

## Thursday, 17 October 2019 at 20:00

In the Teachers' Canteen (Van Houtte building)

Av. du Vert Chasseur 46

B – 1180 Brussels

### MINUTES APEEE Board Meeting 17/10/2019

#### ATTENDEES:

**Voting Board Members:** Irene BONVISSUTO (IT Sec), André DE WOOT DE TRIXHE (FR Sec), Istvan DOBO (HU Sec, CE HU Sec Deputy), Brian GRAY (APEEE Treasurer, DK Sec), Marc GUITART (ES Sec), Anne-Marie HAMMER (APEEE VP Administration, DK elected by GA, CE DK Prim), Karin HUNDEBOLL (APEEE VP Pedagogy, DK Prim), Eduardo LANZA SAIZ (Mat), Alejandro MARTINEZ TUREGANO (ES Prim), Kathryn MATHE (APEEE President, EN Sec), Pere MOLES PALLEJA (Elected by GA), Stefan OBERMAIER (DE Sec), Gundars OSTROVSKIS (Berkendael LV, member elected by GA – also representing by proxy Marek BOBIS, Berkendael SK, member elected by GA), Emese SAVOIA-KELETI (Deputy HU Sec, CE HU Sec – representing by Proxy Balazs PALVOLGYI - HU Prim)

**Deputy Board Member (non-voting):** Julien REICHSTADT (FR Prim), Tibor SCHARF (DE Sec)

**Other participants :** Neva ALES (Observer), Samantha CHAITKIN (CE IT Prim, CE EN Sec Deputy), Thomas ELSNER (Observer), Joanna GAWRYLCZYK-MALESA (Observer), Selena GRAY (APEEE Secretariat), Dietrich ROMETSCH (CE DE Sec), Nadia ROSINI (CE Mat), Monika VELIKONJA (CE SWALS Sec, CE SWALS Prim Deputy)

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The President notifies the Board that Pt 14 (Results of APEEE Services' survey of MAT-P1-P2 parents on their children's transport needs on Fridays after School / New Transport Service) is removed from agenda points. The agenda is adopted, 3 points are added to AOB.

#### 2. Approval of draft minutes of the Board meeting on 10 September

The minutes are approved. The Secretariat should correct spelling of Gundars OSTROVSKIS on Page 3.

### 3. Action points reviewed

The President reviews the status of the Action Points. Most have been completed, but some are still pending:

For Pt.3, regarding sweatshirts, while sample sweatshirts were ordered and shown off during the P2&P3 and P4&P5 Class Rep meetings, there is a problem (high cost) with online purchase system and we will need to look into other alternatives, e.g. negotiate instead with the CDE to use their site. It is noted there will be no bulk pre-ordering of sweatshirts in order to maintain stock control. Sweatshirts will be ordered and pre-paid online, with APEEE undertaking delivery to classrooms.

For Pt.8, regarding the DPO contract revision/suggestions are currently with DPO.

For Pt.12, the President refers to and goes through the 3 formal responses from the school (Docs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 circulated with agenda) related to the New Marking System, S1-S3 Timetable Change, and L2 Class Grouping.

For pt.16, the report on the meeting with OSG on the New Marking System (Doc 15.1 circulated with agenda) is referred to.

ACTION: Look into alternatives for online sales of sweatshirts. ACTION: Revise and sign contract with DPO.
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### Points for decision

4. **Changes in the APEEE Board Calendar:** 28 November proposed for next APEEE Board Meeting to align with General Assembly of Services; 10 December proposed for General Assembly.

The downside of 28 November being Parliament week is noted as well as the fact that several key members will be at INTERPARENTS. The fact that the Treasurer is not available on 10 December is also noted. The President therefore decided to put this to written procedure, and updates will be decided and circulated to the Board as soon as possible

ACTION: New CA/GA dates will be proposed through written procedure. The document is attached as Annex 1.
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5. **Appointments:** INTERPARENTS representatives, Neva Ales for EEBI and Nora Straehle for EEBI Berkendael; EEBI Berkendael delegate to the Groupe de Suivi, Thomas Elsner; Award Panel for Autumn Procedure.

