



Administrative Board Meeting/Réunion du Conseil d' Administration

Brussels Thursday, 10th November 2022

Teams Video Meeting: 12:36-15:27

Present: Stephanie Buus, Marianna Cosco, Nicholas Costello, Mariana Ghitoi, Angela Guarino, Yannick Hartstein, Nadia Kichaout, Maria Koidu, Vladas Kukulskis, Dan Nicolae, Josephine Norris, Dana Adriana Puia Morel, Adja Awa Sissoko, Diane Werhert.

Absent: Cerasela Botoroaga, Jane Okafor, Victoria Petrova.

Excused: Romina Garbi, Pénélope Vlandas.

Proxy: Romina Garbi to Marianna Cosco, Pénélope Vlandas to Adja Awa Sissoko, Mariana Ghitoi to Dana Adriana Puia Morel from 2:38 pm, Yannick Hartstein to Adja Awa Sissoko from 1:30 pm, Nadia Kichaout to Adja Awa Sissoko from 2:20 pm, Vladas Kukulskis to Dana Adriana Puia Morel from 2:33 pm, Josephine Norris to Stephanie Buus from 2:36 pm.

Guest: Manuela Pamio, Secretariat of APEEE and, Eric Rega, the Director of the APEEE of Brussels IV.

Minutes 10.11.2022

The quorum is present. Ms Buus chairs the Administrative Board meeting.

1. Adoption of the agenda.

Adopted.

2. Approval of the Board Minutes:

-From June 23rd, 2022 (12 votes).

Adopted without any remarks.

-From September 22nd, 2022 (14 votes).

Adopted without any remarks.

-From October 6th, 2022.

On hold. The Minutes will be circulated for adoption after Ms Vlandas' comments.

3. Resignation of Board Member Iulian Vasile.

The Administrative Board takes note that Iulian Vasile is no longer a member of the Board from 11th October 2022. The Administrative Board is now composed of 19 members.

4. Changes to the General Rules and APEEE services.

Yesterday evening, the President of the APEEE of Brussels IV sent an e-mail to the Board members explaining the discussions among the other APEEEs and then through Interparents as well as between the four Brussels' APEEE Presidents and the Central Office of the European Schools, specifically with Ms Spitzer, from the internal control capability unit.

Ms Buus informs the Board that negotiations are still ongoing and many APEEEs are very concerned about the wording of the new formulations and the implications of these proposed amendments to the General Rules related to safety and security.

The main source of concern is the shift in accountability and responsibility not only for our services but also for the infrastructure that would fall to the APEEEs and no longer to the School's Directors.

If approved by the Board of Governors in early December, the proposed amendments will take effect on 1st January 2023. Ms Buus will keep the Board updated on future developments via e-mail and at the next Board meeting, if there are any changes.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
01 CA 10/11/2022	To contact the President of the APEEE if you have any ideas, thoughts, or arguments that you would like to bring forward to Interparents.	ALL	In the coming weeks

5. Follow-up of the meeting with Together School.

Mr Nicolae gives some positive feedback from the meeting that the Transport Working Group had yesterday with Together School, a software company working for the transport service of the APEEE of Brussels I, the Bavarian International school and for other schools in Northern America and Southern Africa.

During that meeting, this company showed, through a demo presentation, that their application not only may track a school bus in real time and indicate whether or not a pupil has been picked-up or dropped off at a bus stop but also may allow the transport office to send automatic or manual notifications to parents in case of bus cancellations, delays, etc. They also stated that the application, depending on the service needs, could be used to the other services: canteen and extracurricular activities. Mr Nicolae and Mr Rega were impressed by this application for the services provided and the price. In terms of costs, Mr Nicolae explains that we should pay the setup costs, approximately between €5.000 and €10.000, the maintenance costs and not the developments and we could use the hardware we already have. Specifically, we should pay per child, per month: €1,50 for the transport, €0,50 for the canteen and €0,50 for the extracurricular activities. He explains that if we choose this new application, we will save money because we currently pay €5.000 per year for SMS and €9.000 per year for Vetasoft maintenance costs.

Mr Nicolae explains that the implementation time would be of approximately three months, we could start a soft launch in March or May 2023 and be fully operational in September 2023. He would like that the Board may take a decision to go for this application by the next Board meeting because it is a very good product.

The majority of Board members would like to receive written details of the offer before taking a decision. Some remarks are made in terms of the process and working together. Mr Hartstein reminds us that at the last Board meeting, the Board agreed to have an application for all services, and each service should have its own assessment and these assessments will be brought together, and market research will be done. With reference to the together school's project, he would like to have some feedback from Uccle and consult the experience of the International School in Munich.

