

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

April 19, 2016



Partnership in Milo earns recognition

A unique partnership between the Milo and District Agricultural Society Sustainability Committee and Palliser Regional Schools has been recognized with an award.

Board Chair Colleen Deitz, trustee for the Milo area, said the Milo Business Centre project came in second for an award from SouthGrow Regional Initiative, an economic development alliance of communities in southern Alberta. The recognition was in the Collaboration/Partnership category.

The sustainability committee and Palliser worked together to create a business centre out of unused space in the Milo Community School. The business centre has high-speed Internet, a computer workstation and other office equipment, and a meeting room, as well as secure, separate entry from the space used by students.

Kudos to staff and students

Trustees expressed appreciation to Palliser staff and students on a variety of fronts.

Vice-Chair Robert Strauss commended teachers Lee Porath and Brian Rodgers and students at County Central High School in Vulcan for their presentation of "Murder's in the Heir" Dessert Theatre. Strauss said the audience members voted on who they thought the murderer was and then students restructured the ending of the play based on the poll results.

Trustee Don Zech congratulated Palliser staff and student representatives from Picture Butte High School, Heritage Christian Academy, Calgary Christian Secondary and County Central High for their presentations at the National Congress on Rural Education in Saskatoon. He said others attending the conference shared how impressed they were with the student presentation about Palliser's Discover U student leadership conference.

Trustee Esther Willms, who also attended the National Congress, agreed students and staff did an amazing job, and the conference overall was excellent. She also expressed appreciation to R.I. Baker Middle School Vice-Principal Lindsey Hagen, whose Grade 6 students made a grant application as a writing exercise. The result was a grant from the Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta to make improvements at the Town

of Coaldale dog park.

"Lindsey did an amazing job with their Grade 6 class and the kids really see the power of words," Willms said.

Trustee Craig Whitehead offered congratulations to organizers of the 2A Girls Basketball Provincials held at Picture Butte High School. The tournament was well run and the PBHS girls won the title.

Individual school calendars approved in principle for 2016-2017

The board passed a motion approving in principle individual school calendars for 2016-2017. Associate Superintendent Education Services Pat Rivard said each calendar is being reviewed to ensure appropriate lunch and recess breaks and adherence to division start and end dates. Central Office staff are working with individual principals to address any adjustments that may be needed.

According to the division calendar for 2016-2017, the first day for students will be Tuesday, Sept. 6, 2016, the last day before summer break will be Wednesday, June 28 and Christmas break will see the last day of classes on Thursday Dec. 22, with a return Monday, Jan. 9. For a copy of the division calendar, click [here](#). Professional development days and spring break may vary from school to school.

Work continues toward Palliser move to new system for student records

Three days of training were held in mid-April for Palliser staff as the division prepares to switch to a new student information system called PowerSchool.

Associate Superintendent Human Resources Ken Garinger thanked Director of Learning Tom Hamer and the Technology Services team, Co-ordinator of Corporate Services Joanne Siljak and Student Information Services Clerk Sherryl Loman for their work spearheading the transition to a new service. He also commended school administrators, administrative assistants and teachers for attending the training sessions. The new system will go live in May with full implementation in September for the 2016-2017 school year.

The move to PowerSchool was necessitated by a decision by the current provider to stop working toward compliance with the Alberta Government's Provincial

Approach to Student Information (PASI).

International travel will be re-examined

The board will revisit the question of student travel to Europe and has directed Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun to investigate the cost of cancellation decision.

In December 2015, the board passed a motion to cancel scheduled trips to Europe for the 2015-2016 school year, based on advice from the school division's insurer. With requests from schools now coming in for student travel in 2016-2017, the board is reviewing options to ensure student safety and save parents and guardians money should a trip have to be cancelled based on a sudden change in security conditions.

The December motion included a provision that trips to non-European destinations be monitored by administration using federal travel advisories.

Braun was asked to report back in May on the cost of cancellation insurance. Meanwhile, the superintendent is encouraging schools planning next year's trips outside Canada to have a back-up plan in the event of a security issue.

Co-ordinator hired to get South Region Child Advocacy Centre up and running

A co-ordinator has been hired for a new child advocacy centre to support young victims of abuse.

Palliser Associate Superintendent Education Services Pat Rivard, who co-chairs the centre steering committee, said David Slomp brings more than 20 years of policing experience to the role as co-ordinator of the South Region Child Advocacy Centre. The centre is a collaborative venture modelled after the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary. It brings together a variety of organizations, including law enforcement, addictions and mental health services, and other partners to provide seamless and integrated support for children, youth and their families.

A steering committee working on the creation of the new centre, based in Lethbridge, is co-chaired by Lonnie Slezina, Regional Director of South Region, Alberta Human Services.

"I'm very appreciative of the courage this board took in taking the lead on this," Rivard said.

Preliminary look at 2016-17 budget

The provincial budget announcement on April 14 was good for schools, particularly in light of the many financial pressures Alberta is facing, said Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun.

