

MINUTES

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF PALLISER SCHOOL DIVISION

REGULAR MEETING

BT20250311

DATE: March 11, 2025

9:00 a.m. - Palliser Meeting Room B

Trustees in Attendance: Lorelei Bexte, Chair
Tony Montina, Vice Chair
Debbie Laturnus, Alternate Vice Chair
Mike Oliver, Trustee
Sharon Rutledge, Trustee
Louise Schmidt, Trustee

Staff in Attendance: Dave Driscoll, Superintendent
Tom Hamer, Deputy Superintendent
Audrey Kluin, Associate Superintendent, Human Resources
Cindy Rogers, Associate Superintendent, Business Services
Wesley Lebeau, Communications Officer

Recording: Michelle Taylor

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lorelei Bexte called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution # BT20250311 - 01

Moved by: Trustee Mike Oliver

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

3. MOVE TO IN-CAMERA

Resolution # BT20250311 - 02

Moved by: Trustee Tony Montina

That the meeting moves *In-Camera*, at 9:00 a.m., pursuant to Section S64(3) of the Education Act, and Division 2 of Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter S-3 and amendments thereto, to discuss Privileged Information with regards to identified In-Camera Items.

CARRIED

Chairperson: *Loulei E. Bexte*

Secretary Treasurer: *[Signature]*

MOVE OUT OF *IN-CAMERA*

Resolution #BT20250311 - 03

Moved by: Trustee Debbie Laturnus

That the meeting moves out of *in-camera* at 10:35 a.m.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM *IN-CAMERA*

There was no business arising from in-camera.

5. ADOPTION OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Resolution # BT20250311 - 04

Moved by: Trustee Louise Schmidt

That the Minutes of the February 11, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Palliser School Division be approved as presented.

CARRIED

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Human Resources and Payroll Report

The Palliser School Division Human Resources (HR) department aims to recruit and retain qualified personnel, promote a positive work culture, and uphold legal and ethical standards to provide quality education to all students. Key areas of focus for the HR department are recruitment and retention efforts and addressing employee well-being through health and wellness initiatives and workplace training. Notable achievements in the past year include an increase in the onboarding of substitute teachers, decreased staff resignations and updates to administrative procedures and handbooks. The Payroll department plays a vital role in the division, ensuring accurate and timely compensation for all employees. This involves managing a complex system of salaries, benefits, deductions, and tax withholdings for all staff. Payroll maintains financial stability within the school division, while also ensuring compliance with labour laws and regulations. The payroll department offers essential financial services to all members of the school division.


An overview of staffing within the division was presented, which included detailed staffing numbers for both certificated and support staff.

Certificated Staffing: HR oversees recruitment, hiring, and management of certified professionals. Certificated staffing includes the recruitment, hiring, and management of certified professionals, such as teachers. The HR works with school division leaders to ensure that positions are filled with highly qualified individuals who meet the educational standards and requirements set by the

Chairperson:



Secretary Treasurer:



division and relevant regulatory bodies. Currently there are 720 certificated staff, including teachers, substitutes, and senior administration.


- Contracts
 - decrease in administrator contracts from 33 in 2023-24 to 28 in 2024-25.
 - increase in Interim Teaching Contracts from 16 in 2023-24 to 33 and Temporary Teaching Contracts from 38 to 54.
- Interim Professional Certificate (IPC)/Permanent Professional Certificate (PPC) Applications
 - 35 PPC applications are being processed in 2024-2025, compared to 27 processed in 2023-2024. Anticipating 60 IPC renewals in 2024-2025.
- New Teacher Orientation
 - 18 teachers attended in August 2024.
- Aspiring Leaders
 - 8 participants in 2024-25.
- Edwin Parr
 - Nominations are being completed for qualifying teachers by 4 Principals.
- Resignations/Retirements
 - 13 resignations of certificated staff and 4 retirements between September 1, 2024, and February 15, 2025.

Support Staffing: As of February 21, 2025, there are 625 support staff (436.38 full-time equivalent (FTE)) support staff in the division which includes Bus Drivers, Caretakers, Educational Assistants, Administrative Assistants, Early Learning Educators, Learning Common Facilitators, Speech Language Pathologist, Central Office, Facilities, Maintenance and Technology employees, Parents as Teachers, South West Collaborative Support Services, Family School Liaison Counsellors, and Making Connections Workers.

- Resignations/Retirements:
 - 29 resignations and 6 retirements between September 1, 2024, and February 15, 2025.
- Exit Forms
 - 34 entries made in the Exit Form (to date).

Substitute Teachers: From September 2024 to February 2025, there were 71 new substitute teacher contracts, a slight decrease from 74 substitute teachers onboarded during the same period in the previous year. 30 substitute teachers resigned between September 1, 2024, and February 15, 2025 citing reasons that include being hired under contract with the board or a neighboring board, relocation, or temporary inactivity due to maternity/medical leave. The division has approximately 175 substitute teachers contributing to the ATRF pension.