Ms Kichaout points out that before taking a decision, it is very important to have a proper analysis of our needs and take all necessary steps to ensure that all APEEE service needs are identified, prioritised, and matched with what the application can do, a written analysis with figures is needed. Ms Norris adds that we need to understand the pricing structure going forward and whether there are people in place who could maintain and update the application because our needs and our population evolve very rapidly. It is also important to see how we can redress problems when they occur, and at what cost. Mr Nicolae explains that the training of the APEEE staff and bus drivers is included in the set-up price. Mr Rega informs the Board that it is always possible to have another live demo with Together school if needed.

The President of the Apeee thanks Mr Nicolae and Mr Rega for their presentation as well as everyone for the contributions and comments shared on this topic. She outlines that we need a process in place and more detailed discussion in the Executive Committee meeting, with the wish to have more written documentation about costs. The following actions are identified:

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
02 CA 10/11/2022	to contact Ms Kichaout, Ms Guarino and Mr Nicolae and see the feasibility of having a working Group meeting on this issue before the next Executive Committee meeting.	Stephanie Buus	ASAP

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
03 CA 10/11/2022	to have a more detailed discussion about this new IT solution with questions and answers at the next Executive Committee meeting (17/11/2022).	Executive Committee	17/11/2022

6. APEEE services: Info point on the Services' State of play:

a) Transport

Ms Sissoko gives an oral report from the Transport Working Group meeting held yesterday. There was a preliminary discussion on how to reorganise the transport service and what options might be proposed to parents at the next APEEE General Assembly meeting. Ms Sissoko clarifies that the APEEE transport team will come back with figures and concrete proposals that will be discussed in the Transport Working Group and then in the Executive Committee. The Transport Working Group discussed the following ideas to reduce the bus journey duration and optimize the bus routes in Brussels:

- to limit the bus routes to the outskirts of Brussels with the organisation of pick-up and drop-off points in the suburban areas. It was noted that some bus lines are too long especially those whose stops are outside Brussels.
- to prioritise the transport service to nursery and primary pupils first, and not to allow secondary students with entry/exit cards to use school buses.
- to increase the area close to school where the school bus service is not provided (no bus stops within 1 km, 1,5 km or 2 km from the school?).
- to optimize 1st and 2nd bus departures: to shorten bus routes and have less buses for the 1st departure and have more bus lines for the 2nd departure.

Ms Sissoko outlines that a set of measures needs to be implemented and that the Transport Working Group is fully aware that some decisions of orientation have an impact on pupils, families, and school.

Ms Norris, who is a member of the Transport Working Group, raises the financial and legal feasibility of measures. She thinks that it is very important that we look at reviewing our transport service and we do it based on a needs assessment, and then we see what is feasible. According to Ms Norris, feasibility is also how we operate within the financial rules and the legal requirements imposed by the Institutions. She reminds the Board that the transport service for the vast majority of parents is paid from the educational allowances by the different Institutions and they have rules. She would like to look into those legal questions and financial aspects and see what our margin with the Institutions is. Mr Nicolae and Ms Sissoko thanks Ms Norris for her help. In order to properly perform this task, Ms Norris may request data/information from the APEEE Director and the transport staff, if needed.

Ms Koidu points out that we should keep in mind what the school would allow or not before coming up with measures.

b) Canteen.

Ms Sissoko briefly explains what happened in the school canteen on Friday 28th October 2022. There were some queue issues during the lunch break because there were no time slots for each class and all secondary and OIB pupils arrived at the same time and same place. To avoid these issues, all dining rooms will be open next time.

With reference to the canteen decorations, Ms Sissoko clarifies that whenever we place a decoration in the canteen for specific events (Halloween, Christmas, etc.), we will first convene the school to get their opinion.

c) Extra-curricular activities (and ski trip).

Our extracurricular service would like to organize a ski trip for secondary students next year in collaboration with UCPA, a French organization specialized in youth sports activities. Enrolments should be made via our online registration website, processed on a "first come, first served basis", and validated if the payment is received within two weeks. The cost of the ski trip would be of approximately €1.000 per person. With reference to the places available, Ms Guarino asks about the minimum number required to launch this event and if there is a margin to increase this maximum number of 55 places. This possibility should be checked before launching the event.

Mr Rega informs the Board that the price requested for the ski trip was around €985 in 2019 and €850 in 2020, and there was a very high demand from both parents and students.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
04 CA 10/11/2022	To check if there is the possibility of doubling the groups and increase the number of participants requested.	Eric Rega	In the coming weeks

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
05 CA 10/11/2022	To inform Ms Puia Morel how many adults will accompany students on a ski trip.	Eric Rega	In the coming weeks

7. Follow up point on the absence of back-up to the transport manager - single access to key information.

Mr Rega informs the Board that the transport manager is training one transport assistant to act as a back-up not only for sending the invoices to the Institutions but also for checking the invoices received by the bus companies. Ms Norris points out that it is important that the back-up person in the office has the same rights of access and powers as the transport manager.