In his report to the board, Braun said the budget provides stability in education by committing to fund

student enrolment growth. Across the province, public, separate and charter schools are expected to share \$6.9 billion in operating support in 2016-2017, an increase of about 3.1 per cent. This increase covers enrolment growth for 2015-2016 and seven months of 2016-2017 and the ongoing impact of the two per cent salary increase teachers received in September 2015.

Capital investment province-wide is another \$1.8 billion. Palliser has one school project on a list of unfunded capital projects. Huntsville School in Iron Springs made the list of projects that met priority criteria and could be included in future capital plans. There is a value management meeting scheduled in May to look at Huntsville School to determine the best course for improving its value to the community, Braun said.

The budget's implications on Palliser based on preliminary estimates include:

- All grants, other than Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal (IMR), have been frozen at 2015-2016 rates.
- The per student and facility space components of the grant formula for Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal are increased, and funding is expected to be \$1.7 million in Palliser next year, up from \$1.1 million this year. That reflects both an increase in the grant and in student enrolment in Palliser. This funding is used for building upkeep, including boiler, roof, window or floor replacements.
- Inclusive education funding will rise slightly to about \$5.1 million for Palliser, based on Palliser enrolment and student demographic factors.
- Plant operations and maintenance funding next year should be about \$7.1 million, up slightly from this year based on enrolment. This covers insurance, utilities, caretaking and light maintenance.
- Transportation funding to Palliser is expected to total \$3.6 million next year, about the same as this year.
- The province is maintaining class-size funding for kindergarten through Grade 3. This grant amounts to about \$3.5 million in Palliser.

Braun said cost pressures in Palliser will include:

- The budget will fund student enrolment growth. However, Palliser is projecting a decrease of 0.4 per cent enrolment, or 35 students. That represents a budget decline of about \$300,000.
- The budget does not include funding to cover salary increases to teachers whose salaries rise as they gain more experience. This will be a \$700,000 expense.
- Inflation estimated at one per cent on non-salary

expenses is not funded. This has an estimated impact of \$100,000.

- There is no budget for any salary increases next year.
- The carbon tax impact on Palliser is about \$20,000 in 2016-2017, climbing to about \$40,000 in 2017-2018 on fuel for buses and vehicles alone. An additional impact on heating and electricity expenses has yet to be calculated.
- Technology evergreening in our schools will require an additional annual investment of about \$400,000 to replace technology purchased several years ago with a one-time provincial grant.

These shortfalls total \$1.5 million, or nearly two per cent of Palliser's \$93-million budget.

Palliser has until June 30 to submit next year's budget to Alberta Education.

Braun said he would be completing budget discussion meetings with all school administrators and all departments soon. The board plans to hold a meeting of the committee of the whole to discuss budget implications in greater detail May 9.

Request for improving field at KAHS deferred to budget deliberations

The board deferred a request to contribute cash to improvements to the Kate Andrews High School track and field to budget discussions in May.

The Town of Coaldale requested board assistance in upgrading the outdoor facilities at the Coaldale high school in preparation for the 2018 Southern Alberta Summer Games. The total cost would be \$400,000, and the town asked for \$100,000 toward that. The money would come from Palliser's capital reserves.

Palliser continues long fight for lease funding for Calgary schools

Palliser continues to lobby the province for lease funding for its Calgary schools.

School jurisdictions have a deadline of April 30th to submit their lease requests, and Palliser will continue

to ask for support for its alternative program schools in Calgary, said Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun.

A new policy adopted by the province in 2014 makes Palliser's schools in Calgary ineligible for lease support. In 2016-2017, Brant Christian School, located within Vulcan County, will be the only faith-based alternative program receiving lease funding. Menno Simons Christian School and Heritage Christian School, which had received lease funding since joining Palliser in 2006-2007, will no longer receive the funding, and none of the other faith-based programs in Calgary ever received any lease support.

Palliser trustees and administration have unsuccessfully lobbied the province for years seeking fairness in lease funding.

Alberta Ed to require monthly financial reports starting in spring 2017

Alberta Education is changing its financial reporting requirements of school boards from quarterly to monthly reports.

Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun said boards already report quarterly, but will be required to do so monthly starting in April 2017.

Braun said he expects it will take a day a month to complete the reporting templates for submission, a task that will be accomplished with existing staff.

Proposal to rejoin "A Public Education" deferred to budget deliberations

The board received a proposal to return as a partner in the "A Public Education" television series, joining neighbouring jurisdictions of Lethbridge School District 51 and Holy Spirit, as well as Alberta Teachers' Association Palliser Local 19.

Palliser had been a partner in earlier seasons. The show airs on CTV2 Alberta and Shaw TV Lethbridge and episodes can also be viewed online. The cost to be a partner in Season 8 is an estimated \$11,000.

The board voted to defer the matter to budget discussions in May.

Next regular meeting of the board: May 24, 2016