



Palliser Regional Schools

Palliser Centre

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Highlights of Board of Trustees Meeting Tuesday, May 15, 2018

Board approves 2018-19 budget

Palliser Regional Schools has approved a balanced budget for the 2018-19 school year while keeping direct impact on the classroom to a minimum.

The operating budget of \$96.3 million was approved at the regular Board of Trustees meeting May 15. The budget is based on an enrolment of 7,624 students in Grades 1-12 and early childhood services enrolment of 670, up about 60 students in total from 2017-18.

The Board and Palliser's senior administration went into budget deliberation with the goal of making any cuts as far from the classroom as possible. They were able to find efficiencies in centralized services and board administration and cut spending in that area by more than \$475,000 from this year.

Palliser senior administration was also able to restructure finances going into budget discussions to allow for more sustainable funding for critical assets like school buses and computers in the coming years.

Updated Safe and Caring Schools policy approved

Trustees approved an amended version of Policy 16, 'Safe and Caring Schools,' in keeping with guidelines set out by Alberta Education under Bill 24.

Palliser had earlier sought input from staff and parents on the policy, although Chair Robert Strauss noted that provincial legislation was very prescriptive as to what the policy must include and how it was to be worded. The bottom line, said Superintendent Dave Driscoll, is the policy is in place not to meet any provincial mandate, but to ensure the safety of all students.

While every school had its own student code of conduct, the province required the addition of a division-wide code. Driscoll said it is important for students to know if they cross the line when it comes to issues of gender and sexuality, there will be consequences.

Future direction of technology shared with Board

Trustees heard that Palliser has come a long ways in the last few years in embracing technology and how it can enrich the students' learning experience. Tom Hamer, Director of Learning responsible for technology, told them the division still has a ways to go, however.

Hamer said Palliser's inventory of devices was dated when he began four years ago, the use of technology in the areas of social media were restrictive, and teachers weren't encouraged to be innovative in their use of technology to benefit their students. He said efforts are being made to address those deficits.

*Together we will ensure learning success for all students
to develop their unique potential as caring citizens in a changing world.*

While there are still controls in place to protect students from the darker side of the Internet, Hamer told the Board the emphasis is now on digital citizenship. Students need to be taught how to use technology properly, including how to interact with others through those devices. Superintendent Driscoll said it is important for students to understand we want them to be responsible, moral, respectable citizens whether in-person or on-line.

Hamer also pointed out Picture Butte High School is testing out a parent portal through school websites so they can connect digitally with teachers and view their child's progress on assignments. It is hoped that can be expanded to other schools in the future.

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