



Report of activities June – December 2007

Chairwoman's introduction

Dear parents,

5 months after the foundation of our APEEE and 3 months after the start of the school there are already many things which we can report to you.

Right from the start we were accepted and welcomed by all bodies where matters of interest for our children are decided. At the Central Enrolment Authority together with the other APEEEs from Brussels we are sharing one vote, we have seats in the school's advisory board and pedagogical committee, the European Commission invites us to all meetings in relation to ES matters and are providing us with a permanent office on their premises. *Interparent* invites us to its meetings and we will host, together with the school, their annual assembly at rue Berkendael in January. Furthermore, we have two offices in the school which have recently been moved to the ground level (-1).

Being founded with the financial and personal support from a founding group consisting of skilled parents and APEEE staff from other schools in Brussels was a great help for a quick start and opened many doors.

Besides, on our urgent demand we received a grant by the BoG Board of governors to the European Schools to cover costs related to the transport in order to avoid parents from having to pay more for the bus services than parents at other schools. The parents of Ixelles have set up our transport service, and now control is taken over step by step by our parents and staff.

In the beginning the kitchen of Berkendael was deemed to be suited only being for heating up prepared food from big collective kitchens, such as Sodexo or AGAPE. Thus, the meals would have been at a lower quality level and, furthermore, we - as parents - would have lost control over the food provided to our children. It is only due to the negotiation skills and patience of the group of founders, continued by us, the solidarity by the other APEEEs and a finally united alliance by the school, the secretary general of the BoG and the Commission that such a solution could be prevented. Instead the Belgian state has accepted to undertake the necessary construction work and deliver the needed equipment for the school. The school kitchen will have to be closed for a period between 1 and 2 weeks depending on the progress of work.

Extracurricular activities are another service provided by parent's associations, not by the school. The urgent difficulties to solve with the crucial transport and canteen services, the delay of Laeken and our very limited financial and administrative resources force us to strictly limit our ambition in this respect this year. However, we try to get at least a very small programme off the ground and to add further courses over the years to come.

Our Board consists of a small group of parents working hard to keep our activities running. Most of us are entirely new to the world of European Schools and we were naturally surprised by the unexpected amount of tasks and the high level of responsibility you would find in any other school system. I have personally the greatest respect for all of these young parents who manage to fulfil their mandate besides their family and jobs. Having said this I urge all parents to join the Board or the working groups for the wellbeing of our children. At the moment some tasks are simply not covered because of a lack of active members.



Report of activities June – December 2007

I want to thank all who were and are helping us: the secretary general of the BoG, Madame Renée Christmann, and her predecessor, Mr Michael Ryan, the schools head mistress, Ms Berta Bustorff, and her team, Madame Christiane Bardoux from DG Admin with her Unit, Alain Kruys, Günther Lorenz and Tony Bernard presidents of the other APEEEs, Rotraut Moretto, president of Interparent, the founding group from the other APEEEs headed by Mik Stenger, André Meyer, Isabelle Callens, Jean-Marie Cauwelier from the Ixelles school who set up the transport system which ran from day 1, Daniel Vincent, Jean Luc Lengrand, Ute Priebe and the dinner ladies from mis à net, which provide our children with school meals from day 1, Jean-Paul Soyer who set up our website, communications and statutes, Agnès Lahay and Joelle Salmon advising in garderie matters, Luciano Gilbert advising in extracurricular, and last but not least our staff Manuela Pamio (administration) and Christophe Goblet (Cantine).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Atterf', is centered on a light gray, dotted rectangular background.

Brussels in November 2007
President



Report of activities June – December 2007

1) Educational Matters

a) Interparent – Board of Governors – Administrative and Financial Committee (CAF)

Representatives of our Parent's Association

Member of the Board

- Eva Grotz (De)
- Carola Streul (De)

Interparents (IP) is the organisation which represents all the parents of all European Schools through the local Parents' Association (APEEE). Each APEEE appoints its representative to IP. Its most important task is to present the position of the parents at the meeting of the Board of Governors (BoG). It is the only means available to parents to influence the decision-making of the highest political body of European Schools.

