

Palliser Regional School Division  
Board Report November 15, 2016

On Nov 3 the board received the Organizational review report. We passed a motion to share the executive summary and recommendations of the report. We will continue to be meeting and discussing this report and recommendations more in depth in the next while. The summary and recommendations are online in PDF format. We have held a meeting on Nov 8, and have scheduled another in camera meeting for Nov 23 to discuss the recommendations and start formulating a plan with regards to the report.

At our last meeting on Oct 18, here are some points:

The board will continue planning for a comprehensive review of its policies. Trustees discussed again a desire to systematically review policy and related procedures, starting with any policies the review report may identify as priorities. Trustees discussed how to ensure the policy review process gives staff, school councils and the public opportunity to provide input.

The format of board agendas will change for the Nov. 24 meeting, to streamline meetings and give trustees more time to discuss and deliberate issues. The board discussed setting aside time for a public question period and other presentations, as needed. The agenda format can be tweaked once we experience the new process.

The board approved the 2015-2016 audit plan, as presented by KPMG to the audit committee. As part of the audit, the firm plans to review management of school-generated funds at three schools across the division. The audit committee also discussed personal use of Palliser-owned vehicles. Secretary/Treasurer Wayne Braun said he would be meeting with a tax expert before recommending a policy and/or administrative procedure on the matter. The audit committee will receive the 2015-2016 audit report on Nov. 23, with the report being presented to the full board at the Nov. 24 meeting.

The board amended its contract with Acting Superintendent Dr. Garry Andrews. The terms were not discussed publicly, but Dr Andrews said later the change made his contract flexible and fluid, essentially month to month. Originally, his contract was set to end Oct. 31, the deadline for completion of the organizational review.

Palliser's enrolment for the 2016-2017 school year stood at 8,211 students from early childhood services through Grade 12, up slightly from last year and up 0.7 per cent from budgeted projections. The increase in enrolment is in kindergarten, where Palliser has 720 young learners. In Grades 1-12, Palliser has 7,491 students, down slightly from a projection of 7,529.

The board discussed Draft AP 129, Safety Response to Critical Incidents, this will change the language used about school safety. Will address overuse of the term "lockdown," by ensuring that word was only used in the event of serious incident or threat inside a school. Two new terms would be introduced. The first, "hold and secure," would refer to an incident occurring outside the school that might pose a threat to students and staff. An example would include an armed robbery in the neighbourhood near the school with the armed individual still at large. In such a situation, students would be kept indoors and the school's exterior doors would be locked. The second term, "shelter in place," would reflect environmental conditions outside the school, such as extreme weather, a chemical spill or power outage. In such a situation, the students would be kept safe inside the school with exterior doors closed.

Shelter in place could refer to a blizzard in which it's safer to keep students at school rather than dismiss them early, sending them into the elements when there may not be an adult at home. The three levels of security responses would help prevent overuse of the term "lockdown," reserving that for the most serious incidents. This would help ensure students take lockdown calls seriously and would reduce anxiety about other safety scenarios. Other jurisdictions in southern Alberta are moving to this common language. The AP is still in draft format as additional feedback is collected from stakeholders.

This year's Student Leadership Conference was held at the University of Lethbridge Nov. 9. It was open to students from Grades 7 through 12. The event was planned by a committee of student leaders from across Palliser who will be leading breakout sessions on leadership for their peers. I heard that it was well attended.

The board's next regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 24.

Should anyone have any questions, please contact myself at 403-599-2306, or 403-485-8097

Thank you  
Colleen Deitz