



Brussels, 21 October 2024

## Minutes APEEE Board Meeting - 12 September 2024 (online)

**Board Members (voting):** Blanca BALLESTER MARTÍNEZ (ES Prim), Agnes BOROS (HU Prim), Marek DVORSKY (SK Berkendael), Maria GERHARDT (DE Prim), Marc GUITART (member elected by GA, CE ES Sec), Delphine HEBERT (VP of Berkendael, Berkendael FR), Nathalie KALOGERAS (VP of Secondary, FR Sec), Andreas KEIDEL (DE Berkendael), Alba MARIÑO ENRIQUEZ (ES Berk), Sara MARTELLI (IT Berkendael), Andrej MATIC (SL SWALS), Sara MILANO (Secretary, IT Sec), Kremena MILEVA (EN Prim), Miklos NAGY (HU Sec), Valentina PAPA (EN Sec), Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ (President, ES Sec), Jan TYMOWSKI (PL Sec)

**Proxies:** Gladys EVANGELISTA (IT Prim, member elected by GA) and Nadia ROSINI (VP of Primary, IT Prim) to Sara MILANO

**Deputy Board Members (non-voting):** Santiago CALVO RAMOS (ES Prim), Bartosz HACKBART (FR Berkendael), Mihaly HIMICS (HU Prim), Bianca JITEA (EN Berkendael), Laura SERASSIO (IT Sec), Savo ŽIVKOVIČ (SWALS, CE SWALS Prim and Sec)

**Other participants:** Noémie BEIGBEDER (Deputy CE FR Sec), Talia BOATI (Deputy CE IT Sec), Elena HATZI (CE EL Berkendael), Magdalena KUPCZYK (CE PL Prim), Aleyda HERNANDEZ LAVIADES (Deputy CE ES Prim, IP Representative), Louisa PAPAMIKROULI (Deputy CE EL Berkendael), Klara PERENYI (CE HU Sec), Laura SERRAO (Deputy CE IT Berkendael)

**APEEE Secretariat:** Selena GRAY

### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The final agenda was adopted by consensus, with 2 points of information added under AOB by the President (information points: 2 ceremonies for the new Slovenian and Slovakian linguistic sections; Ukrainian students).

### 2. Approval of Board minutes 13 June 2024

The Minutes of the APEEE board meeting 13 June 2024 were approved by consensus.

## POINTS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

### 3. APEEE delegates to official bodies and working groups: clarification and reminder vacant roles to be filled; discuss renewal of mandates for APEEE working groups, soliciting of volunteers for upcoming events:

- Information sessions class meetings/election Class Reps: 17, 19, 23, 24, 26, 30 September
- APEEE conference all parents Saturday 5 October 2-6pm (Future European Schools, IP, WGs, Fête)
- Fête Committee: soliciting Coordinator
- Revival of second-hand book sales: soliciting Coordinator (library cooperation with school)

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ highlighted upcoming opportunities to solicit volunteers for the APEEE, underlining the need to keep APEEE active and that efforts should be concentrated on the internal Working Groups, lists from the school still pending. He solicited approval and participation from the board to organise an APEEE-IP event on Saturday, 5 October with a presentation on the Future of European Schools (announced as one of the key issues in the welcome letter from the Secretary-General) and a presentation on the work of Interparents, as there is a lack of time to discuss the important work of this Association in the board meetings. The bureau would also invite former IP representatives of APEEE EEB1, Pere MOLES PALLEJA, Katie MATHE and Monika VELIKONJA to present. This would also be a good opportunity to recruit members for the APEEE Working Groups and Fete.



