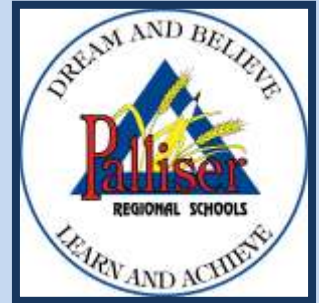


From the Chair ...

Highlights of the Board of Trustees Meeting held Tuesday, August 17, 2010



- The Board of Trustees of Palliser Regional Schools held its first meeting of the new school year Tuesday at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge.
- At a recent conference, Palliser was told it has one of the best Accountability Pillar's in the province. The pillar serves as a report card from Alberta Education of school performance. Chairman Don Zech commended Palliser's teachers for the work they do with our students. The board also reviewed information from Alberta Education about how jurisdictions across the province have fared in reaching Alberta Education's class size guidelines, which recommend a student-to-teacher ratio of 17:1 for kindergarten to Grade 3; 23:1 for Grades 4-6; 25:1 Grade 7-9; and 27:1 Grade 10-12. Palliser was among just a third of school jurisdictions in Alberta which attained those class sizes across all grades in core subjects.
- The board agreed to support the attendance of a student delegation from Palliser to the Canadian Student Leadership Conference taking place in Montreal Sept. 21-25. Monetary support of \$200 per individual to a maximum of \$1,000 will be provided. This is in keeping with past board practice regarding students attending conferences at a national level. Three students from County Central High School in Vulcan have been invited to attend.
- Carmangay Outreach School, Palliser's newest school, will open this fall. The trustees and administrators met with representatives of the community and County of Vulcan in June to discuss the new school, and the concept was met with positive feedback. This alternative program will serve students from the Low German Mennonite community in the area who wish to continue their high school education while juggling work and other commitments. The school in Carmangay closed in 2001 and has been used for a number of community uses since then. The new school's principal is Terri-Lynn Duncan, who also serves as principal of the neighbouring Barons School, an alternative program for students from Low German Mennonite families. The students complete the regular program of studies in English, but their education also includes instruction in High German and a faith component.
- Palliser's Central Office has a tentative plan to review five or six schools in the coming year. The dates have not yet been confirmed. The process sees a team of Central Office administrators and administrators from other schools visit a Palliser school to identify best practices, review performance and results, and suggest strategies for achieving the school's goals. The review is a tool for collecting feedback from stakeholders at the school, and it's then up to the school community to take that information and incorporate it into the school's goals and strategies. Six months after a school is reviewed, the school's administrator(s) is asked to report back to the board on the review and its outcomes. In an extension of the review process, Palliser is now developing a follow-up plan, asking schools to document the issues raised as a result of the review, what strategies have been used to address the issues, and evidence of progress. This would occur two years after the initial review.

A school review of Dorothy Dalgliesh Elementary School in Picture Butte was conducted in May. The review examined the school through the lens of Palliser's effectiveness model. Dan Ryder, district principal,

presented an overview of the review to the board. The review collected input from students, parents and school staff through site visits, classroom observations and online surveys.

The dimensions that contribute to school effectiveness are: adaptive leadership; responsive curriculum and instruction; assessment for learning; comprehensive prevention and early intervention; authentic partnerships; and a caring and respectful school environment. The review identified among the school's strengths its welcoming environment, and a caring staff with strong community support and partnerships. The data goes to school staff who can then begin to examine what it means and how to address issues. A workshop will be held with school staff to present the information and begin the process of staff identifying and addressing issues.

- Palliser's Peer Mentorship Programs in Palliser are in jeopardy as a number of grants have ended and applications for grants have been declined. The five programs across Palliser provide valuable supports for at-risk students. The programs could continue with a minimum of \$10,000 to \$15,000 just to assist with nutrition and supply costs for activities. Associate Superintendent Learning Services Barbara Gammon said the search continues for funding and she continues to hope the programs can be saved.
- The board heard from Associate Superintendent Human Resources Kevin Garinger that the Beginning Teacher Induction Program will be held at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge Aug. 18-20. This program for first-, second- and third-year teachers offers resources to students who are just starting their teaching career. In addition to the program resources, the program pairs up the beginning teachers with mentors from Palliser.

The next regular board meeting will be held at Palliser Centre in Lethbridge on Tuesday, September 21, beginning at 10 a.m.



Don Zech, Board Chair
Palliser Regional Schools