

Brussels, 8 June 2023

Minutes Board Meeting 8 May 2023

ATTENDEES:

Board Members (voting): Noémie BEIGBEDER (FR Sec), Maria GERHARDT (CA DE Prim), Viktor HAUK (Treasurer; HU Sec), Andreas KEIDEL (Berkendael DE), Brigitte LUGGIN (DE Sec), Kathryn MÁTHÉ (Secretary; EN Sec), Sara MILANO (IT Sec), Pere MOLES PALLEJA (member elected by GA), Kenneth MYRUP (DK Sec), Sandrine PIERLOZ (Member elected by GA; deputy CA FR Prim), Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ (ES Sec), Gundars OSTROVSKIS (VP Berkendael; LV), Valentina PAPA (President; EN Prim), Jan TYMOWSKI (Deputy Secretary; PL Prim), Julia TYMOWSKA (PL Sec), Monika VELIKONJA (VP Pedagogy & Uccle Secondary; SWALS), Alex WILSON (Member elected by GA, Deputy Berkendael EN)

Board Members Voting by Proxy: Mathilde DESFEUILLET (FR Prim) to Laurence PRADOURA, Claire GAUDIN (Member elected by GA; deputy CE FR Sec) to Sandrine PIERLOZ, Marek DVORSKY (Berkendael SK) to Gundars OSTROVSKIS.

Deputy Board Members (non-voting): Katharina Bertl (DE Prim), Santiago CALVO RAMOS (ES Prim), Sara DAGOSTINI (IT Sec), Marc GUITART (ES Sec), Bartosz HACKBART (Berkendael FR), Nathalie KALOGERAS (FR Sec), Alba MARINO (Berkendael ES), Sara MARTELLI (Berkendael IT), Laurence PRADOURA (Fr Prim), Emese SAVOIA-KELETI (HU Sec), Thomas SPOORMANS (Fr Sec)

Other participants: Aleyda HERNANDEZ LAVIADES (deputy CE ES Mat), Javier VILLEGAS BURGOS

APEEE Secretariat: Selena GRAY

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus with the following modifications: Pt.3 Update on Well Being WG postponed to later in the agenda pending arrival of Representative; Pt. 11 on the Fete earlier as Point for information.

2. Approval of Board minutes 23 March 2023

It was requested to postpone approval until the next meeting giving more time to review.

POINTS FOR INFORMATION

3. Administrative Meetings and Reports:

- School Meetings: first meeting of Respect et Propreté WG; Meeting of Communication WG Kathryn MATHE, delegate to the Communication WG, reported she and Talia BOATI attended the



meeting held two weeks ago and that progress is slow. The Communication Policy should reflect current practice but not much interest from school admin to change. The school website was presented, this does not really integrate the needs. A school calendar is required and better content, more dynamic and tailored to its main and current audience (students and parents).

Action: Kathryn MATHE to write and to raise purpose of WG at next SAC meeting and possibly Admin Board

- Update by Well Being WG

No representatives were present at the meeting and the update is postponed to the next meeting

4. INTERPARENTS: 12-14 April Board of Governors meeting

As the BoG was held during the Easter holidays, the IP representatives had no concrete briefing to present. However, they could already inform the Board that three new Member State representatives had been appointed and that the Appeals procedure is ongoing, IP is within the deadline to check the reply received from the Central Office. Representatives also underlines the inadequacy of the planning cycle for the Annual Plan, vital for quality assurance and pedagogical development.

5. Secretariat update – update on online payment

President Valentina PAPA reported on the work that had been done to establish an online direct payment system for the APEEE membership fee. She reminded the Board on the work that had been done the previous school year and why it had not worked out with the provider INGENICO. New research and work has now led to a contract with another payment provider, DIGITEAL, but the company handling development of the parent database cannot integrate the last step until July. As this is after the reconduction of the database in mid-June, for the next school year, the payment system will remain the same as the previous year with the idea to integrate the new provider for payment reminders after July. She will continue to update the Board on developments.