Chairperson: 

Secretary Treasurer: 

Substitute teachers' pay rates may be adjusted after the fifth consecutive day in the same assignment. Between September 2024 and February 2025, there were 228 instances where 50 substitute teachers jumped to a higher grid rate.

Casual Employees: 127 casual employees were onboarded between September 1, 2024, and February 15, 2025. 39 casual employees resigned between September 1, 2024, and February 15, 2025 for reasons that include being hired under contract with the board or a neighboring board, relocation, or temporary inactivity due to maternity/medical leave.

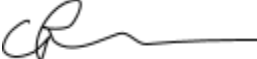
Health and Wellness

- Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
 - The utilization rate for EFAP services was 4.6% from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, among an average population of 993 eligible users.
- 437 users completed their Inkblot online registration.
- Individual counseling accounted for the most EFAP cases, with a 95.0% client satisfaction rate, a 7.9% increase compared to the previous year.
- Inkblot by GreenShield has rebranded to GreenShield Health, but core EFAP services remain the same, including individual and couples counselling, work, health and life services, and digital cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).
- New additions to the EFAP platform include children's mental health supports through Mightier, Indigenous mental health supports through Noojimo, the GreenShield Well-Being program, and the GreenShield Care Navigator tool, all at no additional cost.
- Certificated Sick Leaves: A number of certificated staff members have used more than 5 consecutive sick days, with some having returned to work and others currently on sick leave, and a few staff members are approved for or currently on Extended Disability Benefit (EDB) or Long Term Disability (LTD).
- Uncertificated Sick Leaves: Similarly, several uncertificated staff members have used more than 5 consecutive sick days, with some back at work and others still on leave, in addition to staff members approved for or currently on Extended Disability Benefit (EDB) or Long Term Disability (LTD)

Recruitment and Retention:

- Job Postings: 229 jobs posted for the 2024/2025 school year with 2238 total applicants via ApplyToEducation.
- The division utilizes various platforms to advertise job openings, including ApplyToEducation, Indeed, LinkedIn, Jobillico, Social Media, Kijiji, U of L,

Chairperson: 

Secretary Treasurer: 

Lethbridge College, ASBOA, CPHR, Lethbridge Polytechnic, Christian Week, and Christian Jobs

- Approximately 9 Career Fairs were attended at various locations: the University of Lethbridge, University of Calgary - Werklund Education, Ambrose University, Ladders to Learning, Headstrong Summit, St. Mary's University, and the CAREERS Skilled Trades Fair
- Palliser has hosted numerous professional semester students: 48 Professional Semester 1 student teachers, 6 Professional Semester 2 student teachers, 21 Professional Semester 3 student teachers, and 5 Professional Semester support students. Partner post-secondary institutions include Ambrose University, University of Alberta, University of Calgary - Werklund School of Education, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge Polytechnic, St. Mary's University, and Providence Theological Seminary
- 334 teachers participated in the Teacher Intention Survey for the 2025-2026 school year. The survey results are used to calculate turnover and retention rates for both support and certificated staff. For certificated staff, the retention rate increased from 96.22% to 97.16%, while for support staff, it increased from 88.52% to 90.59%

Legislative changes in Bill 85 now require that teachers provide an updated criminal record and vulnerable sector check to their division every five years. In 2024-2025, 29 teachers and teacher leaders must provide a recent criminal record check (CRC) by August 22, 2025, with 18 already received as of February 2025. For the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years, the division achieved high compliance rates, with most teachers submitting their CRCs by the due date.

Administrative Procedures (APs) and Handbook Review: Several APs were reviewed and updated in the past year. A list is included in the report linked in the agenda. The Human Resources Handbook, Substitute Teacher Handbook and Caretaker Handbook have also been reviewed and updated.

FOIP/Public Interest Disclosure/Human Rights Complaints/Employment Standards Complaints/ATPC Complaints

- Public Interest Commissioner: One complaint filed in 2023-24.
- FOIP: Zero requests thus far for the 2024-25 school year

Staff Recognition

The division recognizes staff for years of service at 5-year increments. Several employees have been recognized for between 5 and 55 years of service for the 2023-2024 school year.

Chairperson:

Louise E. Berte

Secretary Treasurer:

CR

Audrey and Amber were thanked for their presentation and for the support the Human Resources and Payroll teams provide to all staff in the division.

Resolution # BT20250311 - 05

Moved by: Trustee Sharon Rutledge

That the Board receives the Human Resources and Payroll Report as information.

CARRIED

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

7.1. *SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Attached to the agenda was the Superintendent's monthly activities report.

7.2. *DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT, LEARNING SERVICES REPORT

Attached to the agenda was the Deputy Superintendent's monthly activities report.

7.3. *ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Attached to the agenda was the Associate Superintendent's monthly activities report.

7.4. *ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT, BUSINESS SERVICES REPORT

Attached to the agenda was the Associate Superintendent, Business Services' monthly activities report.