He solicited a volunteer for Fete Coordinator, if APEEE is to organise a fete in May 2025, to oversee creating a committee, act as interlocutor with the school (initially with the presence of the bureau for a first meeting) and to ensure the coordination of a Fete WG, reporting back to the board. He clarified that the Fete has not yet been discussed with Director TRAN, but teachers seem to be expecting one and an opportunity to showcase projects. He was reluctant to push for the Fete with school management without such a key representative appointed, as this deserves the full dedication of a Coordinator and cannot just be an additional task for the bureau. Valentina PAPA agreed on the importance of having a Coordinator but argued that at least 3 would be needed, based on previous experience. She thought, however, it was a bit premature as it was not clear what the school would want, especially based on discussions during and after the last Fete. In her experience volunteers are always found in the end, for now it is more important for the bureau to get more guidance from school before consulting the board. After asking if he should push for a Fete and if the event on 5 October should go ahead, and with a lack of objections from the board, President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ concluded that there was a consensus to move forward on both and could therefore count on board members for their support in the coordination, and counted on section representatives to encourage the parents of their sections to attend on 5 October.

**Action:** President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ to contact IP representatives, draft a programme for 5 October event and approach Director TRAN for the Fete

#### **4. Revival of second-hand book sales: soliciting Coordinator (library cooperation with school)**

The Spanish section was thanked for finding a Coordinator, Isabel Mendoza Abril.

#### **5. School mobile phone policy: accompanying measures**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ informed members that official documents on the EEB1 Mobile Policy had just recently been received and uploaded on the OneDrive. These documents are now the framework for the use of “mobile phones” at school. The pedagogical use of screens has been requested by some teachers. The Director suggests charging families in secondary 5 EUR in the budget for this academic year, for accompanying measures for the new mobile phone policy, the specific use will be clarified in the Admin Board meeting. He added that the CdE had requested to discuss how the new MPP could be alleviated or modified during the Admin Board 13 September.

He gave the floor to Mobile Policy WG representative Noémie BEIGBEDER to report: The WG had had several meetings with Director TRAN up until 20 July, regarding various implementation issues. The policy had been informally adopted at the SAC early July. APEEE kept the line of no pedagogical use of student’s personal devices. But if school decides to buy devices, as do other EEBs Brussels, then for parents this is the choice of the school. Director TRAN will present at the Admin Board the request for increasing by 5 EUR the fee for secondary students, in view of buying such devices which he hopes to get by early January with a set of rules for their use by teachers. During the discussions in July, Mr Tran was also considering authorizing teachers to allow pedagogical use of private devices for S6 and S7 in class, pending the school devices. Currently it seems that there is no use allowed, so it seems authorization has not yet been given. At present there is also reference to S4 and S5 for pedagogical use in class, but the APEEE representatives asked him to request that teachers refrain and wait for the arrival of school devices. The purchase of magnetic pouches, that can only be unlocked by an advisor, was also discussed. In July Director TRAN suggested the school buy 500 pouches to neutralize phones of students in infraction with the Policy. This was still under consideration, but he prefers to wait a few weeks to see how the Policy is respected, which has been positive so far. His suggestion was that the school consider buying pouches for later and requested that APEEE help in 2 ways: advance the funds and make the order, as it will take longer if he had to launch a procurement for this. Responding to questions from board members, Noémie BEIGBEDER clarified that she met with school management, representing APEEE and not as part of a school WG (the school has not yet reopened this WG, despite APEEE pushing for it to be relaunched) and why the pouches were still on the table if the sanctions were clear and strong now. Students receive 2 hours of detention as a first sanction, and she does not believe pouches will alleviate these sanctions. With regards to the 5 EUR charge, she understood this was only for secondary, to buy school devices for pedagogical use as APEEE parents have asked not to use private devices in class.