6. Update on OIB

President Valentina PAPA informed that the survey carried out by the APEEE, and its results were shared with OIB, as OIB had requested and as agreed to during the last Board meeting.

Spanish section representative Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ (ES Sec) underlined that it is an important issue that should represent interests of all parents and APEEE should be involved in all decisions, which was not the case regarding the last decision taken by the school and OIB. He urged the Board to agree that it must be interlocutor in any discussions, and he looks forward to the OIB reaction to the survey. It was noted again that not all parents received the survey and confirmed that there is a problem with regards to the server and reception in certain accounts such as that of Hotmail. This will be analysed. FR section reps also indicated that the OIB decision not to grant a place in Berkendael garderie to former Berkendael pupils when they pass to Uccle secondary and who do not have siblings in Berkendael school anymore was felt as really unfair by the families. Indeed they are the only pupils in such a situation to have to leave the garderie where they have always been when they pass to S1. There was a discussion amongst Board members and the outcome was that it was difficult to have a common position for both sites due to the lack of space in Berkendael and the different rules that prevail. It was also noted that this decision by the school is taken in relation to making space available for activities, classes and OIB. But there was consensus that it is certainly a discussion to be had and that OIB decisions should not be taken without consultation of parents, but in first instance with the Garderie.

President Valentina PAPA concluded the point, and closed issue as part of ongoing Board



discussions aside from updating with OIB's reply.

- **Additional point**

President Valentina PAPA informed the Board that she met with the office of the Secretary General regarding the template of the agreement on safety and regulation with APEEE Services President Rafael PAPI and other APEEEs Presidents from the other Brussels schools. She reminded the Board of the context by giving a short background on the agreement that the school is required to sign with the APEEEs convention. Last Thursday meeting 4 May. She made the points she needed to make but did not advance much. Another version to receive and will update accordingly. Reform of general rules, modified by BoG December with no consultation APEEEs.

IP delegate Pere MOLES PALLEJA informed the Board that the complaint had been rejected by the Central Office. IP and the APEEEs had made a contentious appeal to the complaints Board. Period to reply, received reply and now next week deadline to reply. Complex case. Possible that complaints board against having a hearing which would delay the outcome of proceedings until September. If no hearing then a possible conclusion in July. A meeting is schedule next Thursday with the lawyers.

POINTS FOR DECISION

7. New delegates for internal APEEE roles (5 mins, doc provided)

Proposed delegate to the Uccle Safety & Hygiene Committee Javier VILLEGAS BURGOS (Deputy) introduced himself to the Board, offering his support and resilience to do background work leading up to meetings. He expressed his wish to do more horizontal work than the confines of class representative and brings experience working across languages and cultures and a background in health and safety as well as policy work in security and resilience in Belgium. He was welcomed by the Board who adopted his nomination by consensus as well as the revised list of APEEE delegates to official bodies and working groups. The French section noted that Magali BARRAL (Deputy CE FR Sec) is interested in joining the newly created Respect et Propreté WG, in regard to her interest in the discipline as an issue in general. It was agreed for Samantha CHAITKIN and Sara DAGOSTINI to see best fit as per the role she could play. Magali BARRAL will be invited to present herself at the next Board meeting.

During the next Well Being WG meeting 24 May, Coordinator Sara DAGOSTINI will double check with Mr Hazan on the formalities of a possible other WG.

It was agreed that delegates should be invited regularly to attend board discussions.

Action: APEEE Secretariat to add Javier VILLEGAS BURGOS to the participants list for Board meetings. Sara DAGOSTINI to clarify Well Being WGs with Mr HAZAN next well-being meeting with the school.

