

Notes from the Secondary Class Delegates' Meeting 17/12/2018 - 18h30-20h30

The school was represented by:

- Mr. Per FRITHIOFSON - Director
- Ms. Leene SOEKOV - Deputy Director for Secondary

The APEEEL2 was represented by:

- Delphine Ballaguy - President
- Claudia Lange-Tramoni - Vice President Secondary
- Enza Petrone - Canteen Committee President

Questions and Answers session

Périscolaires Activities

- Questions from parents about some activities which have been cancelled due to a lack of participants: example theater in FR
 - *Yes, few activities have been cancelled because we did not have enough pupils per group.*
- Information from APEEEL2: 2 summer camps will take place in June (after the end of lessons) for secondary students; one with sport activities, one with dance and sport activities.

Action

- Question from APEEEL2 to parents: how could we increase the number of participants in periscolaire activities for secondary? Please send us some suggestions.

Canteen

- Can we have more ecological dishes?
 - *APEEEL2: Eurest will change the plastic dishes to bamboo or more ecological materials.*
- Les repas sont trop gras, pas assez variés (pâtes proposées tous les jours) ; comment est géré l'équilibre diététique des repas? + quality and variety could be improved! La variante plat végétarien n'est pas équilibrée pour des végétariens en pleine croissance.
 - *APEEEL2: there is a dietician at Eurest and we think there is a good balance in the menu proposed. There are:*
 - *3 kind of vegetables and 3 starters proposed every day*
 - *1 vegetarian menu, 1 menu with meat*
 - *APEEEL2 is testing foods when visiting the cantine, but it is really a personal opinion.*

- In the 3rd lunch break there is often no choice available anymore, which means the students don't eat in school at that time
 - *Answer: APEEEL2 can go every 6 weeks to visit the canteen. It has been done on a Monday and a Wednesday but APEEEL2 members did not experienced queue. It may happen some other days. However, we know that Mondays and Wednesdays are the busiest days in the canteen.*
- Why pupils can't use the microwave?
 - *Answer: it is a question that has been already debated several times. It used to be in service, and was dirty, dangerous. Eurest decided to stop its use and APEEEL2 has negotiated to maintain it for pupils with specific needs (allergy, diet restriction).*
- Sodas and sugar products should not be available for children in the automatic machines within the school.
 - *APEEEL2: last year we have pushed the decision to get sodas with less sugar. In addition, parents requested to take out desserts at the buffet. We have decided to keep the machine with chocolate. We will launch a survey to ask parents if they want to take out the chocolate from the machine or to keep them.*

Action & Suggestion

- If some parents got the information from their kids that there is no much choice or nothing to be eaten one day, APEEEL2 request to parents to write to them the details: when, which shift... so that it can be reported to Eurest and asked for action plan.
- Idea: can we put a box at the exit of the canteen to ask immediate feedback to pupils? APEEEL2: it is a good idea; we can think about it.

New timeschedules: consequences

- Questions about the 3rd shift? Aucun impact sur l'affluence des élèves, toujours autant de monde et difficulté de trouver une place à la cantine. Quel bilan est fait par l'école et est-il prévu de revoir les horaires ?
- The new first period for lunch is much too early and the prolongation of the school day due to additional breaks causes also additional time for some pupils to get home
- Students (especially S1) always have to run in the school day. 45 minutes to have lunch is too short to eat, go to the toilets and go to the locker. A 15 min break in the afternoon is too short and pupils stay in the corridor to wait for the next lesson. This break is useless.
- Bad consequences on children who take public transports. They spend much more time in the transport than before because they miss the first train and the correspondence afterwards. Train for Arlon is at 4:41, impossible for students to get it. No flexibility from CFL to change it.
- Not enough time for students to get the buses at 4:35 (especially for pupils with crutches)
- Is there a way to ensure that the children have time to eat their snacks and pick up books from the locker?

Answer School Management:

We realized last year we had to change something at the canteen as it was too crowded. We cannot make more space. The 3 shifts have solved this issue. I cannot go back to the past situation. We don't have many options. To fulfill demands on longer breaks between lessons and an end time of school day 16:30, we will have to start 25 min earlier. It does not seem to be an option as it would imply.