Section representatives expressed their views. Sara MILANO (IT section, Sec) argued on the importance of remaining pragmatic. APEEE needs to first decide if pouches are an idea they want to support before considering whether to fund it. Students are already trying to adapt, which takes time. Blanca BALLESTER MARTÍNEZ (ES Prim) agreed and stated that she had received messages of congratulations from parents on the Policy. Now it is better to give it time to settle down and become a new way of thinking, with pouches only later if necessary. Jan TYMOWSKI (PL Sec) raised some complaints from his section, for example students locking themselves in toilets to use phones; limited use even in authorized groups S6 and S7 and the WIFI cut; loss of the application where students could check absences of teachers and now having reportedly to queue to see physical lists; individual complaints from parents trying to obtain authorization for exceptions for pedagogical use and rejected outright. CDE members have been contacting each other via phone, which is another issue. Sara MARTELLI (IT Berkendael) argued when a policy is implemented it is good to be strict, so people take it seriously. In principle she was in favor of pouches if the only way that a student who repeatedly uses his phone can understand. The school cannot have a room with all phones confiscated as complicated and risky. Pouches seem the safest option. Noemie BEIGBEDER concluded that APEEE should not close the door to pouches but wait and see and suggests the President would state in the Admin Board meeting the day after that APEEE is open to discuss. But for the moment supervisors and teachers are following through, and the hope is it continues.

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ concluded that it is secondary children most affected. Magnetic pouches are a good solution for the school, and he reminded that it was APEEE that had put forward this idea from one of its members as an alternative to confiscation, but APEEE should not be involved in the logistics. If APEEE makes the order, it will be responsible in all senses. No decision needs to be reached now, but it was important to debate and to keep track. He also agreed that the policy needs to be tough to be respected. Another issue highlighted by Director TRAN is the urgent need to rediscuss the “BYOD” Policy for secondary.

## POINTS FOR INFORMATION

### 6. BAC results 2024

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ thanked VP of Secondary Nathalie KALOGERAS for taking up the position of BAC coordinator for the last school year, with the challenges of many last-minute changes. Nathalie KALOGERAS informed the board that the BAC results had been uploaded on OneDrive, with very good results. But there was a huge gap in results between sections, so a point of discussion to continue with Director TRAN. She reported that the average rate of Spanish section was lower, and that the Polish section had more than ten points higher than the Spanish section. There were specific issues with Math 5 and chemistry exams. Many complaints were received from different linguistic sections that the subject was too difficult, and that they did not have all manuals needed for chemistry. There were also complaints by other European schools. Some instructions for correctors were given but results were very low compared with the average. A volunteer from the board was solicited to look at the statistics and numbers. Director TRAN explained that the differences noticed this year are normal differences that can be seen every year between sections and European schools, but it was difficult to follow the mathematical demonstration, and this really needed an expert. The Office of the Secretary General has all data of all previous years, and it would be useful to compare and understand what happened this year and if really the norm. Parents consider something happened but cannot prove it. President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ added that Director TRAN used historical data from various years, a surprise as APEEE do not have access to this data so this would also be useful. Board member Maria GERHARDT and Deputy Board member Santiago CALVO RAMOS volunteered for the task.

Nathalie KALOGERAS informed that all S7 parents received an email from Director TRAN following a mistake by the system (Logiciel de calcul de point) in calculating final grades. They now need to change the official transcripts of the BAC, as numerical results are not the ones given during BAC ceremony. She did not know if all students had made this exchange, and the hope is that the differences are not prejudicial. She clarified that it was difficult for Director TRAN to inform on how many were concerned, apparently only a few 0,1-maximum difference, and could not inform us if any students lost University places because of this miscalculation.

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ reported that 400 parents had signed a complaints letter from various European schools in Brussels regarding math 5 and chemistry, underlining a misalignment between the level



taught at schools and BAC exams. APEEE needs to have a look into this to avoid it happens again in future years.

#### **7. Rentrée: class meetings 2 and 3 September; APEEE stand new parents 3 September**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ informed that the APEEE Secretariat had managed a stand and drew attention to the new sections announced so far (Slovenian in nursery and primary, whereas Slovakian and Latvian also opens in Secondary. He added there is a need for representatives to be involved in our APEEE at some point, with the increasing number of members of our school. He referred them to the data and statistics received the day before, in the Admin Board documents uploaded on the OneDrive. The documents sent for the SAC did not incorporate all data. Now overcrowding is more than 10%. 4459 in total for both sites (previously 4340), with a capacity of 4077. Some classes have reached maximum capacity of 30 students and possible divisions of classes is under discussion. The difficulty is that now overcrowding is increasing and not frozen, which will be discussed further under the Information point on the School Board meeting.