7.5. *TRUSTEE REPORTS

Attached to the agenda were the Trustees' monthly activities reports.

7.6. *ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 360 ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Administrative Procedure 360 was revised and provided as information for the Board.

7.7. *ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 470: VOLUNTEERS

Administrative Procedure 470 was revised and provided as information for the Board.


7.8. *ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 215: OFF CAMPUS EDUCATION

Administrative Procedure 470 was revised and provided as information for the Board.

7.9. *SCHOOL FIELD TRIP REPORT

A list of national and international field trips planned in the division was included in the agenda.

Chairperson: 

Secretary Treasurer: 

8. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1. Fiscal Budget Report 2024-2025

Cindy Rogers, Associate Superintendent Business Services, provided a budget update for the 2024-2025 school year.

Palliser School Division is actively managing a challenging financial landscape and continues to demonstrate strong fiscal responsibility. While facing a higher than anticipated clawback of \$3.4 million, equating to projected deficit as of quarter two of \$2.4 million, the division has already implemented effective cost-saving measures, notably streamlining purchasing processes at schools. The division is strategically navigating evolving procurement policies and is awaiting clarity on directives by the provincial government with respect to only making purchases from Canadian vendors. Despite financial challenges, the division's commitment continues to be on ensuring operational efficiency and maintaining essential services for students. A summary of the current financial report was linked in the agenda and is available for review at the following link:

[Year To Date Financial Performance Revenue and Expense Analysis - December 2024 - February 2025](#)

Resolution # BT20250311 - 06

Moved by: Trustee Mike Oliver

That the Board receives the Fiscal Budget Report as information.

CARRIED

8.2. Adjusting Bus Services in Response to 2025-2026 Walk Limit Changes

The government announced planned changes to walk limits which will impact the distance at which students qualify for busing services, effective the 2025-2026 school year. Three scenarios for implementing adjustment to Palliser's bus service with consideration of financial implications and community impact were brought forward by Administration at the February meeting and were again discussed. The Board considered all options and provided direction to Administration that they are in support of Option 1 as presented.

The options discussed are viewable at this link:

[Transportation - Walk limit Changes 2025-2026](#)

Chairperson:

Louise E. Berte

Secretary Treasurer:

CR

Resolution # BT20250311 - 07

Moved by: Trustee Tony Montina

That the Board directs Administration to maintain the current transportation service for the 2025-2026 school year.

CARRIED

- 8.3. 2025 Congress and National Trustee Gathering on Indigenous Education of the Canadian School Boards Association

The 2025 Canadian School Boards Association Congress and National Trustee Gathering on Indigenous Education is scheduled for July 2 to 5, 2025, in Winnipeg, MB. Palliser Trustees have attended past conferences. Discussion took place at the February meeting regarding whether a Board representative will attend this year's congress and was brought forward again for final decision. After discussion, no Palliser School Division Trustee will attend the conference this year.

- 8.4. Approval of the 3-Year 2025-2028 Capital Plan

Every year, school boards create a list of the building projects that are important to their communities for the next 3 years. This list is known as the board's 3-year capital plan. Government uses information from the individual school board plans to create a provincial capital plan. The provincial capital plan helps the government decide which projects will be approved when funding is available for school projects.

Resolution # BT20250311 - 08

Moved by: Trustee Mike Oliver


That the 2025-2028 Capital Plan be approved as presented with the Coalhurst Solution as the Board's first priority, County Central High School as the second priority and Sunnyside School as the third priority.

CARRIED

- 8.5. Alberta School Council Engagement (ASCE) Grant

The Alberta government allocates funding to school councils through the Alberta School Council Engagement (ASCE) Grant, designed to support the fulfillment of legislated responsibilities as outlined in the Education Act and School Council Regulation, and to enhance parental involvement. School councils determine the utilization of these funds. Discussion took place about how to best provide councils in the division with direction on the use of these funds. To provide more support to councils, information will be provided at the next Council of School

Chairperson: 

Secretary Treasurer: 

Councils meeting. More information will also be provided to Administrators at the next Administrators Council meeting.

8.6. Palliser School Division Edwin Parr Teacher Award Nominee

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that Rachelle Warchola, a first year teacher at Jennie Emery Elementary School in Coaldale, Alberta, is the division's 2025 Edwin Parr nominee.

The meeting paused for lunch from 11:47 a.m. to 12:36 p.m.

9. **MOVE TO *IN-CAMERA***

Resolution # BT20250311 - 09

Moved by: Trustee Debbie Laturnus

That the meeting moves *In-Camera*, at 12:36 p.m., pursuant to Section S64(3) of the Education Act, and Division 2 of Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter S-3 and amendments thereto, to discuss Privileged Information with regards to identified In-Camera Items.

CARRIED

MOVE OUT OF *IN-CAMERA*

Resolution #BT20250311 - 10

Moved by: Trustee Tony Montana

That the meeting moves out of *in-camera* at 1:22 p.m.

CARRIED

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:23 p.m.

Chairperson: 

Secretary Treasurer: 