

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

March 21, 2017



Next regular meeting slated for April 25

The Board of Trustees held their regular monthly meeting March 21. Trustee Esther Willms was not in attendance. Trustee Colleen Deitz joined the meeting until the lunch break by Google Hangout. The next regular meeting will be held April 25, 2017.

Requests for proposals issued

The board approved issuing two requests for proposals.

One seeks the services of an ombudsperson. Reporting directly to the Board of Trustees, the ombudsperson will have authority to handle internal and external stakeholder complaints. The individual will investigate and resolve complaints, where possible, and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for action, as appropriate. The deadline to submit a proposal is 2 p.m. MDT, April 11, 2017. The request for proposals can be downloaded in PDF format at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/download/97837>.

The ombudsperson position was a recommendation in the Palliser organizational review conducted last year and released in November.

The other request for proposals is for an executive search consultant to initiate and lead the process to secure the services of a Superintendent of Schools. The deadline to submit a proposal is 2 p.m. MDT, April 4, 2017. This request for proposals can be downloaded in PDF format at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/download/97838>.

Both RFPs will be shared on Alberta Purchasing Connection, online with other affiliated associations and in traditional media outlets.

Moratorium placed on new alternative programs till end of board's term

Trustees voted to place a moratorium on pursuing new alternative programs with organizations not already associated with Palliser for the remainder of this board's term. Elections for school board will be held in October. The board discussed the amount of work already on its agenda.

At a meeting March 14, the board approved a new master agreement with Horizon Academy Institute to create a new alternative program in southwest Calgary to open for the 2017-2018 school year.

Public input sought on 10 draft policies

The board approved for public distribution 10 draft policies, in the first phase of its policy review. The drafts are posted online at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/board-of-trustees/policy-review>. The public is invited to submit feedback by April 21.

The 10 drafts emerged out of the first of a series of workshops facilitated by Dr. Terry Weninger, in response to recommendations in the organizational review. All-day policy workshops were held Feb. 13-14, March 14 and March 17. The next workshops will be held April 11 and May 16.

Board Chair Robert Strauss said the public will be invited to submit feedback again in May to another set of draft policies.

Board reviewed themes from Coaldale open house

The board reviewed themes emerging from an open house held in Coaldale about the best use of existing facilities in the face of growing student enrolment, particularly at the elementary level.

At the open house in January, participants were presented information about each of the facilities in Coaldale and area and invited to offer their thoughts on how best to serve students going forward.

Acting Superintendent Dr. Garry Andrews said he reviewed the ideas for trends as well as short-, medium- and long-term actions.

Among the trends was a strong desire to keep Grade 4 students at Jennie Emery Elementary School and Grade 8 students at R.I. Baker Middle School. There were a number of suggestions about relocating early learning and kindergarten classes from Jennie Emery; interest in whether Palliser could reacquire rural schools the division does not own; and desire for more programming options for middle and high school students.

A follow-up meeting in Coaldale is expected but is not scheduled yet as Palliser administration continues to review its possibilities.

Changes to grade configurations or other facility use are anticipated for fall 2018 to address changing enrolments at Coaldale schools.

Reduction to school fees discussed

Acting Superintendent Dr. Garry Andrews reviewed the changes to school fees announced by Alberta Education March 2.

Legislation to reduce school fees would eliminate fees charged for transportation for students who are attending their designated school and live more than 2.4 kilometres from the school; and instructional supplies or materials, such as textbooks, workbooks, printing, and paper costs. This category would also include any common fees that are charged to an entire student body or grade cohort.

Andrews said the bus fee would not have an impact on Palliser because the division does not charge students living beyond 2.4 km of their community school for busing. The only Palliser bus fee is provided under an agreement with the Town Coaldale for students living within 2.4 km of their school in town.

Palliser has two alternative program schools which charge a bus fee because they do not receive any transportation funding from Alberta Education for providing this service. These are not designated schools; they are schools of choice.

Palliser's instructional supply fees are currently set at \$59 per Grade 7-9 student and \$69 for Grade 10-12 students, annually. The \$39 fee for Grade 1-6 students has been waived for all families for more than a decade but the equivalent funding was provided to elementary schools from other Palliser revenues.

Andrews said Alberta Education expects new regulations governing fees could be in place by April 30.

Another change in the new budget is that Palliser will

not receive an Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal (IMR) portion of the per-student grant for students attending alternative programs in Calgary. An analysis by Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Braun, who was absent from the meeting, indicated the change will reduce Palliser's IMR funding by about \$300,000.

Andrews, sharing Braun's report, said the Palliser funding profile posted by Alberta Education online indicates the division's funding will rise \$1.7 million due to increased enrolment. Based on Palliser's internal estimates, funding is expected to rise by \$186,000, based on new provincial funding to replace lost instructional supplies and materials fees. Andrews said a budget shortfall of \$1.4 million is likely in 2017-2018.

Associate Superintendent Human Resources Ken Garinger said enrolment projections currently show status quo numbers in Calgary, and some growth at R.I. Baker and Kate Andrews High School in Coaldale, Noble Central in Nobleford and Coalhurst High School. Schools in Vulcan and Picture Butte are projecting enrolment declines.

New Huntsville School to be built

Acting Superintendent Dr. Garry Andrews shared the provincial announcement of funding for replacing Huntsville School in Iron Springs. The early learning through Grade 9 school is one of nine school replacements around the province, with another seven modernizations and eight new schools also announced.

Huntsville School was built in 1941 and serves about 125 students.