The common position of the parents is formed during IP meetings, which usually take place before the meeting of the BoG. IP representatives are also members of the various Working Committees (Groups) set up by the BoG.

The last two meetings were held in October and in November. However, our Association could not be represented because of the overwhelming work load due to the launching of our activities. The next meeting will be held on 26 January in our school in rue Berkendael.

b) Central Enrolment Authority

Member of the Board

- Carola Streul (De)

The Central Enrolment Authority (CEA) was founded in 2006 in order to have a uniform body for questions on the Brussels' enrolment policy and to make decisions more transparent. It is related to the BoG which takes the basic political decision while the CEA is the executive body also in charge of transforming the decision into an enrolment policy. In its meeting of 24 October 2007 the BoG decided on the enrolment policy for the school year 2008/2009 and of the new composition of the CEA.

The enrolment policy will only change in a few details. Also, in the coming school year only pupils of Category I with a sibling in one of the 3 old schools will be accepted there. Some very limited exceptions are possible and are still under discussion. These are due to a very limited number of possible transfers to another of the old schools and also due to a number of children returning to their old class from missions of their parents. In order to increase the school population in rue Berkendael a limited acceptance of Category III children for the coming school year is discussed. The voluntary transfer to the 4th school should be facilitated by the new enrolment policy. The parents have supported the request coming from the Directors to allow children of teachers to the ES a place at the school in which their parents work – albeit again to a limited extent.

The 4 APEEEs agreed on a proposal for a modified enrolment policy which was published on our website.



Report of activities June – December 2007

The last BoG meeting also decided that the CEA composition and voting rules changed: The school Directors, who had 3 votes in the past have only 1. The CEA is composed further by the secretary general of the BoG (1 vote), the host country Belgium (1 vote), the European Commission (1 vote), the European Commission staff representative, the parents' associations (1 vote), a representative of an organisation representing future parents (only on meetings where the enrolment policy is fixed).

The CEA also decides on individual cases.

Other issues discussed in the CEA are related to the 4th school, the development – and now its delay – of Laeken and the situation of the transitory site: rue Berkendael.

We participated in the last 6 meetings of the CEA. The next meeting will be held on the 5th December.

c) Primary and Nursery educational group

Representatives of our Parent's Association

Member of the Board

- Eva Grotz (De)

Parent volunteers

- Francesca Beltrame
- Marzia Pietrelli
- Marjorie Paternostre
- Lamia Mechbal

The main purpose of the primary and nursery educational Committee is to discuss various educational issues, share information between school and parents, and address any problems which parents raise with the Parents' association. In our school the composition and the number of meetings haven't yet been decided. So far, 2 meetings took place: 11 October and 15 November. In both meetings the headmistress and the deputy head mistress participated as well as parents and teachers (the latter groups were present in larger number in the last meeting). The next meeting will be held on the 6th December.

Correspondence via agenda

The parents draw the attention to the importance of communication with teachers via the agenda and they complained that some teachers were apparently not sufficiently aware of this issue.

Extracurricular activities

The Parents' association reported on the actual situation following the circulation of a form which had caused some confusion. The new approach with a smaller programme was announced. The teachers emphasised that teachers should be consulted on the choice of activities appropriate for the children and asked to set up a committee where they could participate.



Report of activities June – December 2007

Extracurricular activities are organised, administered and financed by the parents on the premises of the school but outside the normal school schedule. In the other schools there are regularly activities during the lunch breaks particularly addressing the younger children and activities in the afternoons for children of all ages.

School schedule

Parents draw the attention to the issue of parents' consultation on the school schedule and to include the alternative of 4 long school days instead of 3 as an option. Thus, the long days could be shortened (about 1H15) and it would be prevented that the children who travel from far have to start their journey by bus at 7 a.m. to return at 5 p.m.