8. Proposal to raise the APEEE Membership fee for 2023-2024 (10 mins, doc provided)

Treasurer Viktor HAUK reported on the financial situation of APEEE and the proposal to raise the membership fee for the next school year, in line with inflation and to balance the budget as APEEE is now drawing from its reserves. On 15 November 2022, the Board had examined the Budget proposal for 2022-2023 and discussed in length the possibility of raising the APEEE Membership fees. After a constructive discussion among Members, there was not a majority to propose to the General Assembly (already on 1 December 2022) to increase the annual fee and the Board adopted the Budget proposal without any increase (confirmed later by the GA). It was decided that the Board would reevaluate the situation in Spring 2023 and, if necessary, convening an extraordinary GA to vote for a raise of the fee of 10% (from 50 to 55 EUR) for the 2023/2024 year.



Considering that the situation has not improved in relation to the raise of prices and inflation, it is proposed that the APEEE membership fee is raised from 50 euros to 55 euros per family and that, if the board approves, an extra-ordinary GA is held as soon as possible (a convocation for an Extraordinary GA is required to be sent out 2 weeks in advance) in order to adopt the raise of the fee already for the 2023-2024 academic year. This means before we send out the request of payment as from mid-June, when reconduction of the family database for the next school year (and therefore the sending out of the payment requests for APEEE membership) will take place.

President Valentina PAPA gave the floor to the Board to discuss and to reach a position and vote.

Danish section representative Kenneth MYRUP (DK Sec) confirmed that he had not been given a mandate to support this increase, parents compare the APEEE to parent associations in Danish schools and cannot understand the need. Instead, he urged to spend time studying where APEEE could downsize spending. He also argued that if APEEE raised the fee it would have the highest of the Parent Associations of the Brussels European schools. The President replied that this work was already being done. Project Calls have been suspended and we decided to organize a Fete so that we can start again to fund projects. However, the Board remains responsible for the two staff members employed at 25 hours each under Belgium employment law and APEEE costs covering these salaries, taxes, and obligatory reserves, as well as obligatory legal expenses to run an Association in Belgium and office overhead expenses cannot be reduced and need to be responsibly assumed. She reminded that APEEE EEB1 is the only Parent Association where costs could not be shared with APEEE Services because APEEE EEB1 is the only case where the two Associations are separate. The Association also needs to cover the costs of lawyers, accountants, website, and database development for the integration of an online payment system more in line for collection of membership fees.

The FR section representative Noémie BEIGBEDER said she had no mandate and would not support the vote at the meeting. Other members added that they did not see the need of taking this decision now, while we could wait for the Annual General Assembly in December. The President explained that if the decision is taken in December, it would not count for the 2023-2024 Budget, but for the 2024-2025, as we send the request of payment for the membership fee in June before the start of the Academic year.

Other board members argued that inflation is a fact of life and that this needs to be confronted, adding that it would be irresponsible of the Board not to propose an increase in a situation where costs have increased and APEEE is experiencing losses and using its reserve. The Board was also reminded that the fee had not been increased since 2019.

The Treasurer had presented the budgetary forecast already in 2022 and already pointed to the risks the Association is facing. Board members have a responsibility towards their sections to make sure they are well informed, and the Board need to act responsibly towards their staff at the APEEE Secretariat. President Valentina PAPA underlined that as legal representative of the Association she does not want to put the association at risk and find ourselves in a situation where we cannot cover such costs.

In conclusion, the proposal for an increase of the membership fee from 50 EUR to 55 EUR per family per year was approved with 13 votes for, 8 votes against and 2 abstentions.

The convocation for the General Assembly is planned for 15 May, to hold the vote in due time before the reconduction mid-June, in the hope to increase the fee for the next school year 2023-2024.

Action: APEEE Secretariat to send convocation for an extraordinary General Assembly for voting of the increase in membership fee.