The following are voted for unanimously (the 14 votes present are all in favour): The INTERPARENTS representatives Neva Alves (for EEBI) and Nora Straehle (for EEBI Berkendael); Thomas Elsner as EEBI Berkendael delegate to the Brussels Steering Group (Groupe de Suivi); the Autumn 2019 Awards Panel for the APEEE Autumn Award Funding Procedure will include coordinators from APEEE WGs (Bien Et re, Community Building, and Pedagogy), an APEEE Safety

& Hygiene Group delegate, the APEEE Financial Adviser and 2 representatives from the school and 1 from CDE. No additional Board Member volunteers.

**ACTION:** All new delegates and the bodies to which they belong will be formally informed.

## Discussion and decision

### 6. **Proposal to launch APEEE survey of P5/S1/S4 parents on the pilot that replaces "bilingual L2 language groups" with mixed ability classes and parallel "enrichment hours" for high proficiency L2 students**

Anne-Marie Hammer takes the Board through the summary document attached (Doc 6 circulated with agenda) and expresses her hope for the dialogue with the school to continue.

The Board votes in favour (13 in favour; 0 against, 2 abstentions of the 15 votes present) for the Languages Coordinator of the APEEE Pedagogical Group/Languages (in cooperation with its members) to draft a survey to present for approval at the next Board meeting. This survey is intended to complement the school's own end of year evaluation and should therefore go out to all parents concerned early in December. Although there is some debate about whether this survey will be run too early, the members are in general agreement that it is essential in order to complement the school's evaluation, due to the way the pilot was introduced and is being implemented and the lack of information regarding the evaluation. It is underlined that we unfortunately do not have the luxury of time as decisions will be taken, and students are already being affected by the new pilot scheme. It is requested to include a question on whether the parents feel they have been properly informed and to include some 'roll out' questions, also questions aimed at weak students as well as strong students.

With regards to the objective to *'write to the language coordinators of L2 FR and EN before the Toussaint break to raise concerns about significant disparities in the respective implementation'*, there is consensus for the Pedagogical Working Group, to produce a draft, on behalf of concerned parents, to be approved through written procedure and officially sent by APEEE. This should include asking why some materials are below the levels in the official curriculum and why there are different approaches.

It is also underlined that parents should be encouraged to contact subject teachers and coordinators individually to raise concerns, due to the haphazard way the pilot is being implemented and the different approaches and different levels of materials used.

The main discussion revolves around the history of the set-up of bilingual classes in the first place, the different effects of mixed classes on the students (whether demotivated because fluent or equally if not mastering the language), and the fact that it worked well for 10 years. It is underlined that change should not be for change's sake; the school should consider why it was set up in the first place. It is argued that it is not an 'elitist' approach to put fluent students in an advanced class - it is also for the benefit of the teachers and for pedagogical reasons, to meet students at their own level. It is also positive from the point of view of the weaker students. It is important to ensure a dialogue with the school, to recall the pedagogical rationale behind the development of bilingual classes 10 years ago and to retain institutional memory surrounding the creation of these classes. When such a pilot scheme is introduced, ideally teachers, parents and students should be part of the design of the programme to give feedback on their experiences. When the school decides to do something, it is important to decide the success factors upfront before implementation.

The problem with how this pilot scheme was introduced at the CE (a Consultative Body) is also noted. The Director should produce written documentation; oral presentations can lead to different understandings between the members present and leave room for doubt and unfulfilled

objectives. A solid written presentation of such change is required to take back to the diverse stakeholders. It is difficult (especially for the teachers) to achieve harmonisation with decisions taken in this manner, without analysis and without a clear set of paperwork behind that explains the whole approach.

**ACTION:** Language Coordinator of APEEE Pedagogical Group/Languages, in cooperation with its members, to draft a survey for approval at next Board Meeting.  
**ACTION:** letter from APEEE to the language coordinators to be drafted by the Pedagogical Group and approved through written procedure. The latter document attached as Annex 2.