Action & Suggestion

- APEEEL2 to parents / class delegates: can you send us emails about the time schedule, your suggestion... We will follow up this point.
- Suggestion from parents: can we have a feedback from the teachers? APEEEL2: ok

Communication

- There are 3 European languages: DE is often missing.
 - *Answer (M. Frithiofson): yes, it is missing; and it should not be missing. We don't have enough secretaries to make the translation. It has been mentioned to the Admin Board in order to increase our staff.*
- It is too long to get an answer from the Deputy Director or to get an appointment
 - *Answer (Ms. Soekov):*
 - *It depends of the email; if it is short, I can answer quickly. If it is a long one, I may have to talk to the parent, teacher, student... and it takes long time.*
 - *Even the Director has difficulty to get an appointment with me. I have a lot of meetings, discussion with teachers...So the first people that will ask for an appointment will be served. I advise you that if you don't have an answer within 2 weeks, contact the secretariat. Sometimes it is much easier to make telephone calls.*
- Last school survey was in 2014, it's time to run a second one
 - *School Management: Yes, we will do it. We have received some quotation. We will see how to drive it and may keep the questions of 2014 to make a comparison. Our intention is to run this survey in 2019.*
- Use of SMS has improved but some teachers still don't use it or are using it after homework deadline is passed. Concrete examples have been already provided to APEEEL2 and nothing happened.
 - *Answer (Ms. Soekov): we started with new options of SMS, for e.g. on homework. All teachers got the training on SMS. During this first part of the year, we have discovered that there are different ways to enter information so using SMS has turned out to be more complex than supposed. Some teachers are not comfortable with digital approach. What I would appreciate is to get some print screens from parents to discuss with teachers.*

- No information provided by the School on success rate of graduates in universities. We used to get the information very clearly until 2013. What happened?
 - *APEEEL2: we circulated a survey within S7 pupils at the end of the year to get the information. Unfortunately, we have very low rate of answers. We will try to get a few more answers (using the sending of their bac ceremony film) before publishing the results from Bac 2018 students.*
 - *School Management: we don't have the emails of the pupils when they leave the School. And we have no influence on them. We cannot take the tasks to follow up pupils which leave the school.*
- Will parents of S5 students receive instructions regarding the selection of subjects for the 6th and 7th year? Who can help students and parents to finalize their choices depending on the students' orientation/preferred country of studies?
 - *There will be a meeting for S5 parents on the 16th of January. The students themselves will have an induction on the afternoon of the 8th of January.*

Action & Suggestion

- Ms Soekov to parents: in order to follow up the use of SMS Parents, I would appreciate to get some print screens from parents to discuss with teachers.
- Parents suggestion: in order to increase the information on the University chosen by the pupils, can you ask directly to parents instead of the pupils?

Education

- Possibility to have school books to refer to in case of pupils' absence/to complete the lesson given by the teacher/to help the student to practice, especially in maths and in physics.
 - *Not possible at this time – would create a situation with one more parameter for teachers to take in consideration when planning a course – they don't have this time. It will most certainly also create questions to teachers (from parents, from students) that will take more time than working with the material planned for the course – teachers don't have this time.*
- This is not clear why some topics like biology and geography are compulsory in S6/S7 and some are not like physics, L3...?
 - *For S6/S7, we have extremely strict regulation to follow by the pupils. Course compulsory: L1, L2, Maths, Sports, Religion or Moral.. Then we have History 2 or 4. Geography 2 or 4. Philo 2 or 4. Bio 2 or 4. And 4 period options.*
 - *For S6/S7, a student can't have less than 31 periods.*
- Why did the school stop the advanced English class with no advance warning and no communication to the parents? This was such a welcome development two years ago. Possibility to have levels groups in L2 and in L3?
 - *School Management: We have advanced course in S6/S7. So I don't understand the question. If we have less than 5 students, we don't open the*

course. For the moment there are no group levels at the European School for L2 or L3.

- Is it true that in Lux 1 the student can choose sports as a 4-hour-option? if yes, why is this option not offered to LUX 2 students?
 - *School Management: for S6/S7, 2 period of sport is compulsory. For next year (current S5), it will be possible to choose 2 more periods (complementary option).*
- How does the school control that the programs as described in the syllabus are correctly followed in class? Inspector role?
 - *There is a requirement that the syllabus is connected to the planning proposed by the teachers. And it is controlled upon needed. If there is a problem / a doubt, it is mentioned and checked.*