Changes in School management were explained: Olivier Hazan, previously Deputy Director Secondary, now replaced by Emilia MAKARSKA, is now Assistant Deputy Director Secondary. Simone CAJHEN, Deputy Director for Primary left, with Marie-Louise CANDON as Acting Deputy Director Primary until she is replaced.

#### **8. Calendar of meetings 2024-2025**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ indicated the change of date for functional reason for the Election of Section Representatives, from Thursday 14 November to Tuesday 12 November. APEEE needs time to send out the names of the new section representatives elected, together with the convocation, 2 weeks before its General Assembly on 28 November. He added that information from school on some dates is still pending, CE meeting dates on Uccle Primary in particular.

#### **9. Project Funding: preparation Autumn Funding Call**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ asked the board to take the time to consult the information and preparatory documents for the next Autumn Call for Funding uploaded on OneDrive before the next board meeting, so they are in position to take a decision for approval.

#### **10. European Dimension in European Schools – European activities, 180 days discussion**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ clarified that this point concerns the period during the BAC and the days with no class for secondary, in relation to the calendar approved in principle last year, uploaded on OneDrive. He reminded that there is an INTERPARENTS group dedicated to this as apparently school directors seek to convince the Secretary General that it is not an obligation to respect the 180 rule and that they can suspend the application of this. He wanted to consult the board on whether it is a worthwhile struggle to keep pushing the position APEEE has always taken, for the 180 days rule to be respected, and therefore that other activities are organised when there are no classes, which could focus on the European dimension. These could be focused on European activities. For example, Olympic games between Brussels European schools, visits to places of European memory, practical experience with how European institutions work. Therefore, finding ways to engage with school in fruitful discussion and not end up having APEEE services offering paid courses as previously relied on. In the absence of any comments, he took it as a consensus that APEEE will continue with its position that activities with pedagogical content are organised by the school during these days even if they have to take place outside of the school.

#### **11. Alumni meeting Saturday 19 October**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ informed the board that a celebration (60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first BAC) is foreseen by the Alumni. If the Alumni can organise such an event on site, then a good sign if APEEE wants to organise ad hoc events in the future. Some invitations to register had been received but communication so far had not been very clear.

#### **12. Administrative Meeting Reports – reporting on system level meetings: updates on meetings and latest developments.**



---

## **INTERPARENTS – Position to SG (mission/ambition European Schools), School trips, update on tender launch**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ reminded that Working Groups are active in IP, including a WG on the tender launch on the school trips where an update is pending. Also, a WG on sustainability in schools, but the APEEE have no representatives that attended. An IP conference will take place 7-8 October in Laeken, to prepare for the JTC and the new Cypriot presidency. As soon as documents have been received, they will be circulated, when authorised to do so. He highlighted the derogations in schools linked to overcrowding, an important discussion point ongoing in IP, as this typically means that in some cases classes of different levels are merged (because there are few students). In some cases, where they merge for example S2 and S3, there is a conflict in attending L2 classes as they do not have the same timetable, with cases where more than 10% of classes are lost by one or other student. IP therefore want a discussion around the maximum threshold of what can be done on this. In reference to the uploaded document, he clarified they referred to vertical regroupings of classes for primary and secondary with the European Commission overruling and ensuring there is no going beyond the legal threshold of merging. There is an ongoing discussion in IP on the limit to derogations that can be given, as part of the preparation of the IP Position to be discussed in the IP meeting in October, in preparation for the JTC. He clarified that APEEE does not have any member in the IP Board, the Brussels schools are represented by President of EEB2 Woluwe so APEEE does not have direct access to the folder of documents. Documents are only circulated closer to the IP meeting in October. He reiterated the benefit of the 5 October APEEE-IP meeting which will allow IP delegates of our school to present IP and its positions, as well as an opportunity to solicit volunteers to join an IP WG, which can be any parent, but who has to be formally endorsed by the board.

