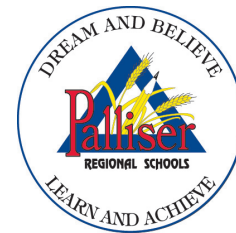


# Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting



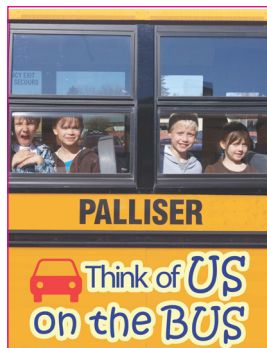
December 18, 2012

## Meeting cut short by other business

The Board radically amended its agenda to ensure conclusion of the meeting by noon to allow Board Chair Don Zech and Superintendent Kevin Gietz to attend a meeting called by Alberta Education in Calgary. Agenda items not addressed at this meeting will be forwarded to the next regular meeting of the board, scheduled for January 15, 2013.

## Think of Us on the Bus campaign draws congratulations from ministers

Superintendent Kevin Gietz shared letters he received in recent weeks from both Education Minister Jeff Johnson and Solicitor General Jonathan Denis regarding information Palliser had shared with both about the division's four-week Think of Us on the Bus safety campaign.



The campaign, which included a public awareness effort through radio and print media, safety assemblies at elementary and middle schools, and an enforcement blitz that had officers ride on some school buses, was acknowledged by both ministers who congratulated Palliser staff for the effort.

In sharing Palliser's safety efforts, the division has encouraged both ministers to consider expanding the campaign across the province.

In their letters, both the Education Minister and Solicitor General indicated they had forwarded information about the campaign to Minister of Transportation Ric Mclver. Superintendent Kevin Gietz said representatives of Palliser have been invited to discuss the campaign with representatives of Alberta Transportation.

Palliser has been invited to present information about the campaign to the Zone 6 meeting of the Alberta School Boards Association meeting in Lethbridge in early January.

## Palliser part of leadership and assessment initiative

Palliser Regional Schools is one of four divisions in southern Alberta to be chosen to participate in the

Alberta Assessment Consortium's Three-Year Instructional Leadership and Assessment Initiative.

The project involves a significant research component that seeks to determine the impact of a coaching model of professional learning on leadership practice and teacher practice, and the impact of a focused approach to enhancing formative assessment practices at the school level on student learning.

Superintendent Kevin Gietz said the first step is for Palliser to identify three to five schools in the division to participate, with schools representing elementary, junior high/middle school and high school levels.

Participating principals, vice-principals and teachers will volunteer to take part in research including questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and the collection of video exemplars.

A facilitator from the Alberta Assessment Consortium will guide the day-to-day work of the project with Palliser's designated project leader taking part in regional and jurisdiction meetings, as well as coaching work.

The first meetings are set for February 2013.

## Officials meet to discuss Low German Mennonite educational needs

Superintendent Kevin Gietz and Chair Don Zech were among Palliser representatives to take part in an interjurisdictional meeting to discuss the educational needs of southern Alberta's Low German Mennonite community.

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard, principals Janice Loitz, Nathan Sillito and Sherrie Nickel, whose schools are entirely or predominantly Low German Mennonite, and Palliser LGM liaison worker Dan Doerksen were also part of the Palliser contingent. The team met with counterparts from Grasslands Public Schools in Brooks, Horizon School Division in Taber, and Prairie Rose School Division representing the rural area near Medicine Hat.

The meeting was intended to set the stage for a January meeting with provincial government departments that share an interest in examining the education needs of the LGM community, said Gietz.



Don Zech

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

The four divisions have about 2,500 LGM students between them, with about 525 enrolled in Palliser schools.

Gietz said issues include whether home schooling is meeting LGM students' needs and how many children may not be attending school at all.

Zech and Gietz said the opportunity to discuss issues with other jurisdictions as well as Alberta Education and other departments is welcome.

## Board reviews results report

The Board reviewed the final draft of the division's Annual Education Results Report for 2011-2012 and the Three-Year Education Plan for 2012-2015. The board had earlier adopted a draft of the plan at its Nov. 26th meeting, pending the addition of information from the budget update adopted that same day.

The report was submitted to Alberta Education and posted on Palliser's website by the Nov. 30th deadline.

The full report can be viewed at [http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/docs/library/AERR\\_Ed\\_Plan\\_2012\\_2015\\_1.pdf](http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/docs/library/AERR_Ed_Plan_2012_2015_1.pdf).

A one-page summary was also prepared and was published in local print media. The summary provided Palliser's results as measured by Alberta Education's Accountability Pillar, which are excellent across the board. Superintendent Kevin Gietz said Palliser will continue to focus on key strategies to maintain success: literacy; assessment for learning; safe and caring learning environments; collaboration; meaningful school goals; and a rigorous school review process.

## Palliser meets class size guidelines in core subjects at all grades

Kevin Garinger, Associate Superintendent (Human Resources), shared Palliser's class size information with the Board.

The division is at or below Alberta Education's recommended class sizes in all core subjects at all grade levels this year.

Alberta Education recommends no more than 17 students in a class from kindergarten through Grade 3; 23 students, Grades 4-6; 25 students, Grades 7-9; and 27 students, Grades 10-12.