The headmistress announced that the school would not change the school schedule during this school year by the exception of introducing a "flexible" Friday, meaning that after the lunch break no school lessons by the class teacher would take place with the exception of the P3 pupils who have to follow European hours. The gap for the younger pupils who would not be picked up by parents could be filled with a school garderie or maybe a school run dancing class. Alternatively the parents could offer extracurricular activities on Friday afternoons.

The parent's association continues negotiations with the school with the aim to launch a common referendum on the school schedule.

School outings

The school has prepared a list of scheduled outings in the different classes. For the traditional trip for several days starting P3 will go on "classes de mer" the P3 pupils from the Woluwe school. The headmistress emphasised to be aware that special care for the small group from Berkendael has to be taken.

As concerns the other outings the school will inform the parents in time. Not all projects will be realised.

Pedagogical role of nursery teachers at lunch

The nursery teachers explained that they could fulfil their educational obligations even when not having the same meal. However, they argued that they could encourage children to eat unknown food better when providing a good example.

The parents' association emphasised that the critique expressed by some teachers on the school meals were unfounded and it also draw the attention to the fact that the kitchen was in a transitory situation. Teachers and headmistress expressed interest for a canteen committee.

Other projects (school party, Christmas market)

The school has set the date for the Christmas market on a working day in order to ensure that all children participate. The parents expressed their disappointment because the children's' families would thus practically excluded from sharing this moment.

The headmistress did not see an urgent need for a school party the parents were advocating for.



Report of activities June – December 2007

d) Participation in the Schools advisory Board

Representatives of the Parent's Association:

- Carola Streul (De)
- Nathalie Laurent Eker (Fr)
- Ivan Torre (It)

The Parents' Association's representatives have seats on the school's advisory board and they had raised in the past meetings the following issues: status of safety and equipment of the new school, in particular in the building for nursery classes, the play ground for nursery, the entry controls, the equipment of our offices with telephone lines and other basic material, the reassembling and connection points between school staff and our transport surveillance for the logistic and responsibility of the children, the traffic and allowances of entry and parking on the school's parking ground and others.

2) Services groups

Representatives of the Parent's Association:

- Nathalie Laurent Eker (Fr) Coordinator of services groups
- Camilla Gaudina (It) Canteen
- Guido Ricci (It) Transport

Parents volunteering:

- Andrea Morass (De) Canteen
- Thomas Frenzel (De) dito
- Hilary Crowder (En) Extracurricular activities
- Anke Held (De) dito
- Blandine Lurin (Fr) dito

The Parent's Associations of the European schools are running the school transport, the canteen and the extracurricular activities. They are implemented in co-operation with the school but they are entirely undertaken in the sole responsibility of the parents.

The Parents' Association organised on the 9th October in the school "restaurant" an information evening on the services.

a) Transport

The transport was set up by a set-up team from the European School III (Ixelles). The preparation was very difficult because both the number of pupils and their addresses were unknown during the planning phase. However, the team had to expect, that pupils were spread over the whole town. Still, the first busses ran from the very first school day.



Report of activities June – December 2007

The Parents' Association successfully negotiated a grant with the BoG in order to cover those costs for parents which exceeded the average costs for transport in the old schools.

Meetings with the Commune of Forest took place in May and June in order to demand necessary public support for the traffic regulations.

On the 27 June the parents organised in co-operation with the school an information evening with neighbours of the school and delegates from the Forest Commune.

The school transport supplied by the APEEE currently consists of:

4 minibus lines and 1 car line in the morning

3 minibus lines and 1 bus line in the afternoon. There are 75 children who use the service which represents 142 situations/ lines to manage (one situation/line defined by a child who gets on and off a bus given a stop one or more time a week).