### **20 June Primary Berkendael CE Meeting**

VP of Berkendael, Delphine HEBERT reported. The central issue was management of overcrowding, with more than 1000 students enrolled this year. School management needs to manage this with the reorganisation of classes alongside several issues with building A and building B, with the Régie des bâtiments planning works in building B for 2025. Maximum capacity is 1000 students as per the fire inspection. Building B is not in good condition for more than 300 students, so now with the maximum. They also discussed September and the reorganisation of the canteen, with talk of splitting levels and implementing a third service. However, 20 minutes eating time for P5 is not very realistic. Concerning smartphones, these have been banned in the school rules for many years. The management also confiscated phones and smartwatches last year (2023\_24). Concerning the LIS or EVRAS training, the results are positive for students and teachers. This required several meetings held in advance with the school, the teachers found it quite heavy in preparation and asked for more coordination with the trainers in advance. There were also presentation meetings with parents (which was very positive regarding the subject).

### **25 June Primary Uccle CE Meeting**

VP of Primary Nadia ROSINI was not able to be present at the board meeting to report.

### **27 June SAC Meeting**

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ explained that the SAC meeting is preparatory for the school admin board meeting but unfortunately, he was not in Brussels in the scheduled day and time for the meeting. VP of Secondary Nathalie KALOGERAS, who attended with Deputy Secretary Sandrine PIERLOZ and VP Berkendael Delphine HEBERT, reported. They received the Annual Pedagogical Plan for 2024-2025 with the 4 main objectives decided by Central Office. Director TRAN explained 2 priority objectives for the school for this year: harmonisation between Berkendael and Uccle and also between language sections, through the work of the teachers; Bien Etre scolaire (well-being of the school community, where the WSI demonstrates that the school still has to work on this issue. They will continue working on this, also working on the 8 key competences and to reach PISA results. This year EEB1 S5 will be tested again for PISA and the school will ask to work on results. As part of an explanation concerning results which were not as good as expected, Director TRAN reported that half of the students had chosen tests in L2 and not L1, which could explain the difference in the expected results. He also gave the elements on this school year, an overcrowding with provision of 4500 students, 2500 for secondary, with more than 100 classes. He presented the new Mobile Phone Policy and APEEE had questions regarding school trips and kitties, BAC results, impact of the delay 5<sup>th</sup> school and the



---

pedagogical risk. With regards to the Pedagogical Plan Valentina PAPA reminded that previously the board had been involved, that this is a document where APEEE have the right to make comments and where it can make a difference. She agreed to have a look at the recommendations and send comments on which should be a priority, making sure we are coherent with our positions

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ concluded that they would see in the meeting tomorrow if there is the opportunity to introduce some of the points raised in discussion. He encouraged members to read through the uploaded documents which include many statistics not seen before. It was underlined that the board members are bound by confidentiality and these documents are confidential, uploaded for transparency but not for circulation beyond board members.