Teachers recruitment

- More pressure from the parents have to be given to Brussel, to change the conditions of the teachers working in Luxembourg in the European Schools (salaries are too low for Luxembourg). Parents are worried.
 - *Answer School Management: it has been discussed at the last Board of Governors. There are discussions on options especially as there will be 4 accredited schools now. It is well known; we cannot compete in term of salary / duration – sustainability of the contracts. For the moment, we cannot do more than what has been done with the 2 parents association and Luxembourgish authorities.*
 - *Answer from APEEEL2: please refer to APEEEL2 website to see what APEEEL2 is doing/has done : <http://www.apeeel2.lu/letter-to-the-boq-on-teacher-recruitment-issues/> and <http://www.apeeel2.lu/interparents-communication-boq-meeting-4-7-12-2018/>*
- Concerning the teacher's recruitments and the replacement of chargé de cours with seconded teacher we kindly ask to provide prompt information to parents about the changings. We also ask to plan with the allowed advance the substitution when the provision of a new post is known (reference to the Italian teacher replaced in November)
 - *Answer School Management: Process of the teacher recruitment for the European School: in Sept at the Admin Board, we mentioned all the teachers to be requested for the next year. This year we posted 58 requests for Lux II. We will have a feedback by the end of January from the countries to "feed" the open positions. We will analyze the information and see what we will need to do.*
- Could new accredited schools (AES) in Luxembourg financially participate to the ES budget? How could the Luxembourgish authorities help our schools and our teachers?

- *AES are paying a fee to the central office of ES and Luxembourg is already participating by subsidizing a French class at Lux II and an English class at Lux1 (from nursery to secondary). It means we get the fees for that and a generous financial contribution from Luxembourg . They can't do more.*
- Can you tell us about possible changes in the hiring policy for the school as a reaction to the letter, which was sent from the German section from both Kirchberg and Mamer to Berlin and Brussels in spring 2018. What changes, if any, have you experienced. What will the long-term effects be?
 - *Answer School Management: We had interviews with German teachers but during the summer Berlin refused to let the teachers coming in Lux II as they wanted to keep them Efforts are being done at central level to increase the attractiveness of teaching posts in general at the ES, in order to have a higher interest from teachers in high salary countries like Germany.*
- Are you invited Universities to come at Lux II to talk to S7 students?
 - *APEEEL2: there are already 2 important student fairs every year in Luxembourg which we are promoting (Student fair at Luxexpo and the one at Lycée Vauban)*
 - *Answer School Management: If some universities want to visit our school, they are welcome but we don't organise them.*
 - *APEEEL2: to complete student fair, we are organizing a Careers Day every year.*

Teachers

- New teachers: Training and tutoring for new teachers still not enough (lack of information about use of SMS, prebac and compos rules, tests harmonization, use of the calculator...)
 - *School Management (Ms. Soekov): I do not fully agree. All teachers were present at the induction meeting at the beginning of school year (except 2 teachers who arrived late after the school start). We rely on subject matter coordinator to follow up with questions. Information is given all the time in terms of change. A new working group will be created "induction of teachers" for the European School, and I will part of it.*
- Principal/Form teachers: how do you appoint them?
 - *Answer School Management: We try to appoint teachers who has the whole class first when this is possible.*
- Teachers replacement
 - What is the school policy on substitute teachers?
 - *School Management: as in all the European School, we have a replacement plan based on internal replacements and it depends on the Schools. Our Schools established the rules 3 years ago. We have to cover all the lessons when the teachers are absent. But we don't have enough teachers to manage it. We cover emergencies first and the youngest classes.*

- A Math teacher (Fr section) has been absent for a long period and has been finally replaced but not for all the lessons, so children are accumulating delay. We ask the school to: 1/ Urgently provide a replacing teacher for all the courses 2/ Provide books or documents to help parents and children to follow even in the absence of the teacher
 - *Answer School Management: When it lasts a long time, we put plan in place to cover what is needed with our own resources. For the case mentioned we have decided to replace 3 periods with the same teacher instead of having 3 different teachers. To get a French math teacher in the middle of the year is a dream. The recruitment process lasts a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks. As far as the book is concerned, there is only the syllabus and we don't have any maths books.*
 - Parents would like to have some material so their children could work on math when the teacher is not replaced. Could the school ask other math teachers to provide with some lessons and practical exercises? *APEEEL2 suggests a separate meeting to discuss this specific case.*

Pupil's evaluation

- Compo exams in S4: Why has the compos for S4 changed (less subjects tested) – is this a one-off or will it be a permanent format?
 - *School Management: Yes it is permanent.*
- Exams in S5: Can we have back the long tests calendar in S5 to have a better balance calendar?
 - *School Management: in the past year, A and B marks were mixed. For the B mark there are only 2 tests: December and June. For the A marks, we are going to put the tests in the calendar for the Second Semester.*
- New Marking Scale: At the meeting on May 31, Mrs Soekov said that she would distribute the information at the end of the school year. This never happened and we only received information in November when the first report cards were issued. Why was this not done as originally communicated?
 - *School Management: In May we did not know when the meeting for the Deputy will be held. It was done mid-October in Brussels.*
- We don't understand the NWS. Only 2 grades are failed marks (FX and F), how a pupil with difficulties can see his progress?
 - *School Management: the idea of this new marking scale system was to reduce the failing marks. The pupil can see its progress by increasing its results in the test.*

Pupil's evaluation: Harmonisation

- Can you explain for which subjects there are harmonized and semi-harmonised compos? Has it ever been considered to harmonize all compos in S6? It is not logical that they are harmonized in S5 and S7 and not in S6.