POINTS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

9. Discussion and possibly decision on the draft Statutes

Legal WG Coordinator Jan TYMOWSKI presented the work done on the draft new Statutes and reminded that the APEEE is legally obliged to update its Statutes to put them in line with the new Belgian law by the end of the year. That is why it was important for the Board to take a decision on the remaining issues, such as the composition of the Board, so that the draft Statutes could be proposed to the General Assembly, preferably also before the election of a new Board. An extraordinary General Assembly would be needed to adopt the new Statutes (it could not be the same that would vote on the membership fee because of different rules governing them with regard to quorum and advance notice - at least a month before for the Statutes). On the main changes to the Statutes, most of issues have been already discussed and resolved, and Board members were encouraged to look at the relevant documents. From the Board meeting in March there was a dominant majority to fully integrate Berkendael in the APEEE Board, therefore the proposal to have 1 section representative per cycle, per site (where that section exists) has been already introduced in the draft Statutes. A few remaining issues were summarized in a separate document.

President Valentina PAPA presented the options on the table. She said that during the Board meeting in March, while a large majority of Members were clearly in favor of the Berkendael proposal, there were also some concerns expressed on the need to balance the representation of primary (would have two representatives per section) and secondary (only 1 per section). To respond to these concerns some options were proposed for discussion:

A) The status quo - the **General Assembly electing additional 4 members of the Board**, without any conditions other than that they are Associate Members (see Article 23.2 c);

B) The modification that these additional Board members (elected by the GA) are **Full Members elected by classes in secondary** (in order to ensure balance between nursery/primary and secondary);

C) The modification that these additional Board members (elected by the GA) are **Full Members elected by those Language Sections that have the largest number of classes** (according to the D'Hondt method) - in order to take into account of the size of these sections;

D) **Transitional** provisions (not just for the near future): In case of a section subject to **phase-out** in one of the sites of the School, parents in that section will participate in the election of Language Section Representatives together with parents from the other site, including the right to be elected as Board members. This does not concern sections which are phased-out from the School completely.

After presenting the different options, the President added that a SWALS representative should also be counted in the composition of the Board and opened the floor to the Board members.

VP Monika Velikonja supported the proposal to fully integrate Berkendael and the SWALS representative. In the proposal SWALS would have representative in the Board if they have at least 50 pupils. Andreas KEIDEL (Berkendael DE) said that Option D would not be acceptable as parents in Berkendael should be represented in the Board until there is a section there. FR representative secondary Noémie BEIGBEDER reminded the Board of the proposal on the verification system, which she believes does not depend on the decision on the different options. She said that there could be an adjustment on the wording of the proposal, for example on how many Members could



trigger the verification system. On the other issues, she is in favour for the integration of Berkendael and does not see the issue of unbalance between primary and secondary and would prefer the status quo (of 4 members elected by the GA) and let the GA decide who they want to elect. Other members mentioned that it is indeed important to keep the possibility to have in the Board additional members elected by the GA. They often have important role in the association and it could be an asset for the APEEE.

On the balance between primary and secondary, some members said that they do not see it as an issue and that in any case the unbalance will be reduced with the years once the section will be consolidated among sites. Neither option B nor Option C received support.

On the verification system, some Board members pointed out that it does not guarantee that the vote is more democratic, as it assumes at the moment of verification that 100% of the parents of that section is behind the section representative. Others said that it would complicate the decision-making of the Board by attempting to block decisions. It is also problematic for example, although technically possible, that the verification system would only count the Board members elected by the language sections and not the vote of the 4 Board members elected by the GA, making the vote by a section representative more valuable than the vote of board members elected by the GA.

After a long and constructive discussion, the President concluded that:

1. there was a large majority for the composition as proposed (1 section representative per cycle, per site)
2. + 1 SWALS representative (without any minimum number of pupils, in order to align it with representatives of sections phasing out from one site to another)
3. Status quo: 4 elected Members by the GA (without any conditions)
4. NO transitional provision (Option D was not supported)

She asked if this proposal could be adopted by consensus. FR Section said that it has to be a vote because they wished to have a package approach to be adopted together with the proposal on the verification system, therefore they have to vote against.

The President explained that the issues are treated separately as this part of the proposal has received the support of the large majority of the Board, including the FR section, and could have been adopted by consensus, while a separate vote is indeed needed for the proposal of the verification system. She took note of the FR section position and proceeded to the vote.

