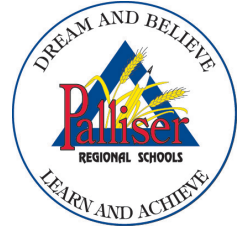


Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting

January 14, 2014



Board visits Champion

The board held its first regular meeting of the new year at Champion School, the first of four school meetings this year. Other regular board meetings to be held at schools are March 11, Kate Andrews High School, Coaldale; April 8, Noble Central School; and, tentatively, May 13 at Calgary Christian School's secondary campus. During this visit, trustees were treated to a performance by the Grade 7-9 band students, led by teacher Amanda Rodgers.



Board-Teacher Advisory Committee report

Board Chair Colleen Deitz reported on the Board-Teacher Advisory Committee meeting held Dec. 10. The committee of trustees and representatives of Palliser Alberta Teachers' Association Local 19 meets twice a year. Deitz said one issue raised was a question about teacher travel to Palliser collaboration days in Vulcan and whether they can claim the travel as an employment expense with Canada Revenue Agency. There was also discussion of Palliser's inclement weather policy and that staff are expected to report for work if weather improves early in the day. Deitz said the committee discussed the limit on instruction time to no more than 907 hours, as outlined in the framework agreement negotiated by the ATA and Alberta Education, and later ratified by Palliser's teachers and board. At this time, Palliser does not expect to seek any exceptions to the 907-hour limit, Deitz said. The committee discussed the results of a survey on professional development conducted by the local and Deitz said the results would be taken into consideration. Finally, there was discussion about the ATA-Board co-sponsored family barbecues held in June in Lethbridge and Calgary. The Calgary event has not been well attended, and the ATA raised the prospect of only holding one event in Lethbridge. The board discussed this suggestion and trustees said they could not support this proposal.

Teacher Amanda Rodgers, on drums, and her Grade 7-9 band performed for the Board and administration during their visit to Champion School.

Wall of Fame committee looks ahead

The board's Wall of Fame committee, comprised of trustees and Palliser staff, will begin meeting shortly to discuss potential inductees for the program which honours former students of Palliser schools for their outstanding achievement in their chosen fields.

August's induction will be the eighth annual Wall of Fame ceremony.

The public is welcome to nominate outstanding individuals. The nomination form is online at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/about-us/palliser-wall-of-fame>

Volunteers from Palliser staff who would like to join this committee are asked to contact Communications Officer Dawn Sugimoto at dawn.sugimoto@pallisersd.ab.ca. The time commitment for the committee is quite small.

Change to Policy 19, adds wind chill

The Board passed a change to the wording of Policy 19, Inclement Weather. The wording was updated to include reference to wind chill factor in consideration of when to cancel school bus service.

The amended wording reads:

School bus service shall be suspended by the

Superintendent/designate when a temperature or wind chill factor of -40 ° C has been reached.

The policy, and all Palliser policies, are on the Palliser website at <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/about-us/policies>

Review of Central Office planned

The Board of Trustees will meet with education consultant Leroy Sloan Jan. 23 as part of a review of Central Office. The board has asked Sloan to collect input from stakeholders within Palliser, review the organizational structure and make recommendations for improved service to Palliser schools and public.

In addition to meeting with trustees, it's expected Sloan will interview Central Office finance services, administrative and education staff individually, as well as meeting with Palliser's principals and vice-principals.

Sloan will be working in Central Office Jan. 22-24. Sloan is a former superintendent and Alberta Education deputy minister who has his own consulting firm and also works as a consultant with Alberta School Boards Association.

Palliser board will present a national education conference

Superintendent Kevin Gietz reported that Palliser's proposal to present at the National Congress on Rural Education in Saskatoon has been accepted. The presentation, The Difference One Board Can Make, will share the board's decision to move away from strict site-based management and budgeting to more centralized services, and the resulting improvements in results for students.

Chair Colleen Deitz, Vice-Chair Don Zech and Superintendent Kevin Gietz will make the presentation at the 19th annual conference on rural education March 30-April 1 in Saskatoon. The theme of this year's conference is "The Changing Reality of Rural Schools."

Thank you to Alberta Education manager

Superintendent Kevin Gietz reported on a meeting Jan. 7 of the Central Office admin team with Alberta Education's Manager of South Services Dan Ferguson to discuss Palliser's latest Three-Year Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report.

