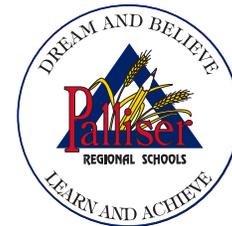


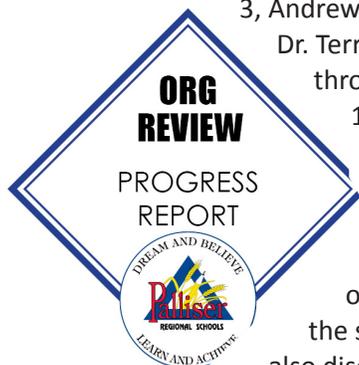
Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

February 21, 2017



Organizational review update shared

Acting Superintendent Dr. Garry Andrews updated the board on recent activities in response to the Palliser Organizational Review recommendations.



In response to Recommendation 3, Andrews noted that facilitator Dr. Terry Weninger led trustees through the first workshop Feb. 13-14 to begin the process of reviewing and drafting revisions to several policies including the role of the board, role of the trustee and role of the superintendent. The board also discussed the creation of new policies on evaluation of the board,

evaluation of individual trustees, and evaluation of the superintendent.

Draft policies developed will be further reviewed at the next workshop March 14 and 17. Board Chair Robert Strauss pointed out the public will have opportunities to provide their input, as the “idea is not for the board to go behind closed doors and churn out policy.”

In response to Recommendation 4, Andrews told trustees a follow-up session was provided to staff who had earlier training in Seven Habits of Highly Effective People and plans are being made to have the board participate in “The Speed of Trust” workshop to help build trust among stakeholders in the jurisdiction.

In response to Recommendation 6, he said the establishment of an independent ombudsperson for complaint handling will be brought back to the table after more feedback from the administrative association is solicited.

In response to Recommendation 12, Andrews said the first steps have been taken towards developing a progressive discipline policy, while discussions have started about developing a policy around personal use of Palliser vehicles, as per Recommendation 16.

To view the organizational review go to <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/board-of-trustees/or-review>

Capital plan update

Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun updated trustees on Palliser’s 2018-2021 capital plan concerning its priority project, Huntsville School.

After further consultation with Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure, there is the possibility a replacement school could be built, rather than modernizing the existing building.

Huntsville School, which is located in Iron Springs, was built in 1941 with additions in 1951 and 1958. Further improvements were made in 2013, but a high water table and resulting drainage problems require a major modernization of up to \$7 million to remedy.

Braun said the province has left open the possibility of replacing the school instead, and has asked Palliser for more information on site readiness. The province, which has the project on its list of priorities that have not yet received capital funding, had previously upgraded it from a “mini” to “major” modernization.

Shortfall in Palliser’s financial position

Palliser Regional Schools was sitting with a \$1.1 million shortfall as of the end of January, 2017.

Secretary-treasurer Wayne Braun told the board some of the discrepancies were due to a timing difference when revenues are received and expenses occur. This was the result of the addition of required teaching and support staff, which accounted for more than \$750,000 in additional expenses. There was also more than \$65,000 in board governance expenses over what had been budgeted for, with much of that due to legal and consultant work relating to the organizational review and follow-up resolutions to address the recommendations made.

He expected the board will end this school year about \$500,000 in deficit, which is normally covered by capital or operating reserves.

Financial reporting profile

In presenting Palliser’s six-year financial reporting profile Braun noted the division came within \$3,118 of balancing its budget of more than \$93 million in 2015-16.

Palliser Regional Schools carried a \$4.5-million surplus

over to the 2016-17 school year, which is 4.84 per cent of its total annual expenses. That figure includes about \$700,000 in surplus carried over by individual schools.

Braun told the board a surplus under 5 per cent is considered reasonable, and noted that the provincial average of all jurisdictions is 6.5 per cent. To put that figure in perspective, \$4.5 million would keep schools running within Palliser for only 12 days. That average provincial surplus would allow a jurisdiction to operate for about 16 days.