## **7. Proposal to mandate Legal WG to draft updated APEEE and APEEE Board Internal Rules of Procedure**

There is not consensus on the tracked changes and proposed updates (Docs 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 circulated before the Board meeting), and the time for redrafting is deemed too short; it is decided that all comments on the APEEE and APEEE Board Internal Rules of Procedure be submitted to the Secretariat by Friday, 25 October. It is acknowledged that it is important to agree on a consistent set of rules, to produce a strong document, rather than to continue to operate far from the practice of the old Rules (inconsistent and unsure of ourselves). The Legal Working Group coordinator suggests that the Bureau produces a set of issues to be addressed, guidelines indicating what is wanted rather than working from a version of the old rules. The Legal WG could then take the text and check these are reflected.

**ACTION:** Bureau will produce a draft and a set of guidelines to be discussed at the next Board Meeting; this will form the basis of the new Rules of Procedure to be drafted by the LWG.  
**ACTION:** The Treasurer confirmed he had registered the UBO (Ultimate Beneficial Owner) information for APEEE Bxl1 by taking the information already entered in the BCE (Banque Carrefour des Entreprises) files. This will need to be updated after the changes decided in the AGM, before end of December.

## **Discussion**

### **8. First Aid training for School teachers and surveillance staff**

Alejandro MARTINEZ TUREGANO presents a proposal (Doc 8 circulated with agenda) by the Spanish Section for the Safety and Hygiene Committee to investigate further what First Aid Trainings are being given to teachers and surveillants. First Aid training is compulsory for surveillants but following a brief research into the situation, it seems only the afternoon surveillants receive regular training. The morning and canteen surveillants only receive training when hired. The President highlights that the Child Protection Policy has reference to First Aid Training at schools and suggests checking with the Secretary General Office as they are actually in the process of updating this document. She suggests getting advice from the Secretary General office; what they envisage and what the different schools implement.

The President mentions as a point of interest the Polish Section First Aid Initiative which is running in parallel. This charity will train Polish students and teachers. First Aid aimed at students is not funded through the Central Office, but something that APEEE or families could fund. (Maybe for a Project Week).

The members all agree on the importance to prioritize First Aid and to explore further. (Ixelles Model).

Suggestions include for the Safety & Hygiene Representatives to contact the Red Cross or the Pompiers (as the Belgian schools do) and explore what they could offer and how they could plan to work together on this with the school.

**ACTION:** Spanish Section to look into Belgian Regulations; Safety & Hygiene to contact the Pompiers and Red Cross; INTERPARENTS to contact Secretary General's office for Child Protection – all to feed information to Alejandro.

## **9. Changes proposed to secondary Project Week structure**

The President takes the Board through the problems arising from the Project Week structure and the changes proposed to the Secondary Project Week Structure (doc 9 circulated with agenda). Essentially where the school officially had 2.5 annual project weeks in the past, the proposal is now to have a so-called 'all-in-all-out' concept, concentrated in one long week in April and two short weeks in October and February, effectively a shift from 2.5 to 1.5 weeks. The issue has been discussed in the CE over the past 12 months and we have supported the structuring of Project Weeks and the all-in-all-out model. In the past, students (especially S1-S3 students) left behind in normal classes had many cancelled lessons due to the problems with replacing teachers off campus on trips. We like the idea that all students will benefit from Project Weeks (excursion/trip/project) if possible.

The concern with this approach is the risk of losing strong and good projects (the risk involved in the process of getting rid of things without taking into consideration institutional history). Teachers have run projects in their spare time and generally without too much support from the school management but also relatively free from interference. The new push to rationalise could affect fragile projects and the risk that teachers lose interest in offering valuable initiatives (e.g. the Hungarian Bio Camp). It is noted that we have yet to receive any documentation on their plans or the impact they will have.

A discussion ensues. It is suggested that the system is moving toward a competence-based approach and toward learning that goes beyond curriculum and "knowledge" and getting rid of days dedicated to projects works against this. Instead of reducing the number of Project Weeks, we should consider placing projects at the end of the school year after exam periods for Secondary. On the other side, the key issue is not the number of project week days, but rather the number of quality projects during those days. By concentrating the same number of projects in 1.5 weeks, there will be less disruption to normal classes throughout the school year. It is noted that most absences are concentrated around the April Project Week, which have the S6 trips, you don't need to cut Project Weeks but rather to concentrate more activities in this week. In one section a teacher has suggested that we will now have Project Days instead of Project Weeks; on certain days you will either be on an excursion or kept busy in the school. There is also concern that level-wide single-day excursions for 250 students will not have the same pedagogical impact as class trips, which build directly on class learning. The school management reassures that it will continue to support pedagogical projects which take place outside Project Weeks (e.g. Model UN, Eurosport, Science Festival, Festival of Arts and Music, theatrical performance, etc.). No written documentation on the new organisation of project weeks has yet been presented.

