

# Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

September 20, 2016



## Board looks ahead to release of organizational review report

With the release of the organizational review of Palliser Regional Schools expected Oct. 31, the board discussed what it expects will be next steps.

Assuming there will be an executive summary provided by the two independent panelists conducting the review, the board passed a motion to publish the summary on the division's website as soon as it's available.

In anticipation of some of the report's recommendations relating to the board and its policies, the board committed to a review of Palliser policies and procedures that includes inviting stakeholders to provide input.

The board's 22 policies can be read online at [://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/about-us/policies](http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/about-us/policies)

Trustee Craig Whitehead said the review of policies will take time to complete, but by giving the public advance notice of the process, stakeholders can better prepare for offering input.

A public meeting with stakeholders is also expected to be scheduled after the review is complete.

Trustees discussed scheduling a special board meeting as soon as the report is available. The board expects to be able to set a special meeting date at its next regular board meeting Oct. 18.

To ensure there's opportunity for discussion of the review report with school council chairs, the board will cancel the suggested Oct. 13 Gathering of School Councils meeting. That date was identified in the spring as an opportunity for school council chairs to engage in workshops provided by the Alberta School Councils' Association. The board now expects to convene a Gathering of School Councils in November, with the review report as the topic.

The review is being conducted independently from the board and Palliser administration, which have not been privy to the review panel's work or findings to this point.

## Change in agenda format planned to give trustees more time for discussion

The board discussed changing the format of its meeting agendas to ensure trustees have more time at meetings to

discuss issues.

Acting Superintendent Dr. Garry Andrews said the format of the agendas was discussed by Central Office staff. Andrews recommended adoption of a consent agenda, that clearly delineates matters requiring action and discussion from items shared for information only.

Items placed on the agenda for information can be moved into the action/discussion section if a trustee feels the item warrants it.

A mock-up of the new format was provided for trustees to review.

The board also discussed how trustees can have an item added to the board agenda.

The agenda format will be further discussed in October with implementation of the new format expected in November.

Board agendas can be viewed online or downloaded in PDF format at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/board-of-trustees/meeting-information>, generally the Friday before the meeting date.

## Grade 7-12 student leadership conference to be held at U of L

Building on the success of last year's Discover U student leadership event for Grade 7-12 students, planning is underway for this year's conference Nov. 10. This year, Palliser will invite students from neighbouring school jurisdictions to attend.

This year's event will be held at the University of Lethbridge and will follow a format similar to last year's. Students will lead breakout sessions on aspects of leadership and there will be time for school teams to identify projects for the betterment of their school or the local or international community.

New this year, an invitation will also be extended to school council chairs to attend this student-led event.

## Board thanks colony teacher for support of new child advocacy centre

The board publicly thanked Hutterite Colony teacher Julie Macklin for her initiative to support the new Southern Alberta Children Advocacy Center. Macklin, a "walking artist," will walk 100 kilometres from County Central High

School in Vulcan to Palliser's Central Office in Lethbridge Sept. 24-25 to raise awareness and funds for the new SACAC and the victims of sexual abuse it will serve across southern Alberta.

Macklin plans to create an art piece based on her experience of the walk which she'll then donate to the new centre.

The Southern Alberta Children Advocacy Center planning committee held a launch event in Lethbridge Sept. 13, with special guest Sheldon Kennedy. The former professional hockey player is now a leading advocate for young victims of abuse. The southern Alberta center will be modelled after the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary, bringing together a range of human services including health, education and law enforcement, to provide a one-stop shop for victims and their families.

At the launch event, Palliser was credited for its leadership in bringing together partner agencies and working with the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre to lay the groundwork for a centre in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

To show support for Macklin and make a \$5 donation to the SACAC, text WALK to 80100. The text to donate option is made available in partnership with Lethbridge Family Services.

The board passed a motion to send a letter of appreciation to Macklin for her initiative.

## **New organizational chart approved**

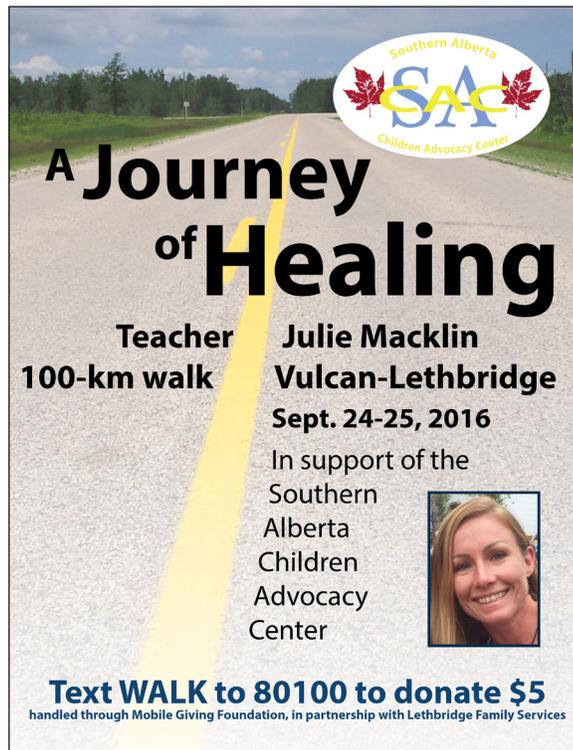
The board reviewed and approved a new organizational chart for 2016-2017, reflecting the addition of director positions and reduction of one associate superintendent position. The chart can be viewed online in [PDF format](#).

