



Palliser Regional Schools

Palliser Centre

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Highlights of Board of Trustees Meeting Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019

Cultural Lesson

Dan Doerksen provided the Board with a cultural and historical overview of the Low German-speaking Mennonite (LGM) community. Now in his 14th year as LGM liaison for Palliser Regional Schools, he said the more trustees know about a group of people they work with, the better they are able to meet their educational needs.

Although there is enough diversity among that community that they shouldn't all be painted with the same brush, Doerksen said they are generally conservative in nature, are good, hands-on learners and tend to grasp information better through oral means than others. Board Chair Robert Strauss thanked Doerksen for his efforts and initiatives, noting the LGM program in Palliser owes much of its success to him.

Digital Student Records

Secretary-Treasurer Dexter Durfey informed the Board provincial legislation will require student records in digital, rather than paper form, by the fall of 2020. He said school administrators have been urged to start the process now to ensure a period where any wrinkles can be ironed out before it is mandatory.

That can begin with teachers entering daily attendance into the system digitally, and having student registers next fall done by parents online. He suggested schools initially set specific dates where parents can come in and do that at the school in case they require assistance. Associate Superintendent Tom Hamer said a plan and timeframe for existing student records to be moved from paper to digital form are in the works and trustees will be updated in that concern.

Transportation Services

Trustees heard how the number of students bused through Palliser's Transportation Services department continues to grow, with about 100 new passengers this year. David Shaw, Transportation Services Supervisor, said the success of the department rests on the mechanics who ensure the safety of each vehicle, and the bus drivers who get those students to and from school safely.

One upcoming challenge is a new requirement that all school bus drivers – whether full-time, or volunteers who are taking students to sporting events or on field trips – will require a safety endorsement certificate starting next year. While there is a grandfather clause that will exempt some drivers, many will require additional training. Shaw said Palliser has qualified staff who can offer that, but it is important to get drivers updated prior to the summer break.

Infrastructure, Maintenance and Renewal (IMR)

Trustees were provided with an overview of the IMR plan for 2018-2019 by Secretary-Treasurer Dexter Durfey. He said maintenance staff toured the schools and also got input from school administrators as to work they would like to see addressed in their building.

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

While some of the “big ticket” items will be tackled first, Durfey said they are confident all will be completed prior to the new school year. He added Palliser maintenance staff will be used wherever possible to reduce costs, and plans call on vendors to be brought in to work with Palliser custodial staff to ensure best use of their products.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

Scott McLarty updated the Board on his activities since taking over the role as OHS consultant in August. After touring all Palliser schools to determine any high-risk situations which needed to be addressed immediately, he is reviewing the online training service and will be looking to implement a divisional health and safety committee to meet new provincial requirements. That committee would include representation from each of Palliser’s schools as well as Central Services staff.