Members encourage the APEEE to request the school to produce in writing more detail on its vision and how it plans to establish this approach, a short analysis of the impact on existing projects as well as the programme of trips for this year (already promised at the last CE). The consensus is to write to the administration and request them to produce these papers in advance of the Secondary CE (3 December), supporting the idea of restructuring, but to continue to support the projects in parallel. Teachers should be encouraged, recognised and stimulated to undertake projects. Members are encouraged to speak to their CE reps.

**ACTION:** The APEEE President/VP Pedagogy will write a letter to the Secondary Direction asking for documentation on the pending plans to change the Project Week structure.

## Information points

### 10. Highlights from School Advisory Council and EEB1 Administrative Board (Docs 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4 circulated with agenda)

The President takes the Board through the *Main Outcomes of EEB1 Administrative Board Meeting on 24 September 2019*: the difficult start of the school year; Rentrée information; School Infrastructure/Régie de Batiments; Due diligence by the Central Office to end overcrowding at the Uccle site; Working methods (management's lack of written documentation prior to the 17 September School Advisory Council meeting and for the Administrative Board meeting – and it is noted that the only documents available were in fact ours!); School Calendar; End practice of cancelling school days for S1-S6 at the end of the official school year; Replacement in secondary (concern for extent of cancelled lessons); Educational Support; Child Protection policy (meeting next week at Central Office); Conflict Resolution (a member remarks that European Schools do not have an Ombudsperson); Annual pedagogical school plan; Effects of Brexit; attractiveness measure for teachers; Creation and Suppression of Posts (members remarked how demoralizing this is for local hire teachers); Follow up to EEB1 Whole School Inspection; Outgoing Students Committee Presidency.

### 11. Highlights from CEs Primary and Secondary

Vice President Karin HUNDEBOLL takes the Board through Doc. 11 circulated with agenda: Highlights CE Meetings).

For *Available Spaces*, the President adds that it is not only about free spaces and activities but about the administration (kids required to check in, extra people to ferry students to different activities, ensuring equity...). Samantha CHAITKIN refers to cracks to fill in (complaints of S1-S3 students going to an activity which does not take place and end up hanging around, others end up in the canteen anyway when a sport is cancelled). It is noted that this point (Available spaces during free periods/cancelled lessons) also covers Pt 13 of the agenda.

The Board discusses the *scheduling of the B tests*. Members are requested to report on any feedback regarding this year or last year, to make sure Cycle Coordinators can take everything into account for presentation during the next CE meeting. The President reports the complaint from the English section last year that the S6 B tests were spread over 3 weeks resulting in lost teaching hours; Pere MOLES PALLEJA reports from S4 Spanish Section that they started them this year too early, already in September; Emese SAVOIA-KELETI reports that the tests for the Hungarian Section are scheduled for after the October break and not before, therefore too close to the next B-tests already.



Regarding the placement of *teachers' course description on SMS*, it is believed that this has not been undertaken. There is some scepticism about whether the school even delivered a reminder to teachers. The Section Representatives are asked to double check whether course programmes have been put online. There seems to be no consistent treatment by teachers.

Regarding the *Role and function of the Primary Education Council* it was mentioned that the general rules should be available online.

Regarding the *Primary Choir*, Samantha CHAITKIN adds that a lunchtime option by same teacher was a novelty addition this year, for those not in European Hours Choir. This gives more opportunities to those who did not make it into that lottery and an idea is for the 2 groups to come together for concerts. However, she added the Director Cajhen did not seem to know about it and the opportunity was communicated last minute with a very brief delay for response. This point highlighted the problems with communication in general and the sense that the school has the goodwill, but then does not follow through.