## **International student program grows**

Palliser welcomed 21 students from Brazil to four of its high schools this semester, in addition to nine full-year international students attending school in the system.

Associate Superintendent Education Services Pat Rivard said the Brazilian students are here as part of a Brazilian government program that subsidizes their travel.

Palliser continues efforts to grow the international program. This fall, a student recruitment trip to Spain



The poster features a background image of a paved road with a yellow dashed line down the center, receding into the distance under a blue sky with light clouds. At the top right is the logo for the Southern Alberta Children Advocacy Center (SACAC), which includes the text 'Southern Alberta' in a small font, 'SACAC' in large, stylized letters with a red maple leaf on either side, and 'Children Advocacy Center' in a smaller font below. The main title 'A Journey of Healing' is written in a large, bold, black serif font, with 'of' in a smaller font between 'Journey' and 'Healing'. Below the title, the text 'Teacher Julie Macklin' is written in a bold, black sans-serif font. Underneath that, '100-km walk' and 'Vulcan-Lethbridge' are written in the same bold, black sans-serif font. The dates 'Sept. 24-25, 2016' are also in bold, black sans-serif font. To the right of the dates is a small, square portrait photograph of Julie Macklin, a woman with blonde hair, smiling. Below the portrait, the text 'In support of the Southern Alberta Children Advocacy Center' is written in a smaller, black sans-serif font. At the bottom of the poster, the text 'Text WALK to 80100 to donate \$5' is written in a bold, black sans-serif font, with a smaller line of text below it: 'handled through Mobile Giving Foundation, in partnership with Lethbridge Family Services'.

and Germany is planned. In November, Palliser has been invited to be on a panel at a prestigious forum in Shanghai.

The cost of the trips is covered by revenue generated through international fees.

Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun said the international program generated a small surplus in 2015-2016.

## **New Coalhurst bus loop will proceed**

The board received updates on two key construction projects.

The first, a new bus loop at Coalhurst Elementary School, will now be able to proceed following an appeal to the development appeal board.

Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun said the major benefit of the new bus loop will be that school buses will load and unload off the street, improving student safety. Work on the project ceased while the appeal was being heard. Work was expected to resume this week.

The other ongoing project is modernization of Noble Central School. The first phase, modernization of the south wing of the school, is expected to be done Nov. 30, at which point junior and senior high students will be able to move back into classrooms from temporary learning spaces created in the gym. The project is still on target for full completion at the end of July 2017 for the 2017-2018 school year.

Braun said the wet weather this summer presented a challenge to the construction work.

## **Palliser enrolment slightly lower than projected so far this fall**

Enrolment this September is slightly lower than Palliser had projected, with 8,099 students from early childhood services through Grade 12 enrolling so far. That's 53 fewer students than Palliser had projected in its spring budget discussions.

This fall, Palliser's schools have enrolled more early learning and kindergarten students than projected.

Calgary Islamic School enrolments were below projection, but their numbers were expected to rise as students return late from summer vacations. The timing of the Eid celebration in early September also is believed to have contributed to a delayed return by Muslim students.

The economy may be a cause in a decline in enrolment in some Calgary faith-based schools as well.

Braun said it's encouraging to see stable enrolments in Lethbridge County and Vulcan County schools. Bright spots in rural schools include Noble Central and Brant Christian School, which both have higher than projected enrolments.

## **Reviews of Menno Simons and OBK received as information**

The board received as information school review reports on Menno Simons Christian School and Calgary Islamic School Omar Bin Al-Khattab campus.

A review team visited Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary on Jan. 20.

The report commended the Menno Simons school team on its strengths: its caring, nurturing, family-like atmosphere; Christian focus; and supportive teachers offering quality teaching.

Students in Grades 4-6 and 7-9 identified school uniforms as an issue. Parents expressed concern about safety in the parking lot and openness of the foyer. Parents also expressed a need for more rigour in art, music, band and choir, as well as more challenge for gifted students.

Noteworthy in the Menno Simons Christian School review, this was the first time 100 per cent of a school's parent group completed the review survey.

The review team visited Omar Bin Al-Khattab campus on April 14. The school joined Palliser in August 2015.

School strengths include the school's focus on the Islamic faith; strong teacher-student relationships; and safe and caring environment.

Areas of refinement include improvements in play space, school and classroom libraries; better access to

technology at school; and improved communication between the school and families.

The OBK school offers a Tahfeeth program for Grade 6-9 students to learn to recite and memorize the Qur'an.

The executive summaries and full review reports are included in the meeting agenda and can be viewed or downloaded at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/board-of-trustees/meeting-information>

## **Palliser's board will move to a new meeting space in Central Office**

The board has outgrown its meeting room so plans are in place to convert a larger meeting room in Palliser's Central Office into a board meeting space.

Several times this past year, the current room has been filled to capacity with spectators.

Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun said the plan is to convert the Learning Centre into a boardroom, which, although not extensive, will require some additional technology in the room. The current boardroom will continue to be used as a meeting space for other purposes.

Other changes in Central Office will include creating office space for Calgary-based Directors of Learning who occasionally work from Lethbridge, and for the Hutterite Colony Principal. The principal had been located in the building shared by John Davidson and PASS+ schools in Coaldale. With growth in John Davidson School, the colony principal will be moving to make room for students.

Renovations to improve the working space in Central Office were recommended in the 2014 Central Office review report.

The changes to the office were already incorporated in the Palliser budget, Braun said.

**The board's next regular meeting is scheduled for Oct. 18, 2016.**