### **7 July Safety & Hygiene Meeting**

Santiago CALVO RAMOS, Member of the Safety & Hygiene WG, referred members to the meeting report uploaded on OneDrive. Some issues concern Berkendael, as reported on already in the feedback on Primary Berkendael CE Meeting. Other interesting points: the OPSTAL entrance, where they are doing work to make it safer and have the budget but are waiting for the Régie des Bâtiments to visit the site and approve the work. This is the only entrance to European schools where this happens. The Road safety assessment and VIAS situation is still in stalemate. It was suggested that the school try to find different group of experts; the reopening of the VERT CHASSEUR entrance which the school was more positive about. Previously the reply had been that more comprehensive works would need to happen pending the support of the Régie des Bâtiments. Now there is a more pragmatic plan for broadening of the entrance, pending a reply from the Régie des Bâtiments. He asked the President to inquire informally for an update from school management; overcrowding in Uccle, particularly for secondary, where for the moment there is no plan on solutions, but an assessment that it is a problem. Using classrooms from primary is not helpful as they have different types of furniture. Repurposing of some rooms were mentioned. Teachers and APEEE stated that a medium-term plan is necessary, and Director TRAN agreed. There was further discussion during the board on the overcrowding in Secondary, particularly considering the whole point of the reform of the linguistic structure and there was consensus that this was an area where APEEE needed to push for more definition. He was also asked to clarify the history of the VIAS report and the situation regarding the VERT CHASSEUR, where school now seem more flexible to do something in short run, maybe to open outside peak morning hours. He confirmed they would keep these points in the meeting agendas with the school and welcomed feedback from representatives as all information regarding parents' experiences is useful.

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ added that overcrowding is one of the main issues to raise at the Steering Committee Brussels on 3 October and encouraged members to read the Steering Committee documents uploaded on OneDrive, even if it is acknowledged that Berkendael cannot play the role that EVERE is playing; on the contrary a temporary class is being hosted (Greek section which is growing and will stay longer than expected). There is already an issue with the logic to create in our school new linguistic sections. Originally, the new Slovenian section was supposed to go to Berkendael but as Berkendael is full they are now in Uccle, with a move planned to Berkendael when the Greek go to the new school, scheduled to open only in 2030. APEEE will make it clear in the Steering Committee that the Greek section should not move twice. The document reflects that there is request from the system now for the Belgian government to find temporary solutions to overcrowding. It is suggested in a diplomatic way, instigated by EEB2, that as the Belgian government was supposed to deliver a new school in 2015, they should take responsibility for the consequences of the delay and find alternative spaces. He questioned if our school should be doing the same in the search for solutions and board members speculated on what could be, and not be, the solutions, such as the expansion of sites.

**Action:** President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ to inquire informally on planning and timeline for the works on VERT CHASSEUR entrance and solutions to overcrowding.

### **Review and solicitation of agenda points for next meetings:**

#### **13 September School Administration Board**

This was discussed already. Members can send any comments to President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ.



---

### 24 September Berkendael Primary CE

Members were reminded to send any points to include to VP of Berkendael Delphine HEBERT.

### 3 October Steering Committee Brussels

Discussed already under Pt.11 Administrative Meeting Reports – 7 July Safety & Hygiene Committee meeting

### 7-8 October INTERPARENTS meetings (hosted by EEB4) – preparation for JTC and new Cypriot Presidency

#### AOB

President Sigfrido RAMÍREZ PÉREZ reported on:

**Slovenian and Slovakian section ceremonies:** the Slovenian ceremony was held on the 10 September and the Slovakian will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> September, which will also be attended by the Secretary General. The APEEE will need to incorporate new sections in the board. It was apparent at the Slovenian Ceremony that the EEB1 community is growing with already a lot of Slovenian students in the school, as well as new teachers.

**Ukrainian students:** There is a request in IP to see if funding can be provided for psychological support, with discussion now on whether APEEE will be contributing. In general, there has been a discussion of the cost that Ukrainian students have on the budget of the various APEEEs. The position of the Secretary General is that any of this continuation in schools should not be financed by the system but by the schools. For APEEE Services in EEB1, this has not been a problem but in other schools it has been an issue. We need to push to keep supporting, particularly contributing to the psychological support, although keeping the pressure on the system to assume the cost of their decision to integrate Ukrainian students into the European schools.

Before closing, Secretary Sara Milano made a quick appeal on behalf of Eureka who are lacking volunteers. In case no new volunteers are found, opening hours will be in danger as many of the previous volunteers have left the school. All section representatives were asked to spread the word and solicit volunteers. Anyone interested can email the Eureka address: [eureka@apeee-eeb1.org](mailto:eureka@apeee-eeb1.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

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

*The next meeting is scheduled for 24 October 2024 (Uccle site)*