The proposal for the composition of the Board with 1 section rep, per cycle per site + 1 SWALS rep + 4 members elected by the GA was adopted with 14 in favor, 5 against, 0 abstentions.

On the verification system, the President explained that the Board has the ability to vote when consensus is not possible, and that consensus does not mean unanimity. The Board can vote and it does so by simple majority. Board members have the same right to vote independently from the section they are elected from or if they are elected by the GA. Their vote counts the same (1 vote each). The verification system as proposed goes against this principle. It allows one Board member to trigger a verification that would weigh the vote of Board members depending on the population of their sections (going against the principle that all Board members have equal vote) and that it could have the effect of blocking the decision taken by the simple majority of Board members. She reminded that the proposal has been discussed lengthily at the Board meeting in March and that the majority of Board members raised their concerns about it and did not support it.



She then proceeded to the vote: the proposal on the verification system was rejected with 4 in favor, 13 against and 2 abstentions.

The President explained the next steps: Jan TYMOWSKI will insert the changes adopted today in the draft Statutes and then they would be sent to Ernst & Young for the final legal check and translation into French. Legal consultants from Ernst & Young would also be involved in the organization of the extraordinary General Assembly to vote on the new Statutes. The Board would continue to be updated at following meetings.

10. Discussion and possibly decision on school trips

Sara MARTELLI, delegate of the school trips WG, reported, referring Board members to the written report on the update and planning of school trips uploaded onto OneDrive.

Action: The conclusion of the discussion was for the delegates to follow up with school management and see if survey could be delinked from the P2 trips.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

11. EEB1 Fête 6 May: update by Fête coordinators (moved to Point for Information)

President Valentina PAPA thanked the Board and expressed how proud she was of APEEE and all of its volunteers who made the Fete a success. Board members joined in to express their gratitude for the hard work and commitment from the staff of the APEEE Secretariat who supported logistics and the hard work of all of the volunteers and especially the Fete Committee. A special thanks was given to Fete Coordinator Kathryn MATHE, whose mobilization of historical memory of past fetes was key to its success.

The plan is to gather feedback, possibly organize a dedicated meeting of organizers for a proper debrief, and to request if Kathryn MATHE could put together some guidelines for the next fete. The use of Eventbrite as the tool for registration should be revisited, either using a different system or configuring differently (avoiding the option of 'other'). Proposals included to aim at two fetes, maybe to only invite P4 and P5 Berkendael to the Uccle site or manage flow at the Uccle site with Maternelle and Primary in the morning, secondary in the afternoon. The rental of tables was a positive solution in the end and food stands were congratulated for stepping up with extra food last minute. The limited edition of hoodies was a success, and it was proposed to give Board members the possibility to order these if interested.

The football tournament organizers were also thanked for their hard work. It was noted that for the future there could be a need to introduce a quota for gender parity due to some experiences.

All of the issues raised would be part of a proper discussion and reflection by coordinators, after a cool off period, giving time to reflect and communicate.

Action: President Valentina PAPA to coordinate with Director David TRAN to write:

- thank you letter to all who participated.
- Message to all parents understanding the concerns about access (and organize a serious debrief with the school and discuss how to organize and to manage flows in the future)

It was agreed to express appreciation to security and technicians for all their hard work by organizing small gifts for them.

Organise dedicated debrief and put together guidelines for future fetes.

Look into possibility of selling hoodies during rentrée and organise possibility of ordering special fete edition hoodies for board members.



12. Solicitation of agenda points for CE meetings: 30 May – Uccle Secondary, 20 June – Berkendael Primary, 27 June – Uccle Primary.

The meeting ran out of time, points solicited by email.

POINTS FOR WRITTEN INFORMATION

13. Secretariat Update (memo)

Board members were referred to the memo uploaded.

Supporting reports and documents for this meeting are accessible to Board members in the OneDrive Board meeting folder.

The next meeting is scheduled for 29 June 2023 (in situ).