

Association des parents d'élèves de l'école européenne de Bruxelles IV AISBL

Parents Association of the European School, Brussels IV Aisbl
Elternvereinigung der Europäischen Schule Brüssel IV Aisbl
Associazione dei genitori della Scuola Europea di Bruxelles IV Aisbl
Oudervereniging van de Europese School Brussel IV Aisbl
Асоциация на родителите на учениците от Европейско училище Брюксел IV AISBL
Asociația de părinții elevilor de la Școala Europeană de Bruxelles IV AISBL



Extraordinary Admin Board Meeting/Réunion du Conseil d'Administration

Extraordinaire

Brussels – Saturday, 15 February 2014-02-18

EEB IV Canteen, Sint-Annadreef 86, 1020 Brussels

10:00-14:00

Present: Sarah Conyers Barber, Kristin Dijkstra, Iseult Lennon Hudson, Horst Nickels, Alessandro Roggi, Carla Sabeva, Joëlle Salmon, Tobias Stricker, Patrick Ten Brink, Josephine Usher, Natalia Vandenberghe,

Proxies: none

Excused: Rachid Ahajjam, Salima Atiaoui, Christian Drantmann, Marc Henriques, Jane Okafor, Martina Sindelar, Cristina Vanberghen, Benoît Vandergeeten, Ralph Wischermann

Minutes (approved by written procedure)

1 Discussion of Services

Decision that **Horst Nickels** will be the contact person for the canteen.

• **Staff**

- With regards to paid staff and the proposal to organise staff training, it was stated that the supervision in the canteen is the responsibility of the school, not the APEEE. The guards at the gates are also the responsibility of the school. The APEEE staff is recruited under Belgian contracts. The bus supervisors are hired via an *ALE (Agence Locale pour l'Emploi)* (not *titres-services*), which aims at getting long-term unemployed back into the work market. This creates a high rate of turnover in our team. Supervisors are sent by the agency and each Brussels commune has its own ALE with its own rules, further complicating the issue. Work starts as soon as the monitor steps on the bus, and there is a maximum number of hours allowed to work per month. It is extremely difficult to find people willing to work a couple of hours in the early morning and after school, with nothing to do in-between.
- There is training once a month. In theory, the monitors get together and discuss general issues and share best practices. The transport Manager has impressively dealt with certain monitors, as seen by members of the board. She

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Comptes bancaires	Général, cotisations	BE3413 253154 5590	Banque Delta Lloyd
	Transport scolaire	BE3413 253154 4782	
	Service cantine	BE3413 253154 5287	
	Activités périscolaire	BE3413 253154 5489	

and the APEEE Director even get on the bus sometimes to conduct spot checks.

- A charter has been drawn up with rules for the children and monitors on the bus.
- Proposal to make a clear outline of the tasks and responsibilities for canteen, transport, etc. so it is clear from the outset for every new board over the years and for people from outside the board who want to join - common basis to facilitate communication.
- The APEEE applies the same disciplinary rules as school on the bus, in the canteen and in extra-curricular activities.
- Discussion of how the APEEE could take the lead in defining how to manage in a multicultural environment, balancing the stick with the carrot by rewarding good behaviour. The idea was presented of creating a “Best Bus Award”.

2 Communication

• Complaints

- Discussion of whether the board wants to consider systematically logging individual complaints and doing follow-up about how they were managed, in order to learn from them. The way it should work is that when parents have a complaint, they contact the manager responsible for the service concerned. If after that they are still not happy, the issue will first be escalated to the Director and as a final measure to a board member. This escalation procedure needs to be clearly communicated to the parents, and the board needs to know what the complaints are about and what can be done. Inform parents that every time they send an email, they are taking our staff away from improving the services, so complaints should be limited to serious problems.
- Question – what is the role of the CA? Maybe we go too much into detail, and should be a decision-making board. For example, with our overview of where problems lie, we can communicate to the school about what changes need to be made. Suggestion to conduct a parents survey on each service we provide, annually, to gather non-anecdotal statistics about how satisfied people are.
- There was a cross-service survey planned for the second half of January, to be carried out by university students. We are still waiting for students who want to do this, so now we need to decide whether to do it ourselves and if so, how. Include questions about communication – how do parents gather info about the school, what info were they missing. We do have survey software.
- Mention that parents who come to eat in the canteen are asked to fill in a comment form.

• Constructive criticism

- Discussion of motions in the AGM. Suggestion that motions should only be allowed if there is a constructive improvement proposed. Complaining just to complain and dump the problem on someone else is not acceptable.

- **Proposals and ideas for external communication**
 - Suggestion to make a short film about the services offered: transport, canteen, extra-curricular activities, etc. A one-click presentation in the style of the one-minute FB lookback film, to keep it short and light-hearted.
 - Discussion about creating an APEEE Facebook page, which would be a good tool for providing parents flashes of information. The communications team should come up with a proposal for this, and then present it to the board for approval. In the past, previous boards were against FB but it seems that this board is open to the idea. Security issues need to be considered, also with regards to making a film, particularly with regards to privacy and the children's safety.
 - The APEEE website is not intuitive. It does contain a lot of information, but the way the information is presented does not provide new parents easy, clear access to the vital information they need. The important and/or time-sensitive info needs to jump out more at the user.
 - People interested in communications: Jane, Carla, Josie, Sarah, Kristin

- **Internal board communication**
 - Emails are not always the best method of communication. Doodle and Google calendar are being used but are problematic. We need to have a centralised platform that everyone uses and that actually works. To avoid endless email chains, we could have a private forum on the website (which already exists but is not being used) or a private FB group. Discussion of the privacy problems linked to FB, and the need for board members to be able to express themselves freely within our communications without fear of retaliation from the parent body. Inter-board emails should never be sent to people outside the board, and board members' personal email addresses and contact information never shared.