During the meeting Ferguson commended Palliser for the quality and quantity of information the division shares in its annual report.

Superintendent Kevin Gietz commended Ferguson and the process for discussing the division's results. Ferguson asked very good questions about Palliser's results, programs and priorities. "He was very knowledgeable about our division and he went through the report in detail," Gietz said.

Palliser invited Ferguson to participate in a school review, see the division's mobile Career and Technology Studies units, which increase student access to shop, carpentry, mechanics and welding equipment, and visit the division's alternative schools for Low German-speaking Mennonite students.

Master's College admin reflect on school review process and outcome

The board welcomed Principal Peter Muller and Vice-Principal Susan McAllister to the meeting to share their school's response to a school review conducted there in February 2013.

Muller began by thanking Palliser for supports provided by the division, the accessibility of Central Office staff, and opportunities for professional development and collaboration.

Master's College was founded as a Christian private school in 1997. It joined Palliser as an alternative program in 2008-09. The school serves 254 students from Grades 7-12 and is located at 4414 Crowchild Trail SW in Calgary.

The review celebrated the school's strengths, which include effective teaching, a caring, passionate staff and effective use of technology to support student learning.

Muller said the school has always focused on research and development, with staff spending about three hours on Friday afternoons after students are dismissed working collaboratively.

McAllister said teachers spend time developing journey maps (what do I, as teacher, need to cover with my students?); capacity maps (teachers and students work together with students identifying what they know and what they can help others with); and learning adventures (driving questions that engage students and focusing on great projects for learning).

The review identified areas of improvement as including a desire for more options and non-athletic extracurricular clubs, facility needs, and more direct, focused instruction.

In response, the school is adding options and activities, driven by student interest.

The school is undergoing construction to create new space for Grade 6 students from Master's Academy and Grade 7-8 from the College. More flexible spaces have been created that can be opened up for larger groups, or reconfigured with moveable walls to create smaller pods for students and teachers.

Although the review found a desire for more direct and focused instruction, school staff believe this reflected a perception issue. McAllister said Master's has always focused on instruction, but they also emphasize student



empowerment and choice. Muller said he talks with students about quality being rigid and time flexible. The expectations for quality are high, but some students may achieve that standard sooner than others. Students are encouraged to make their own decisions on how to use their time, and that flexibility may be perceived as a lack of focused instruction. The focus is there, but the process is something parents may not be used to, he said.

The school's goals this year focus on literacy, helping students explore their relationship to God and develop outstanding character and rising above contemporary culture in academics, morals and conduct.

Bargaining set to begin with CUPE

Associate Superintendent (Human Resources) Kevin Garinger said Palliser is commencing bargaining with Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 290, representing 26 school caretakers. Negotiations will begin Jan. 21.

Budget update approved

The board received and approved the fall budget update for the 2013-2014 school year. Normally a process done by the end of November, Palliser had Alberta Education's permission for an extension as the division dealt with staffing changes this fall. The updated budget reflects actual enrolment and revenues, rather than the projected figures approved in Spring 2013.

The updated budget projects revenue of \$83.2 million, up slightly from the spring due largely to enrolment increases. Palliser is projected a balanced budget with budgeted revenue exceeding expenses by just \$22,309. The spring budget projected enrolment of about 7,200 students, but by Sept. 30, Palliser had about 7,500.

With the approval of the budget update, the final piece of information needed for Palliser's Annual Education Results Report and Three-Year Education Plan was complete. The fall update figures are now represented in the annual report, which is posted on Palliser's website. The document also includes financial information from the annual audited financial statements.

For copies of the annual report, audited financial statement and budget update documents, please visit <http://www.pallisersd.ab.ca/board-of-trustees/planning-and-reporting>

Transportation annual report shared

Palliser's Transportation Services Department provided its report on annual operations. The report shows Palliser's fleet of 90 buses has an average age of 10 years. The oldest buses are about 20 years old, with new buses purchased in each of the last two years. Prior to that, the division held

off buying buses for three years.

The department operates 60 daily routes, transporting 1,827 students daily and travelling 1.8 million kilometres a year.