The lines are the following:

1 AM: 12 stops, official journey 55 min. Supervisor from the 1st stop.

2 AM: 12 stops, official journey 65 min. Supervisor gets on at the 3rd stop.

3 AM: 12 stops, official journey 62 min. Supervisor gets on before the 2nd stop.

4 AM: 11 stops, official journey 75 min. Supervisor gets on at the 1st stop.

5 AM: 1 stop, car without supervisor.

1 PM: 10 stops, official journey 66 min. Supervisor for the whole journey.

2 PM: 12 stops, official journey 65 min. Supervisor for the whole journey.

3 PM: 8 stops, official journey 75 min. Supervisor for the whole journey.

4 PM (after-school facilities): 4 stops, official journey 57 min. One supervisor for the whole journey.

Besides the bus supervisors, there are two people who supervise the arrival and the departure of the buses in the parking. They are all employed at present under the status of ALE workers (unemployed workers who can work a limited number of hours). They all followed a training course with the Red Cross on 26 November.

There are presently 7 children who have more than an hour's journey in the morning (6 every day and one four times a week).

There are 3 children who have more than an hour's travel time in the afternoon, (one everyday, one four times a week and one once a week).

Changes to the service

Nearly every week we had changes to the service due to stops being added or changed.

At the same time we try to make sure that the new stops do not add on travelling time to the journey.

From 20 September, the journeys have reduced a total of 39 minutes, even though the number of children travelling has risen by about 15 with the addition of many stops.

The present lines have a remaining contractual capacity:

- morning, 13 places (7 on line 4 AM)

- after-noon, 30 places, 13 on line 4 PM after-school facilities. Lines

2 AM and 3 AM are the most requested.

Line 5 AM (South of Brussels) is served at present by a car and transports 2 children. There are 4 other children interested, but a minibus or even a people carrying car with 6 children would increase the loss of the APEEE. A decision by the General Assembly is necessary on this issue.

We were faced with the following problems:



Report of activities June – December 2007

- cars parked outside the school hampering bus manoeuvring.
- breakdown of a minibus before the service, replaced by a larger bus not suitable for the journey
- delay of a minibus due to fog, it had to be cancelled
- children sick in the bus early in the morning

Procedures are laid out in the rules for users of the transport service for the following issues:

- changes according to the needs of the users old and new
- get a change in the service for a given day
- to cope with important delays or suspension of the service.
- delegate someone other than a parent to collect a child at a stop.

On the internet site of the APEEE you can find:

- the registration form
- the rules for the transport users
- a link to the timetable
- links to the maps with the stops for the morning and afternoon
- the form for delegation of a third party to collect a child.

b) Canteen

From the beginning it was clear that the kitchen at the Berkendael School could not be used for preparing hot meals on the site due to lack of infrastructure and equipment. The APEEE BRU IV worked hard to find a solution so that the children could be served hot meals of high quality in spite of the problems with the kitchen. Thanks to the very supportive canteen-team at the European School in Woluwe, the APEEE has been able to serve lunch in the canteen since the first day of school. The food is prepared in the kitchen in Woluwe, transported to Berkendael and then heated up by our much appreciated chef who manages the kitchen since the end of August 2007. He prepares the menus in cooperation with the Woluwe kitchen which also has a dietician at their disposal. The menus are worked out by the Chef of Woluwe who heads the school canteen since 30 years and by the dietician – a volunteering parent since over a decade; they are published regularly on our website.

The objective of the Founding groupe and APEEE BRU IV has since the start been to have a fully operational kitchen at the school in order to be able to fully control the quality of our children's meal. Discussions and negotiations with the owner of the building (the Belgian state via the "Régie des Bâtiments") have started in spring and are still continued. Our APEEE has been represented by the President of the founders group with assistance from the Chef of the Woluwe cantine, the canteen manager and external consultants. The APEEE now has reason to be optimistic regarding the perspective to obtain the objective of having a kitchen at the Berkendael School in the near future since the "Régie des Bâtiments" has finally accepted to turn the kitchen operational at their cost. Some infrastructural work will have to be done and additional equipment installed. During that period the canteen will be closed for approximately two weeks and a solution on how to arrange for the children's lunches during this time will be discussed and agreed upon on the General Assembly.