Palliser had \$400,000 in capital reserves going into this school year, which amounts to \$53 per student. While that was well below the average of all school jurisdictions, at \$383 per student, Braun said Palliser has made a concerted effort to increase that figure over the past few years. Capital reserves provide a division the ability to cover some of the unforeseen problems that might pop up in its school buildings, or do other work that doesn't qualify for provincial funding.

In the area of capital assets, the net depreciated book value of buildings sits at 55 per cent, slightly below the provincial average of 60 per cent. He explained the provincial number is higher due to all the new schools recently added in Calgary and Edmonton. A value above 50 per cent is considered acceptable.

The net book value of Palliser's vehicles (buses, vans and cars) and equipment sits at 26 per cent, in line with the provincial average of 27 per cent. These lower numbers reflect assets that are fully depreciated but are still functional and support division operations.

Palliser Beyond Borders on the move

The Palliser Board of Trustees has now approved a lease agreement to allow the relocation of the former PASS+ Outreach School in Coaldale.

The alternative secondary school, recently renamed Palliser Beyond Borders at Coaldale, will be offered at 1915 20 Avenue beginning in April. The relocation was already in the planning stages prior to the Coaldale School Facilities Planning Open House.

Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun explained that provincial funding for outreach schools is only available if the program does not share space with another school. A separate space is also beneficial to those students who choose outreach programs because they are unable to flourish in a traditional school setting.

The program is now being offered in shared facilities with John Davidson School. Enrolment at this Palliser school, which offers an alternative program for Low German-speaking Mennonite children, is increasing. Now boasting a student population of 164 students, enrolment

is expected to grow to 180 students next year and the area now housing the outreach program will be made into additional classrooms.

Braun said the cost of renovations to the new home of Palliser Beyond Borders at Coaldale should be covered through existing funding.

Talks continue on adding faith-based school to Palliser family

The board plans to meet further with representatives of Horizon Academy Institute with an eye on bringing the faith-based program in southwest Calgary into the Palliser family.

Trustees earlier approved a motion to accept the school, in principle, pending a contract review and inspection of the Academy's building on the former Currie Barracks property. Palliser maintenance and Occupational Health and Safety staff recently toured the facility and determined it was suitable for that purpose. The building has housed other alternative school programs previously.

A meeting will be set up to allow for further discussion with Horizon Academy Institute about the proposed contract.

The Academy's proposal is to create a kindergarten through Grade 6 school for about 300 students offering both Islamic and Arabic studies, and with an emphasis on leadership. If approved, it hopes to begin operations as an alternative program with Palliser starting in August 2017.

Further input sought on future of Coaldale school facilities

Possible solutions and comments supplied at the Coaldale School Facilities Planning Open House Jan. 31 are still being reviewed, but plans are already underway to allow for further public input.

Acting Superintendent Dr. Garry Andrews told the board that more than 60 responses were gathered before the deadline. That information is being sorted into common themes and options for review by the board and will then be posted on the division website to encourage further feedback.

Andrews said the next step would be for Palliser to host another open house, likely late April or early May, for further discussion.

Growth in and around the community requires a re-examination of how existing classroom space is used in Palliser's Coaldale schools and Sunnyside School. While some are at capacity, others have classroom space available.

Any possible changes which might come out of the

open houses would not be put into effect until at least the 2018-2019 school year, added Andrews.

Board contemplates changes to retirement recognition

Palliser Regional Schools continues to look at ways to best honour retiring staff for their contributions.

The Human Resources team asked the board whether it would favour holding a retirement dinner at the end of the school year, perhaps in conjunction with the employee recognition dinner which honours individuals nominated for or winning awards.

Currently retirees are recognized at the employee's school site. Past division-wide retirement dinners were not

always well attended.

Board Chair Robert Strauss suggested it might be more practical to hold a combined dinner for retirees and employee achievement at one of Palliser's more-centrally located schools rather than a restaurant in one of the larger centres.

Associate Superintendent HR Ken Garinger said a survey will be sent out to gauge interest in that option. Should Palliser proceed in that direction, the schools and the Alberta Teachers' Association local would be contacted to ensure no conflicts with dates already chosen for retiree recognition.

Next regular meeting Feb. 28, 2017