Accomplishments in the department include a second year of the Think of Us on the Bus safety campaign and the addition of five camera systems that monitor activities inside and outside the bus.

The department has boosted revenue from community bookings this past year. When demand for booking buses is high, priority is given to Palliser schools over community groups. The division also provides maintenance services to a private school in the area. While some boosts to revenue have been made, the department struggled with the loss of about \$330,000 in a fuel subsidy that was cut effective April 1, 2013. The lost grant impacted operations last school year and moving forward.

Board circulates draft 2015-16 calendar

The board continues its efforts to examine school calendars well in advance to help families plan their vacations.

The board reviewed a draft divisional calendar for 2015-2016, approving its circulation to school principals and school councils for input. The draft would see students start school before Labour Day because the holiday falls late in 2015, on Sept. 7. The draft continues Palliser's practice of identifying four division-wide professional development days when teachers from across the region work together in small collaborative groups.

The board asks that school principals and school councils provide their feedback on the draft before trustee's meeting on March 11.

Board seeks exception to school closure process at Glenmore Christian

The board will approach the Education Minister to seek permission to end its affiliation with Glenmore Christian Academy in Calgary without following the school closure process as outlined in the School Act.

The society at Glenmore served notice this fall that it intends to end its partnership with Palliser at the end of the 2013-2014 school year and resume operating GCA as a private school.

Trustees discussed their regret at the society decision to leave Palliser. The school closure process provides opportunity for public input to the board, but in this case, with the society's decision made, there is no amount of public input that can influence the decision.

The board expects it will hold public meetings in Calgary and elsewhere in the division to give parents opportunity to discuss this issue and others.

Academic wrap-around project continues to support student success

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard said Palliser's academic wrap-around project continues to experience success and is now drawing attention from other jurisdictions.

The project sees a team of support people from Central Office working with classroom teachers and others at the school to support students who are struggling.

Rivard said supports on the team include Director of Learning Laurie Wilson, who has expertise in inclusion and co-ordinates other support services, literacy experts and Palliser's technology integration specialist. They meet with the school administrator and the classroom teacher to identify strategies and supports for an individual student. The team's efforts have been showing success in making a difference for the individual student. At the same time, the team builds the skills and capacity of the classroom teacher who can use new strategies to support other students.

He said the team is seeing an increase in referrals from schools for assistance.

Board supports making most of literacy data collected in schools

Palliser's board passed a motion approving the use of Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments when determining whether a student needs a reader or other accommodation when taking a provincial exam. The motion will add the data collected through Palliser's literacy assessments to psych-ed and Woodcock-Johnson III assessment tools which are considered when determining which students need accommodation during provincial tests.

Funding available to support students affected by June flood

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat

Rivard said Palliser has been notified of funding to provide mental health/wellness support to students from Siksika First Nation who were affected by the June 2013 flooding that devastated the region. The money is available through the provincial government.

IB program supported in principle

The board gave its support in principle to development of an International Baccalaureate program at Milo School.

In November, Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard and Board Chair Colleen Deitz visited a school in Millarville that became a certified IB program to increase enrolment at the small rural school.

Founded in 1968, the IB program is found in 147 countries, offering primary, middle and high school programs. The aim of the program is to develop internationally minded people who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship for the planet. Inquiry-based learning and experiential learning is critical to the process.

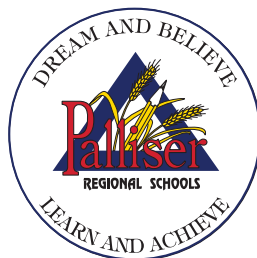
Palliser's newest school has a name

Palliser's newest school, which is providing online delivery of courses to students across the division, will be known as Palliser Beyond Borders.

The board approved the name which was recommended by a committee that considered submissions from students across the division. The name captures not only the vision of the new online school, which can meet the needs of students wherever they live, but also of Palliser, which has broken boundaries through its alternative programs and other innovations.

Associate Superintendent (Education Services) Pat Rivard says the school expects to have 19 courses ready for Semester 2 this year and has already been delivering courses to students in the first semester.

"Ever since I first came on the board in 1998, I've said we've got to do something like this," said Chair Colleen Deitz. "This is exciting."



Next meeting: 9 a.m., Feb. 11, 2014 at Palliser Centre, Lethbridge