

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting



October 19, 2015

Meetings shuffled to accommodate other trustee obligations

Palliser's Board of Trustees held an unusual Monday meeting Oct. 19, rescheduling from the normal Tuesday slot so trustees could attend to other commitments. Absent from this meeting was Trustee Don Zech.

The next regular meeting of the board was also rescheduled from the Tuesday slot to Wednesday, Nov. 25.

The change was made to ensure trustees on Palliser's Joint C2 committee may participate in a provincial meeting of Joint C2 committees. The committees are named for Clause 2 of the provincial framework agreement between boards and Alberta Teachers' Association locals. Committees of division and teacher representatives review and make recommendations regarding teacher workload and efficacy.

Board acts on recommendation from A Community Conversation

The Board of Trustees will invite school council chairs from across the division to attend a gathering of school councils Nov. 23. The meeting stems from comments made at a division-wide stakeholder meeting held in May and attended by about 200 students, parents, staff and other stakeholders.

The gathering of school councils was recommended by the board's communications committee which reviewed the report from the stakeholder meeting, called A Community Conversation 2015. The Nov. 23 gathering will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at three sites: Palliser's Central Office in Lethbridge; County Central High School in Vulcan; and Trinity Christian School in Calgary. The three sites will be connected by videoconference.

Stakeholders had expressed an interest in more regular opportunities to share best practices and success stories from school to school. More information about the Nov. 23 meeting will be shared with schools at a later date.

Latest Accountability Pillar shows sustained strong academic results

Superintendent Kevin Gietz reviewed the latest Accountability Pillar released recently by Alberta

Education. The pillar reflects division-wide results on the 2014-2015 provincial achievement tests and diploma exams, as well as surveys of students, staff and parents conducted last winter.

Gietz said Palliser continues to maintain very high results across the board. He said administrators would be paying particular attention to diploma exam results. The latest results show 18.9 per cent of Palliser students are achieving the standard of excellence, compared to 21 per cent provincially. It's the only category in which Palliser trails the province.

Palliser's diploma exam participation rate is strong and other academic achievement rates remain exceptionally high.

The October 2015 Accountability Pillar is online [here](#).

Four board policies updated

The board voted to update four of its policies after circulating drafts to the Administrators' Association and Alberta Teachers' Association Local 19 and providing opportunity for their input. The new policies are Board Policy 5 (Role of the Board Chair) to add to the chair's responsibilities ensuring the "positive path forward" is actioned through the year; Board Policy 12 (Role of the Superintendent/CEO) to update the timelines for evaluations; Board Policy 16 (Recruitment of Staff) to change Corporate Secretary to Secretary-Treasurer; and Board Policy 22 (Alternative Programs) to refer to faith-based programs rather than Christian programs.

All policies can be viewed online at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/about-us/policies>.

School name changes approved

The board voted to change the name of Milo School to Milo Community School, the new name reflecting the importance of the community and its support to the school and updating official records with common usage. The school has often been referred to as Milo Community School since the 1980s but that change was never formalized by motion or updated in Alberta Education records.

The board also passed motions to change the names of the two campuses of Calgary Islamic School. Currently,

in Alberta Education's School Authority Data Systems, the Calgary Islamic School Omar Bin Al-Khattab campus is known as the Franklin Campus and the CIS Akram Jomaa campus is known as Calgary Islamic Private School.

Board Chair has first opportunity to meet Minister of Education

Board Chair Colleen Deitz and Superintendent Kevin Gietz had their first opportunity to meet Education Minister David Eggen. With counterparts from other southern Alberta school boards, Deitz and Gietz met with the minister in Calgary Oct. 13. Each board was given seven minutes to share information about their jurisdictions. Palliser's presentation included the development of Palliser Beyond Borders, which offers online and international student programs, literacy and the Low German-speaking Mennonite programs. Deitz said lease funding for Palliser's alternative programs in Calgary, negotiations with First Nations and accountability systems were also discussed. The minister has now met with almost every board in the province.

Board suggests new master agreement for Master's Academy and College

Palliser's board passed a motion seeking a reopening of its master agreement with the Master's Education Society. The resolution was passed following a mediation process between the Palliser board and society. The board wants a new agreement that clearly identifies roles and responsibilities and aligns with board policy and legislative requirements. The board will ask the Master's society to respond to this request before the next Palliser board meeting scheduled for Nov. 25. The agreement between Master's Education Society and Palliser was originally signed in 2008 when Master's Academy and College, formerly a private school, joined Palliser as an alternative program.

School key to Village of Milo development plans, says mayor

The Board of Trustees welcomed Village of Milo Mayor Raphael Zea and administrator Christopher Norcutt to the meeting to discuss Milo's economic development plans.

Mayor Zea said the village is working to make the community more attractive to young families, and the Milo Community School is critical to this effort. Playground improvements are part of the plan and a new subdivision is being developed.

"The school is an extremely important part of our community," the mayor said. "It is our biggest employer. . . We appreciate the help and support of the school."

Northcutt said Milo has 20 lots serviced and available for development now. The community is just over an hour's drive from Calgary and is near the 37-kilometre long Lake McGregor.

"We think this is something we can leverage," he said.

