**Milo School Council Meeting, May 28, 2025**

**Board Meeting Highlights for April 8, 2025, Meeting**

**Southern Alberta Collegiate Institute**

Through partnerships with Lethbridge Polytechnic and other regional organizations, the Southern Alberta Collegiate Institute (SACI) offers exciting career pathway programs for students in grades 7–12. These programs provide opportunities to explore careers in Trades, Agriculture, and Health Care through hands-on learning and real-world experiences.

For younger students (grades 7–9), the E3 program builds confidence and practical skills through projects such as patching bike tires, plant splicing, first aid, and constructing small electrical items. These experiences are especially impactful for students who learn best through hands-on activities.

Older students (grades 9–12) can participate in dual credit programs that include college-level courses, work experience, certifications, and other career-focused activities, providing a valuable head start after high school. SACI plans to expand these opportunities further following the completion of the new facility at Lethbridge Polytechnic. Families and students interested in learning more can visit the SACI page on the “OFF CAMPUS” website.

**Numeracy Report**

The Palliser Numeracy Professional Learning Community is a dedicated group of teachers and administrators who support the continued growth of math teaching and learning in the Division. This work directly supports the Division’s goal of helping every student develop strong numeracy skills as foundational building blocks for academic success and daily life.

This year, the Division hosted a successful Numeracy Symposium and partnered with neighboring divisions to deliver targeted professional learning opportunities, including the well-received Building Thinking Classrooms approach. These initiatives are equipping teachers with practical tools and strategies for delivering engaging, hands-on math instruction. Resources such as additional whiteboard spaces, digital platforms, and fluency kits are also helping spark student curiosity and promote deeper thinking.

Teachers across the Division are collaborating to build clear learning progressions that support math development from one grade to the next. Their collective efforts focus on aligning instruction, supporting students who require additional help, and using data to inform teaching, particularly in Grades K–3, where foundational numeracy skills are critical for long-term success. An opportunity will be provided to teachers to participate in the development of this resource.

**Literacy Report**

Palliser continues to prioritize strong literacy foundations, especially in the early years. This year, more than 1,000 students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 received targeted support in reading and language development. Teachers and administrators collaborated to enhance assessment practices and responses to student needs through updated tools, including the Palliser Early Literacy Assessment and Intervention Pathways.

Professional learning opportunities focused on early reading instruction, vocabulary development, and comprehension. Two Literacy Symposia were held in November, one in Calgary and one in Lethbridge. Professional learning days and collaborative sessions enabled educators to connect and share strategies. Increased inter-school collaboration also allowed teachers to observe literacy intervention practices in action. Staff have asked for more opportunities to learn from other educators in their classrooms.

Partnerships with the University of Lethbridge and the University of Calgary have broadened professional learning options for staff. Administrators continue to engage in learning communities that support strong literacy leadership within schools.

While progress has been made in creating more consistent assessment practices, changes to provincial literacy assessments have introduced some challenges. The Division remains committed to flexible approaches while working toward more unified methods of tracking student growth over time. Educators are using assessment data to guide instruction and ensure timely, targeted support for students.

**Facilities Update**

The Palliser School Division’s Facilities team has experienced significant changes this year. The unexpected passing of long-time Facilities Supervisor Rod Swatzenberger at the beginning of the year was deeply felt by all who knew him. Most recently, Rod oversaw the planning, construction, and completion of Coaldale Prairie Winds Secondary, a facility that stands as a testament to his dedication and passion for the students of Palliser. The report also listed all the other projects and improvements that were completed over the past year.

The Facilities team is now led by Rick Aos, Facilities Manager, who joins Palliser from the University of Lethbridge. The team is also supported by Stephen O’Connor, Maintenance Supervisor, who oversees Palliser’s caretaking staff. With several long-serving facilities employees set to retire this year, their experience is being generously passed along to new team members.

The Facilities team will be working closely with schools and conducting site visits to enhance learning environments for all Palliser students.

**Board Meeting Highlights May 13, 2025**

**Inclusive Education Update:**

The Board reviewed progress on the division’s multi-year strategy to strengthen inclusive education. This year’s focus has been on fully implementing a new Individual Program Plan (IPP) system and providing professional learning that helps staff design lessons for all learners. Feedback from teachers and Learning Support Teachers has been positive, noting the new IPP platform is more efficient and better supports student voice and family involvement.

**Indigenous Education Update:**

The Board received an important update on Indigenous education, focused on how schools are supporting the success of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students. Data shared in the presentation showed that Indigenous students who have been enrolled in the division longer tend to achieve higher results on provincial tests and literacy assessments, suggesting that consistent support over time makes a meaningful difference.

The report also covered trends in high school completion, drop-out, and transition rates to postsecondary education. While progress is being made, the division is continuing to strengthen both school and division-level strategies to boost outcomes. This includes responding directly to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives and needs are part of everyday learning across the system.

**Fiscal Update:**

The Division’s financial update shows a positive shift, with the projected deficit for 2024–2025 reduced from $1.36 million to approximately $1.09 million, thanks to additional targeted funding received during the year. These funds, supporting areas like dual credit programming, enrollment growth, and fuel cost contingencies, have helped offset some key expenses. Facilities staff are also completing site audits to prioritize maintenance and safety needs, especially regarding roofs.

**CTS Trailer Program Update:**

The Board received an update on the Career and Technology Studies (CTS) trailers currently rotating among Coalhurst High School, Brant Christian School, and Noble Central School. These mobile shops are a vital way for students to gain hands-on skills in areas like woodworking and welding, especially in schools without permanent shop spaces. The trailers are well-used and highly valued by students, staff, and the wider school communities.

While there are some maintenance and staffing challenges, short and long-term recommendations are being developed, including rotating the trailers more efficiently, improving heating and air quality, and partnering with local trades or colleges. Overall, the trailers are a practical solution for offering experiential learning for Palliser’s smaller schools.

**Review of the Education Plan:**

Palliser’s current Three-Year Education Plan, which launched in the 2023–2024 school year, was reviewed by the Board as it enters its second year. While no major revisions are planned at this time, some key updates were noted. Notably, the Division will discontinue the use of 'Our School' surveys, as they were found to overlap significantly with Alberta Education’s existing surveys. Instead, schools will begin developing local surveys tailored to gather more meaningful and actionable feedback. The Mission, Vision and Values statements will also potentially change after the Board completes their strategic planning process. The Board will revisit the Education following the approval of the 2025–2026 budget.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**: **The time of the June 17th Board meeting has been changed to begin at 11:30 AM.**

We had a regular board meeting on May 27, 2025, to pass our 2025/26 school budget and year 2 of the Education Plan. Details will follow at the next Milo school meeting. We have a Regular Board Meeting on June 17, 2025.

Please contact Lorelei Bexte with any questions or concerns, [lorelei.bexte@pallisersd.ab.ca](mailto:lorelei.bexte@pallisersd.ab.ca),

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