- No harmonized marking across the different teachers, especially in subjects like Geography, History and Gymnastics in secondary. What are the actions of the school is taking on this respect?
- How does it happen that in the S6 compos some sections have really different topics of exams, especially as far as time is concerned? In L1 for example, the same matter necessitates two 4-pages answers and pupils write frenetically in order to finish, and in another, pupils finish much more in advance, with no extra pages. It is well known that the topics of BAC necessitate a good time management and a speedy writing.
- Harmonization in sport: Can you please ask all sports teachers to try and apply a more uniform system of grades which does not put certain pupils into disadvantage with regard to others?

Answer School Management: the rule on harmonization:

- *For S5 all the marks for the B marks need to be harmonized. With the new marking scale which was already very demanding for teachers, I did not push for the compulsory harmonization marks for Christmas. It will be done at the end of the year.*
- *In S6 it is strongly recommended.*
- *In S7, everything has to be harmonized.*
- *For L1, it is not possible to harmonize the rules. For L2, it is difficult but attempt has been made to harmonise the structure.*

Pupil's evaluation: S6 & S7 exams

- Why some teachers do not give long tests? Should long tests not be obligatory in S6? Long tests prepare students to deal better with the course syllabus before the compos.
- On the other hand, would it be possible to ask teachers to better balance long tests and compos? Doesn't make sense to organize a long test one week before the compos especially when the student won't get the result of the long test before the compo.
- There was one week where my kid had 5 tests in S6. Can't this be avoided?
- Is there a new rule this year which says that S7 pupils can't know the results of their prebac in geography, history, biology? It was known that the pupils do not have accesses to the test itself but apparently for a first time even the mark is not communicated.

Answer School Management:

In S6 the number of long tests or tests for A marks is not regulated centrally. The teachers have to use their common sense and the workload option of SMS to plan their testing. For lower years, the long tests for A marks were re-entered into the calendar of long tests.

5 tests in S6 – it is not clear what kind of tests they were – there can always be class tests that do not need home preparation, also short tests with home preparations can take place and then there are long tests. S6& S7 are very demanding courses.

For S7 Pre-BAC there is a new rule for this year – the students will not be informed of their marks for the Pre-BAC exams before the communication of results after the S7 class council which will be 11 February.

Internal rules

- Where can the pupils wait when they finish lessons at 16:30 when they have to wait for 30 min for their train?
- Would it be possible to review permissions A/B for lower secondary pupils (especially on short days)?
- why do the afternoons off change to a different day every year in Secondary? The kids' extracurricular activities don't change, and this inevitably creates problems.

Answer School Management:

Unfortunately, we do not have dedicated places for students to wait after the lessons. To do so we need also supervision for those students. Right now no possibilities

A/B permissions for lower years have not been granted for safeguarding reasons.

The free afternoons for the classes depend on timetable possibilities.

School trips & excursions

- It seems teachers are blocked due to new regulations by organizing school trips and excursions as they have to look for a replacement for their courses during their absence by themselves - proposal would be that the "conseillers" are organizing the replacement
- Teachers reported they have difficulty to plan any educational trips
- If there are changes to the school's policy/attitude towards school trips? Can it please be communicated directly to the parents?
- Lack of support by School Management on educational trips. EE1 continues as always. Is this a new rule or this is an interpretation of the current school management? If there is a new regulation can this be shared with the parents?
- Apparently there have been some changes in the group composition of the S6-trip although it had been announced that there would be absolutely none. How do we explain to our kids that some people do achieve in the end what they want if they insist and cry hard enough?

School Management:

- *The School policy has never changed. It is in the teachers vademecum for a few years and we are only applying the rules set in the vademecum.*
- *Vademecum states a routine where the teacher who arranges a trip gives a proposal to School on replacements. It is the School who then works on the actual replacements – not the teacher.*
- *Conditions for S6 trips are the same now as before – if enough trips are organized by teachers the S6 trips will be done.*
- *There are 3 trips compulsory: S2, S4 and S6. But we are not discouraging other trips.*
- *Conditions for S6 trips are the same now as before – if enough trips are organized by teachers the S6 trips will be done. It was clear that teachers had strong responsibility in the alcohol use during trips. It is important to protect them and to ensure we are all align on the use of alcohol.*
- *The only decision which was taken in agreement with teachers, students and parents representatives is that no trips shall be organized for S7 after Toussaint break and*

over the prebacs, so the students can focus on prebac and all possible lessons will be used for this.