For the moment about 140 children are subscribed to the canteen. Most children are subscribed for four meals a week. The children eat between 11.30 and 12.15. Nursery school children are accompanied by their teachers and primary school children by accompanying staff, all speaking the language of the class they are monitoring. The meals are served at the table by a team of five people who also prepare and clean the tables. On Wednesdays the children attending one of the



Report of activities June – December 2007

Commission's gardeners (about 50 children) have lunch in the canteen after the end of the school day at 12.30. This meal is paid by the parents via the gardeners.

The provisional price for the first three months for primary school children is 263.2 euro (4 meals/week) and for nursery school children 224 euro (4 meals/week). The final price will be decided by the General Assembly. Teachers, school staff, administrative staff and visitors attending meetings at the school have the possibility to buy lunch tickets at the APEEE office at the school. Parents are given the possibility to eat together with their child once every three months and a number of parents have already benefited from this offer.

The canteen regulation has been modified. No major changes have been introduced, mainly the rules applying only to secondary school children have been taken out in order to make the regulation more adapted to the situation at the Berkendael School. The new version has been published on the website and is sent out by mail on request.

The Canteen committee has for the moment three members and hopefully more parents will join and give some of their time, advice and support in helping in running and improving the canteen.

Finally, the APEEE BRU IV would like to express their gratitude and appreciation for the support and advice given to us by the canteen-team at the European School in Woluwe. In particular we would like to thank Jean-Luc Legrand, Michael Stenger and Daniel Vincent.

c) Extracurricular Activities

This service sector is still in preparation. The APEEE is checking different options and their financial and organisational feasibility.

d) Informations group

Members of administrative Board

- Maurits Pino, Information Vice president
- Aedin O'Byrne, Webmaster

Website

The Parent's Associations website was created by the founding group and it was handed over to the responsibility of our association in October. The site is one of the main tools of communication with the parents. The group is working on the translation of texts into English and intends to modernise the layout.

Publication of the bulletin

The bulletin is a newsletter informing parents regularly about new developments, dates and contacts. It is pinned on the schools information board in the entrance hall and published on the web site. It will, as from the next number, also be published through the distribution list to the class representatives.



Report of activities June – December 2007

Our Parent's Association has no Health and Safety group and no Social Fund for the moment. A group following the developments of the site in Laeken could not be set up.

3) Report on the financial situation as of 11 December 2007

The APEEE BRU4 was founded on 7 June 2007 by the vote of its founding members, on the basis of the provisional budget attached (temp budget 2007-2008 bxliv).

The start-up finances have been provided by an interest-free loan granted by the three other APEEE of Brussels ¹

As a result of the CEA Enrolment Policy 2007/2008 and other factors beyond the control of APEEE BRU4, some assumptions on which the initial budget has been adopted have to be revised to take account of the reality.

The number of children attending the school is far lower than was expected by any party; the estimate of 240 on which our first budget was based was only half of the official expectations. However, in September only 158 kids were enrolled in BRU 4 – until today this figure has increased to 168. Only 75 kids are subscribed to the school bus instead of the estimated 150, about 150 kids are eating at the canteen, the expected figure was above 200.

There are less bus routes but their cost is higher: the homes of the few passengers are spread all over the town. For

The food cost has to include transport costs + a service fee as it has to be prepared in BRU 2 kitchen.

The legal framework established by the adopted statute does not foresee the compulsory payment of all parents, as a consequence the revenue, already considered marginal, has to be reduced to 75% to improve the appropriateness of the budget.

The costs of personnel are higher than budgeted. Despite the short period for recruitment (APEEE was founded in June and transport and canteen services had to be provided in September) qualified, reliable and committed staff could be found. However, the numerous different administrative tasks to be fulfilled for the different services and the association itself are not feasible by one person, *a fortiori* in the case of an APEEE that has to establish its operations while establishing itself in a new European School on a temporary site.

