



Palliser Regional Schools

Palliser Centre

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Budget challenge creates an opportunity for innovation

Hello everyone,

Spring is always a great and busy time, not just in schools but everywhere it seems. Days get longer, outdoor sports kick back into gear and for our farm families, a new growing season begins. In schools, it seems final exams and all our year-end work is just around the corner.

This is also a season for planning for next year in our schools. The look ahead is not all rosy. Recently, the provincial budget was announced, and though we were relieved that the upcoming contractual obligations to our teachers were acknowledged with funding, we were disappointed to see most other grants reduced by 3.1 per cent. Between decreases to grants, no new funding for enrolment growth or additional high school credits and an expected structural deficit this year, Palliser is facing a shortfall of about \$3.55 million.

It is a significant number and it will be a challenge to maintain the many excellent programs and services currently offered in our schools. Every school board across Alberta is facing a very similar challenge.

In the words of former White House advisor and now Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, "You never let a serious crisis go to waste... it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before."

When the funding model for distance learning was dramatically changed to our detriment two years ago, we saw the need for our own online school. Out of that crisis, Palliser Beyond Borders was born. Our academic wrap-around team and collaborative practice model are examples of fresh ways of building capacity and supporting classroom teachers to serve the great diversity of student needs.

I'm reminded of a presentation by one of our students at our recent outstanding Palliser Student Leadership Conference in Calgary. She said leadership can be a product of our environment. Faced with a challenge or obstacle, we grow and lead and overcome.

Speaking of opportunities on the horizon, I'd encourage you to mark May 28th on your calendars. Palliser's Board of Trustees has set aside that day for a division-wide stakeholders meeting. Three years ago we brought together parents, staff, students and public from across Palliser to talk about school success. Please watch for more information about this gathering in the next few weeks.

Kevin Gietz, Superintendent
Palliser Regional Schools



*Together we will ensure learning success for all students
to develop their unique potential as caring citizens in a changing world.*