The village, agricultural society and Palliser Regional Schools have a strong partnership, an example of which is the creation of a business centre in the school. The space has a board room, private office, computer work stations and internet access, giving professionals a usable space for meeting with clients. The space has a separate entrance, its own kitchen and washroom facilities. Users of the business centre don't have access to the rest of the school. Not far from the school, the village has an arena and fitness centre. Milo also has a grocery store, bank, hotel, hair salon, library and curling club.

The school is in the process of developing an International Baccalaureate program for elementary students, an effort that was initiated by the community.

The board thanked Milo for its presentation and expressed willingness to contribute information to the Village for use in its marketing efforts.

International program sees first student earn credit online from Hong Kong

Associate Superintendent Education Services Pat Rivard provided the first annual accountability report on the international student program.

Palliser started its international student program less than two years ago and now has 11 full-year and 10 half-year students enrolled attending nine schools across the division.

This summer, one international student completed courses online through Palliser Beyond Borders while in Hong Kong. Palliser is currently working to combine both its online school and international student program under the Palliser Beyond Borders brand, to give students opportunity to learn online with Palliser before attending school here in person.

In other highlights, a student from Heritage Christian Academy was selected to attend a summer camp in China; Kate Andrews High School in Coaldale and Kaifeng Qiushi Middle School in China have signed a five-year student exchange agreement; and the division has reached a student exchange agreement with 19th High School of Qingdao.

Division staff training others in threat risk assessment and intervention

Palliser continues its focus on school safety and identifying risky or troublesome behaviour before it can escalate. Associate Superintendent Education Services Pat

Rivard and Director of Learning Laurie Wilson led Violent Threat Risk Assessment Level 1 training for new principals, counsellors and other staff in Calgary this fall. Rivard said some staff from Calgary Board of Education also attended. Fourteen Palliser staff also attended VTRA Level 2 training, offered by Kevin Cameron, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response.

Board commits seed money for centre to help young victims of abuse

The Palliser Board of Trustees is committed to providing services and support to children and youth who have suffered sexual or physical abuse and is willing to provide start-up money for the effort.

The board approved up to \$90,000 of its 2015-2016 budget if needed to help create an integrated service centre for young victims of abuse and their families, modelled on the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary. The centre brings together law enforcement, human and health services as a one-stop shop for children and youth and their families. Palliser has been working with other school boards and agencies across southern Alberta to encourage creation of the service centre.

Two Palliser schools set to lose lease funding while others never got any

Despite ongoing lobbying efforts by the board and administration of Palliser Regional Schools, lease funding from Alberta Education will cease to two schools in Calgary in 2016-2017.

Heritage Christian Academy will receive \$213,600 this year and Menno Simons Christian School will receive \$84,450, half of the support they received in 2014-2015.

For years, Palliser has lobbied for its other Calgary schools to receive lease support to provide both fairness and address the fact the privately owned buildings are providing educational space for thousands of students at no capital cost to the province. Heritage and Menno have received at least some lease funding since joining Palliser, but no other Calgary schools to join the school division since have received any lease support.

Heritage Christian Academy and Menno Simons Christian School no longer meet the new criteria developed for lease support for alternative programs in privately owned facilities.

Only Brant Christian School, located in Vulcan County, will be eligible for lease support according to the province's new criteria. Brant will receive just over \$28,000 in lease support for 2015-2016.

Division to seek joint use agreements

Palliser will pursue the creation of joint use community agreements with its municipal partners to address shared responsibility and use of school and community facilities. The board passed a motion to start the process of creating such agreements with the Town of Coaldale which is making a bid to host the 2018 Alberta Summer Games.

Palliser has a joint use agreement with the Town of Vulcan for the track and the Cultural Recreational Centre, both which are near or attached to County Central High School.

Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun, who oversees the Facility Services department, will work with municipal partners to develop joint use agreements.

Board commends Palliser's Facility Services staff

Palliser Regional Schools is fortunate to have a committed team of highly skilled Facility Services staff ensuring its schools are safe, efficient, clean learning environments.

Facility Services Supervisor Darren Stocker credited his team for their work around the clock as needed when the unpredictable happens in a Palliser-owned facility. Chair Colleen Deitz said she's received positive comments from the public about the upkeep of schools and she commended Stocker and the Facility Services staff.

The commendations came at the end of Stocker's presentation of the department's annual accountability report. Major Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal projects included replacement of the 80-year-old boiler in Barons School, boiler system replacement in John Davidson School, and roof replacement at Sunnyside School.

Stocker said Occupational Health and Safety reviews of all Palliser-owned facilities were completed and all schools are OH and S compliant. Palliser's OH and S co-ordinator also conducted safety reviews of the division's colony schools.

The division is using Public School Works, an online training and tracking system, to promote workplace safety. The system tracks fire and lockdown drills and sends caretakers reminders to complete key tasks, such as checks of fire extinguishers and exit lighting. This fall, a training video created by Palliser was added to the online system and other training opportunities are also being considered.

Work has also begun and will continue on the Noble Central School modernization project.

Palliser will apply for two modulars

Palliser will apply to Alberta Education for two modular classrooms, following up on an unsuccessful request last year. If approved, one modular would be installed at Barons School, the other at Coalhurst Elementary School.