- **Hierarchy of communication and communication with the school**
 - BoG – school – APEEE board – Class reps
 - The way the school communicates to the board and to the parents needs to be formalized. If Mr Schlabe wants to communicate something to the parents, it would be preferable if it were in written form (i.e. email).
 - Discussion of how to communicate with the school administration on big pedagogical issues for high-level meetings, as well as on the day-to-day functioning of the school. We also need to think about how we manage ad hoc communication, for example by taking written notes and then emailing them to Mr Schlabe asking for approval by the next day. That way the exchange is in writing. Example is getting rooms for extra-curricular activities. If a promise for a room is made, it is good to have a written record to fall back on.

- **Problematic communication from the school**

- Drug policy: Extensive discussion of the email sent by school last week stating that they have a drug policy and that everything was fine ON THE SAME DAY as the police was at school making a drug bust. It would have been better to admit there was a problem and that it had been effectively dealt with. Some teachers were communicating information to students, which is a form of official communication. The school needs to have a formal procedure followed by all staff. The school is extremely unclear about how/when “drug testing” takes place and what it entails (apparently it meant using police dogs to search the school premises, and not urine tests as some parents had feared). It is the role of the APEEE to encourage the school to communicate better, in order to prevent false rumours from spreading.
 - With regards to the police being present at school: the school is Belgian territory and Belgian law applies. The police can be invited to enter the school, which is what happened on Thursday.
 - Discussion of EEB IV drug policy. The policy is that the school can conduct a search, but that a teacher can ask a student to empty their pockets or search their bag only in the presence of another adult. The child has the right to refuse.
- Whole school inspection March 3-7: The school has selected a small group of parents to attend a one-hour meeting with the inspectors. In preparation for this, the Primary School has been working on a communication policy which they have adopted from Uccle. This particular policy will be for Nursery/Primary it will be necessary to develop a similar system for secondary. Uccle had their inspection last year and has all their documentation about it on their website.
 - A letter was sent out addressed to “Dear parents”, but only 7 parents have been invited. The meeting room is small, so cannot accommodate an open invitation to the entire parent body. Again, this raises questions about transparency with regards to how the school communicates to parents.
- How do we react about the drug communication to the parents? It is important for the APEEE to officially respond to this problem toward the school. Proposal to constructively suggest that the drug policy be clearly communicated so that parents’ questions are answered.
- When we have a constructive dialogue with the school about communication, it needs to be age-specific and age-appropriate. Rumour mills create false information. Example given of small children (maternelle) being unable to communicate effectively to their parents (either not telling a story or blowing it out of proportion), underlining the necessity for the school to proactively communicate so that the correct information is disseminated.

3 Working groups

- Discussion of existing working groups – who is doing what and what is already being done

- Pedagogical working groups are coordinated across the schools through Interparents and within the school by the VP Pedagogical Affairs.
- Proposal to consider the concept of section representatives to provide a point of contact per language section.
- **Pedagogical Affairs**
 - The Laeken pedagogical group has 30 members, across Nursery/Primary/Secondary. All board members with an interest in pedagogical affairs should come forward, so we can define a contact person for Nursery, Primary and Secondary. It is important to give parents (people outside the working groups) a view of who the contact people are. We need to define the architecture of the working groups so we can identify empty slots and fill them in.
 - Additionally, we need to focus on secondary reform.
 - Ped group : Iseult, Martina, Carla, Patrick, Tobias, Josie, Horst, Sarah, Kristin

4 APEEE organigramme & competencies

(At this point in the meeting, the board stood around a table and made a detailed organigramme using index cards)

- **Tobias Stricker** will be the contact person for Health & Safety.
- Nigel will remain Webmaster, just in terms of maintaining the site. Alessandro will be the link between the Webmaster and the board, letting the board know what the Webmaster needs and providing content from the board for the website. IT resources will go on the admin level of Secretary/Treasurer, and not fall under a particular branch (i.e. Communications, Ped Affairs).
- HR Strategy group falls under VP Admin Affairs. All services (transport, canteen, extra-curricular activities) feed into this as well.
- Proposal to define the subjects of meetings ahead of time and put them on the agenda, separating Services meetings from other types of meetings. Then Eric would not have to attend meetings that have nothing to do with services, and the bureau could respond quickly to time-sensitive issues.
- Internal Rules. First we need to experience a full school year cycle, establish the rules, and have them be approved at the AGM.
- Suggestion to have a chair for each meeting, in order to streamline communication.
- Somerfesto: the costs of setting up this year's Somerfesto should be taken out of the fund and a decision needs to be made on what happens with the money.