

# Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

April 25, 2014



## Board approves deficit budget and first fee increase in at least 16 years

The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools convened a special meeting April 25, 2014 to review 2014-15 budget information and other emergent issues.

The Board approved a budget projecting a deficit of \$1.575 million, reflecting a reduction of enrolment related to the loss of Glenmore Christian Academy, per student grants that are not increasing with inflation, and rising fuel costs, among other factors.

Glenmore Christian Academy, a faith-based school in southwest Calgary, will revert to private school status for the 2014-15 school year, reducing Palliser enrolment by about 640 students. The school had been part of Palliser since 2008-09.

The Board also approved the first increase in school fees in more than 16 years. The textbook rental fee for every student Grades 7-9 will increase to \$59 next year, up from \$49. The fee for each student Grade 10-12 increases to \$69 from \$59. The Board will continue to waive collection of the \$39 fee for students in Grades 1-6. The fee for elementary students is not collected from families, but an equivalent amount is provided to schools out of Palliser's operating revenue. Those fees have been waived

since the crisis in the livestock industry in 2003 devastated the southern Alberta economy.

The Board also increased the student technology fee to \$35 from \$25.

In the technology services area, Palliser is investigating potential cost savings from joining other school divisions in purchasing digital media and textbooks, as well as switching to a Government of Alberta cell phone plan.

Board Chair Colleen Deitz said submitting a deficit budget is an unusual step for a school division. The Board and administration have lobbied Alberta Education for transitional funding in light of the loss of one of its schools, but so far, they have been unsuccessful.

The Board plans to submit a letter to the Education Minister with the budget to explain its rationale for deficit budgeting.

School boards have until May 30, 2014 to submit preliminary budgets for the 2014-15 school year.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled to start at 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 13, 2014 at Calgary Christian Secondary School.