Debbie Laturus attended the R.I. Baker Middle School Grade 6 election where 16 students were campaigning to be Mayor for the Day. Laturus said key issues raised by the candidates were the need for a year-round pool in Coaldale, improvements to the skate park and better food at the school canteen. With speeches occurring Nov. 4, just days after Halloween, several candidates were giving away candy in exchange for voter support.

Trustees discuss support for providing their own criminal record checks

Palliser's trustees discussed the division's procedures which require new employees and substitute teachers and support staff to provide a current criminal record check. In keeping with this practice, trustees voted unanimously to provide their own criminal record checks to Palliser.

Outreach proposal to be resubmitted

Palliser Regional Schools will resubmit its proposal for a new outreach school in Calgary. The Board of Trustees voted in favour of pursuing this

proposal in January 2013 to meet the needs of Palliser's students in Calgary who require something other than a traditional high school program. Superintendent Kevin Gietz said for Palliser's families in Calgary, who choose to attend faith-based programs not available through the Calgary Board of Education or Calgary Catholic School District, the only outreach option is to attend a Catholic program or a completely secular one.

Palliser's proposal was turned down by Alberta Education in April, but recently Education Minister Jeff Johnson suggested the Board could resubmit its proposal directly to his office for review.

Trinity Christian principal commends power of school review process

Principal Stan Hielema of Trinity Christian School in Calgary was welcomed to the meeting to present his response to the school review conducted in February 2013. The school in South Calgary joined Palliser for the 2012-2013 school year.

Hielema, who has worked at Trinity for 18 years, described the school review as "an incredibly powerful process," that gave him and his staff an opportunity to learn more about Palliser while at the same time sharing with Palliser's team an understanding of Trinity.

Hielema was invited to be part of a review team visiting Sunnyside School just after Trinity joined Palliser, which helped him become familiar with the process. A few months later it was Trinity's turn, and about 14 people from Central Office and other Palliser schools visited Trinity, interviewing students, staff and meeting with parents.

"It was a real time of encouragement for our staff," Hielema said. "It was an affirmation of our partnership with Palliser. . . For many in our school community, they got to know the heart of what Palliser is about."

He said it was particularly powerful at the end of the



Principal Stan Hielema

*Together we will ensure learning success for all students
to develop their unique potential as caring citizens in a changing world.*

day, when the members of the review team gathered to share the positives they observed while at the school. Hielema said it was tremendous to hear people who were new to the school describe the essence of Trinity's values and strengths.

The review revealed a number of areas of strength, including its infusion of the Christian faith in all aspects of school life, its high expectations for all students, and its safe and caring environment.

Based on data collected through the review, staff have made a number of changes, including introducing Athletics, online games that give students around the globe opportunity to compete against one another as a way to increase student engagement in math; Grade 1-2 student participation in establishing classroom rules; improved wireless connectivity and a one-to-one Chromebook program for junior high students; and creation of clubs offering non-athletic activities at the school which already has high participation in sports.

Prior to joining Palliser, Trinity Christian School operated as a private school, with no requirement for a school council. The school always had a very strong parent action committee, and it started a school council last year. This year, parents are investigating how to bring the committee and the council together, Hielema said.

To promote literacy, the school is rotating books on the shelves of the small library and building up the collection of books for junior high students.

Hielema said his teachers "love" the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment tools Palliser has adopted divisionwide for assessing students' reading skills. "It's the best tool they have used to have a comprehensive view of the literacy skills of students," he said.

He said he also appreciates Palliser's approach to school goals, which are owned by school staff and families, rather than an administrative task required by Alberta Education.

"They talk about our goals," he said. "There's beautiful accountability there.

"There's just too much good going on. The collaboration piece has been so good. As a private school, I was an island unto my own. Now, once a month I get to meet with principals from all over Palliser. It's rejuvenated who I am as a principal."

The Board thanked Hielema for his presentation and his positive embrace of Palliser Regional Schools.

Board approves extension of Siksika tuition agreement

The Board passed a motion in support of signing a one-year interim agreement with Siksika Board of Education, based on the terms of the existing three-year agreement

between Palliser and the First Nation.

Palliser and Siksika successfully negotiated a three-year agreement for 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 with a signing ceremony in March 2012. That agreement was the first between the two organizations. The original agreement setting out terms for students from Siksika to attend what's now known as Palliser Regional Schools was signed by the County of Vulcan and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1971.

Prior to the June flood, Palliser had 47 students from Siksika attending school at Arrowwood and Milo. Damage to a bridge linking the First Nation to Arrowwood and the relocation of many families on Siksika due to flooding has reduced that enrolment number this year.

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard said work continues to access additional supports for Siksika students affected by the flood.

Attendance Board hearings lead to positive results

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard updated the Board on progress of three students from Palliser who were referred to the Attendance Board last year after letters and calls home from the principal failed to improve attendance at school.

Two of the three students were from the same family and their attendance at school has improved since last spring.

A third student was referred to the attendance board in Spring 2013. The student's attendance was just 38 per cent prior to the board hearing, and rose to 80 per cent by the end of the school year. So far this year, his attendance is nearly 70 per cent and his marks are in the 75 to 89 per cent range.

The Attendance Board has the same power as the Court of Queen's Bench to summon witnesses and obtain information and records and it may direct a student to attend school or take an education program, or fine parents for failing to get their child to school.

Locally developed courses approved

The Board approved an application for permission to offer two locally developed courses from Rocky View School District. The Advanced Placement English courses are available in three- and five-credit courses for Grade 12 students.

Next meetings

The Board will hold a special meeting at 1 p.m., Nov. 26 at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge to discuss annual audit, budget update and combined Annual Education Results Report and Three-Year Education Plan. The next regular meeting will be at 9 a.m., Dec. 10 at Palliser Centre.