In core subjects, Palliser has an average of 16.4

students, K-3; 20.6 students, Grades 4-6; 22.6 students, Grades 7-9; and 17.4 students, Grades 10-12.

When class size was measured for all subjects, Palliser was slightly over provincial guidelines in K-3 at 17.8, but was below guidelines at all other levels.

Palliser's class size information is published on the division website and included in the Annual Education Results Report and Three-Year Education Plan.

## Central Office staff spread Christmas cheer to eight families

Kevin Garinger, Associate Superintendent (Human Resources) shared information with the Board about Palliser's Adopt-A-Family efforts. Using money raised through a staff draw and donations from Central Office staff, Palliser was able provide Christmas gifts and grocery gift cards to one independent student and seven families from across the division, including Calgary. The individuals chosen for support were selected on the recommendation of school principals who are aware of families that are struggling financially.

Volunteers from Central Office staff shopped for the families and then wrapped the gifts for delivery to schools. The gifts were then discretely delivered to the receiving families by the school principal.

The Adopt-a-Family campaign also assists families through the course of the year, using money raised through the sales of bottled water and pop in the Palliser Education Centre building, the return of bottles and cans, and donations to a casual Friday fund.

## Huntsville School is first out of the gate with two years of calendars!

The Board reviewed and adopted the first of its school calendars for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Huntsville School has the distinction of being the first with approved calendars for the next two years.

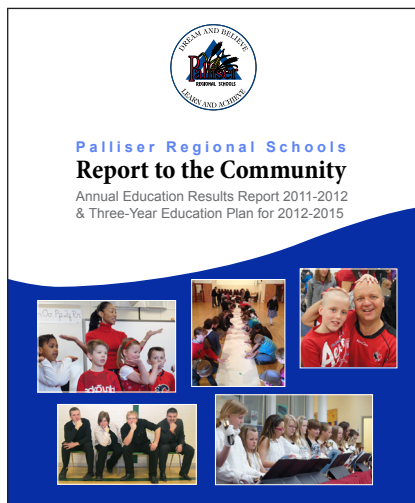
This is the first time Palliser has adopted a division calendar for two years, giving school administrators the ability to prepare their plans for a two-year cycle.

School calendars, once approved, will be posted on the Palliser website under the "Schools" tab.

## Board reviews busing to Sunnyside

The Board reviewed information about busing to Sunnyside School, an elementary program that serves students up to Grade 6 and is located in the rural area east of Lethbridge.

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Dale Backlin said Sunnyside is currently served by two buses, one which has 25 students and the other with 33. Each bus



travels about 49 kilometres to school, with the longest ride time at 65 minutes.

The length of the bus ride was raised as an issue during the recent review of the school.

Backlin said in August each year, students are entered into computer software along with their locations. Then routes are drafted and drivers are consulted because they know the roads and can often offer efficiencies. The routes are drafted with a goal of limiting ride times to no more than an hour, though there are some routes in the division that are slightly longer.

Routes are adjusted through the year as students come and go from the division, Backlin said.

Trustees encouraged administration to continue to search for efficiencies to reduce ride times where possible. The busing arrangements at Sunnyside will continue as they are for the rest of this school year.

### **February Board meeting date changed**

Trustees passed a motion to change the date of the February Board meeting to Feb. 26 from Feb. 12. The change was made to accommodate Palliser staff's participation in the annual Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Conference in Edmonton Feb. 11-12. Palliser staff will be making presentations about the division's AISI projects, and trustees may also be in attendance.

The Feb. 26 board meeting will be held at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge, starting at 9 a.m.

### **Early Learning Program fees unchanged**

The Board will not increase its Early Learning Program fees for 2013-2014.

Fees for Early Learning Programs in Palliser are \$80 a month for two half-days of programming per week. Typically, programming time is three hours per day. Generally, these programs serve children who are four years old, although some programs do accept children as

young as three. Early Learning Programs also serve children who are at least 2 ½ years old who qualify for Program Unit Funding from Alberta Education to address severe disabilities or delays.

For information or to register for a Palliser Early Learning Program, please contact the Palliser elementary school near you.

### **Results of Noble Central School review presented to the Board**

Palliser Director of Learning Dan Ryder was welcomed to the meeting to share the results of a school review of Noble Central School, a K-12 school in Nobleford. A review team of Central Office administrators and two principals from other Palliser schools visited Noble Central on Oct. 30 to conduct the review.

The data collected indicated school strengths include a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, caring staff with high expectations, and the presence of a variety of options, exploratories and athletics at the school.

The review identified school resources and technology as areas for improvement, as well as a focus on enhanced academics.

Overall, a high percentage of students, staff and parents/guardians rated the school as effective or very effective. However, 31 per cent of kindergarten through Grade 2 students and 11 per cent of Grade 3-6 students rated the school as somewhat effective or not effective.

The results will be presented to school staff who can then celebrate what the school does well and identify an action plan to address areas for improvement.

The Board thanked Ryder for his presentation.

### **Next meeting January 15, 2013**

The next meeting of the Board will be January 15, 2013 at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge. The meeting starts at 9 a.m.

HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR  
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