## **12. Berkendael Update**

Gundars OSTROVSKIS gives an oral update on the situation at Berkendael. He reports on the developments since last month: classroom equipment (IT and FR sections) is slowly being resolved with budget by the school now allocated; double booking of rooms with OIB Garderie, especially Friday afternoons, is being tackled; there is hope that the toilet problem will be worked on over the October break; first badges have been distributed (nursery and P1). He touches on the development of the Greek section, whereby they are meant to be diverted to Berkendael except if they have siblings at Ixelles, except that this year it seems new classes have been created at Ixelles which would have a negative impact on the number of pupils left in Berkendael. The discussion continues around the Policy of the Central Enrolment Office, overcrowding, creation of new classes and the danger of not thinking in terms of the future but simply thinking of the next year. The Survey filled in by 70 P5 parents at Berkendael cites 48 preferring Uccle, 14 Ixelles, 8 Woluwe and 0 Laeken.

## **13. Available spaces/activities for S1-S7 students during free hours and cancelled lessons - state of play.**

Covered in Point 11.

## **14. Results of APEEE Services' survey of MAT-P1-P2 parents on their children's transport needs on Fridays after School / New Transport Service**

Point Removed

## **15. New marking system and adaptation of national equivalence tables: roll out of the system; results of the first year; update on the German equivalence table**

The President takes the Board through documents circulated to the Board with the agenda (Docs 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6). She notes that Document 15.1 (New Marking Scale) can be circulated. Document 15.6 statistics can also be circulated to parents.

**16. Funded projects: Hungarian drug programme debriefing report; "Save and Learn to Save" - Polish first aid trainings funded through simplified procedure**

Emese Savova-Keleti takes the Board through the report (Doc 16.1 circulated with agenda) on the Hungarian drug and addiction prevention programme now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

The Save and Learn to Save programme (Doc 16.2) is already voted for through the bureau.

**17. Written reports from meetings attended by APEEE representatives since the last Board meeting on 10 September.**

The Board has been sent the following reports in writing:

- Educational Council for Secondary, 12 September
- School Advisory Council, 17 September
- EEB1 Administrative Board meeting, 24 September
- Central Enrolment Board, 2/14 October
- Education Council for Primary - agenda, 15 October

The following reports were not yet sent:

- Pedagogical Group Meeting, 3 October
- INTERPARENTS meeting and Joint Teaching Committee, 7-11 October

**18. Written reports from past meetings attended by APEEE representatives (docs 18.1, 18.2 circulated with agenda):**

- School Advisory Council (official minutes), 15 January
- KIVA Information Meeting, 17 January

## **AOB**

**Trapped in Bathroom.** Pere Moles-Palleja reports that a parent was trapped in a bathroom at Uccle on the day of the meeting.

**Skype Lessons.** The SWALS rep informs the Board on the disastrous running of skype classes, introduced as a solution for being unable to find a replacement teacher. The skype classes were proposed as a solution for L1 for Slovenia Section (S1-S3) but failed for various reasons (poor internet connection, and on another occasion, it could not even take place as the teacher in charge of unlocking the classroom was absent!). Also, it is felt that the school is not using all the resources available and could do more in its recruitment searches.

**Intervention during Enrolment Board Meeting regarding the issue of Overcrowding in the Brussels Schools.**

In relation to the upcoming Central Enrolment Authority meeting on 22 October, the President requests permission to draft an Intervention, together with the other three Brussels APEEEs, regarding to the serious problem of overcrowding at the European Schools and the inadequacy of the current enrolment guidelines in tackling the problems. The request is to have an intervention which elaborates on the message that: there should be an increase in capacity and/or prioritisation in enrolment in this cycle ensuring that by September 2020 the number of enrolled students will not exceed capacity.



The CEA parent delegates will read the intervention and request that it be included in the version of the Guidelines which goes to the Budget Committee and Board of Governors. There is consensus to grant the request.

**ACTION:** Draft intervention for presentation at CEA. The document is attached in Annex 3.

## List of Annexes

- Annex 1: APEEE annual calendar - approved by written procedure
- Annex 2: Letter to the secondary L2 language coordinators on pilot enrichment programme – approved by written procedure
- Annex 3: Joint statement of the four EEB APEEEs requesting that overcrowding in the Brussels schools be urgently addressed - presented at 22 October 2019 CEA