The President of the APEEE of Brussels IV points out that we have a leadership back-up within the transport office as well as from the Board's side in terms of leading the transport. Ms Kichaout believes that we should consider a forced rotation of Board members in charge of a service every three or four years for the benefit of the APEEE staff, parents, and children.

8. Audit of financial statement to take place the week of 14/11/2022. Request to receive the audit programme.

Ms Kichaout points out that we need to have internal control measures in place and ensure business continuity. She would like to receive the audit programme to see what and how the financial auditors are auditing our accounts. The goal is to ensure that the audit programme meets our needs and, if necessary, to challenge the audit in order to conduct an analytical review and improve our internal controls. The Director of the APEEE explains that we have some internal procedures in place for example: all invoices are validated by the respective managers, payments are pre-encoded by the accountant, checked by the Director of the APEEE and signed by two bank signatories.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
06 CA 10/11/2022	To send to Nadia Kichaout the audit programme prepared by EY auditors.	Eric Rega	ASAP

9. Compulsory school trips.

Ms Norris introduces this topic, which will be discussed in the Pedagogical Working Group tomorrow. She explains that there are compulsory school trips in Primary (for example the P5 snow classes), as well as in Secondary, (S4 and S6), that are part of the curriculum, and the cost is quite high. There are a lot of discussions in the Pedagogical Groups with regard to the costs and the information available for some trips, and more parents will approach the Social Fund for funding requests. She thinks that we need, as a Board, to be aware of the broad discussions on these topics, understand the parents' positions, and take a balanced approach in any reply, including to the Social Fund applications. The President of the APEEE adds that our parents' association has no control over the information, but from the perspective of the Social Fund, we can verify how many applications we have received and how many people we can potentially support. The Director of the APEEE explains that the Social Fund has limited funds.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
07 CA 10/11/2022	To ask the Social Fund Committee what the coverage limits are, and maybe have a discussion about it at the next Administrative Board meeting in December.	Stephanie Buus	Today

10. Decisions coming from the school on pre-COVID measures.

The school's decision to return to pre-Covid measures and force secondary students to stay in the Chill-Out room instead of outside during their free-periods (*fourches*) will be discussed at the Pedagogical Working Group meeting tomorrow. Ms Werhert explains that some parents and students were against this measure and many questions were raised across sections.

It is agreed that the parents' association will not send a formal communication to the school management but the President of the APEEE of Brussels IV will plan a meeting with Ms Maset Calpe, the Deputy Director of the Secondary cycle, to discuss this specific case.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
08 CA 10/11/2022	To plan a meeting with Ms Maset Calpe, the Deputy Director of the Secondary cycle, and discuss this specific school's measure.	Stephanie Buus	In the coming days

11. Reporting of the different WGs/Funds.

The discussion focuses on whether or not the Pedagogical Group should report the Board on the points discussed at the Pedagogical Working Group meetings. Ms Sissoko would like to have a debrief on the main points discussed at the Pedagogical Working Group meetings and points out that we need an organigramme showing the structure of all Working Groups so other people may be involved. According to Ms Cosco, a monthly report to the Board is not needed because the Pedagogical team has always provided the Board with a sort of debriefing when there were serious questions or real pedagogical issues. Ms Werhert clarifies that the Minutes of the Pedagogical Working Group meetings will be made available, once approved. Ms Cosco, Ms Werhert and the Pedagogical team are trying to decentralize things. The aim is to have more information distributed to parents and more contact points for parents so that one or two people are not overloaded. Ms Cosco adds that we are also trying to establish some type of internal procedure and to encourage all section representatives to be more proactive in their roles and interactions with class representatives and parents. The President of the APEEE thinks that it could be useful to have a brief debrief, with two or three main points that concerned the section representatives, from the Pedagogical Working Group meetings at every Board Meeting. This doesn't mean that the Board members should take action but rather that it is a quick way to make them aware of the main pedagogical issues.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
09 CA 10/11/2022	To discuss together with Ms Cosco and Ms Werhert the possibility of having a short debrief of the Pedagogical Working Group meetings at every Board meeting.	Stephanie Buus	In the coming days

12. Proposal for the date of the General Assembly of the APEEE of Brussels IV.

In accordance with the European Parliament's calendar, it is agreed to hold the Ordinary General Assembly Meeting of the APEEE of Brussels IV on Monday 23rd January 2023, at 7:00 pm. The Secretariat of the APEEE will prepare a timeline shortly.

The Board meeting ends at 3:27 pm.