Furthermore, taking into account the:

- Initial start-up difficulties
- Need to establish logistic and administrative practices
- Lack of experience of the parents of BRU4
- Apparent underestimation of the administrative needs

¹ 100K€ BRUIII, 100K+100K€ BRUII, 50K€ BRU I CANTEEN, 50K€ BRU I TRANSPORT.



Report of activities June – December 2007

- The fact that no direct proportionality exist in the number of users and administrative workload (i.e. an APEEE with 2000 kids and 20 permanent staff of the APEEE doesn't necessarily mean that in a school with 100 kids one person can fulfil exactly the same tasks)

The additional needs are to be inquired more closely and different possible solutions should be set up with the advice and assistance of the other APEEES. Volunteering by parents, training and assistance by the other APEEES and additional staff paid on the hours should have priority for the future direction; In case these measure are not satisfactory, engagement of additional permanent staff should be possible. The forecasted additional costs are to be seen as a reserve.

CANTEEN ISSUE

While waiting for the host MS, Belgium, to fulfil its obligation and restore the legally required hygiene conditions in the kitchen, the food is prepared in BRU 2 kitchen and this has the two following costs effects:

For the first months of activity the cost will be increased by the transport cost and the minimal service fee to the food provider.

In any case the reduced number of pupils being present at the school hinders the possibility of any economy of scale necessary to reduce the cost of each meal to lower figures.

An investment of about 55K€ may become necessary to refurbish the kitchen as necessary to comply with legal and operational standards. Thanks to the successful negotiations these costs are likely to be fully paid by the Belgian state.

This means that, in line with the initial budget, the canteen activity will be in loss at least for the first year and – as it was stressed by the President of BRU4 in the loan agreement side-letter - this situation is not likely to improve before a couple of years and the foreseen delayed move from Berkendael to Laeken.

Indeed a loss of about 46K€ was foreseen by the initial budget, now taking into account that due to effective conditions this loss will be even bigger, two options are possible:

1/The GA of the APEEE decides to raise the provisional prices indicated so far in order to cover partly or in tota the incremental loss compared to the initial budget.

2/ The GA of the APEEE decides to stick to the indicated provisional prices, to accept an higher loss for 2007/2008 and to wait for the evolution of the incremental loss in view of a stabilisation to a lower level before taking actions.

TEACHERS REQUESTING FREE MEALS

Following the issue of the free-meals for the teachers of the nursery, the CA promised to have a discussion on this issue.

The parents would have to pay the incremental cost for the M teachers = + approximately € 40 per subscription.



Report of activities June – December 2007

There is a high risk that other employees of the school will request equal treatment, such as teachers for Primary and moniteurs of the Garderie which would further increase the additional financial burden on parents.

Following rumours some parents of nursery classes decided to collect individually for their class teacher. The APEEE has at no point encouraged such direct intervention because of the possible conflict of interest; among other reasons.

PROCUREMENT

All the main suppliers have been "provided" by the others APEEE where we have benefited not only from experienced firms but we have often also benefited from their negotiation powers in terms of prices.

The rest concerns only minor procurements effected on the basis of good diligence and common sense, following discussions with Board Members.

BANK ACCOUNTS

Due to the combination of the procedure for obtaining legal personality and the host country banking regulations, the current bank account will have to be closed and a new one re-opened as soon as the APEEE BRU IV will become a registered AISBL.

Accordingly the following measures have been taken:

-double signature on all transactions

-only the Authoriser and the Verifier have access to the bank account. Documents certifying the management on behalf of the APEEE by the signatories have been signed, too.

-only one central bank account has been opened. Specific bank accounts will be opened once the AISBL has been registered in order to simplify the accountancy. The current situation is acceptable also in view of the limited number of operations to be effected.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL AUDITOR/S

3The GA of the 7 June 2007 has mandated the CA to nominate an auditor until the end of 2007.

CONCLUSION

n)It is proposed that the General Assembly of the APEEE BRU4, in compliance with article 7/e and 6/c of the Statute gives discharges to the members of the CA for the financial management and approves the budget and accounts as per article 6/b.