School life and school atmosphere

- Pupils feel some tension between teachers and school management. Parents are concerned as teachers can be demotivated.
- The atmosphere in the school between the teachers and the hierarchy is getting more and more worse and nobody would like to have only demotivated teachers. It seems that autocratic structures are implemented instead of an open spirit atmosphere in a democratic environment. However, this is in school first that pupils have to learn democratic rules.
- *School Management (Mr Frithiofson):*
 - *I would agree to improve the atmosphere of Secondary for teachers. But we need to see / share the big pictures: this year has been really tough: we have introduced a new marking scale, new harmonization, several demands for the School Inspection: peers' observation, self-evaluation... (for next year), we have increased the use of SMS on parents request. Teachers have been given many new tasks. In addition to introduce new marking scale and new requests... we didn't get any additional resources to train the teachers.*
 - *The what is not questioned. But indeed we can question the how.*
 - *We would like to request parents to trust the School Management we are doing the best for the School.*

Educational Support

- Extreme difficulty faced in communicating with the Secondary Psychologist. This is in huge contrast with the experiences we had with the primary Psychologist. What are school's suggestions for improving the situation?
- More and more students of our school seem to take private lessons in recent years. Could the school/ APEEEL2 organize a survey to identify this?
- *Answer School Management: It is difficult to answer as I do not know what was the difficulty faced. I am ready to step in in case there are difficulties with communication. I cannot comment on private lessons.*

Health & Safety

- Was there any lock down exercise in the school with the participation of the pupils?
- *Answer School Management: The school has a security officer who is dealing with this type of exercises. I do not know the past but last year this exercise was not done. I will forward the request to our security officer.*

Career Guidance

- How the professional orientation activities of the school could be enhanced? Careers day or Hello Future are very good initiatives but seem not enough. A more personalized help should be offered to students who have more difficulties in finding their professional orientation.
- Organizations like scientific labs and technology companies contacted three years ago had given positive answers for internships for S5-S6 pupils, while the same

organizations contacted last year all wanted to follow Luxembourgish school year calendar and had no places for the dates proposed by the school. The School directors should consult the Luxembourgish Ministry of Education to work on a harmonization of school calendar and internships offers.

- *Answer School Management: We have career coordinators for every section and it is their task to provide students with the information needed, Our school calendar is different from the local system although we try as much as possible take the local holidays into consideration. But more we depend on the working sessions of European institutions.*

Transport

- School buses for Lux II are much too expensive. As next year, all transports in Luxembourg shall be for free also the ticket price for ATSEE buses should be modified.
- Luxembourg is claiming to have free transportation for pupils and is about to provide free transportation for all. However, there is no free bus service for the EE except the line 28 and a very limited network around the school. Is there any intention from the school management or APEEEL2 to raise the issue to the Luxembourgish authorities?
- *Answer APEEEL2: MDDI supplies our children with more than 8 buses lines + Line 28, Mamer and Bertrange communes supply with 4 buses lines. We know this could be improved. We will liaise with ATSEEE on this new topic before our next meeting with MDDI.*

Miscellaneous

- Questions remain by several parents on low level of education provided by teacher of S7 Chemistry and Deputy's director decision to assign her as coordinator. The no action on parents complains from the deputy director is creating questions and frustration to parents and pupils. The question is why no action? Do the school intents to revisit the subject?
- *Answer School Management: The teacher left.*
- The time schedule of the pupils for this year is not acceptable. Also, pupils in S4 have already 3 hours in a row free during the school day - course changes are refused, also when it would be possible and agreed with the concerned teachers
- *Answer School Management: As from S4 the students have their timetable designed by their choice of options. That can happen that there are free periods during the day. In S4 & S5 no changes of timetable is allowed except Maths6 to Maths 4 on duly justified pedagogical reasons.*
- S1DE is at 30 pupils. Are there plans to recruit teachers so that this class can be split?
- Answer School Management: The maximum for L1 classes is 30 pupils. In case one more pupil of Cat 1 is enrolled we have to split the class.*
- The rhythm for S4 at maths is too fast and too much information & the students cannot follow. Can the rhythm be a bit slower?
- *Answer School Management: Difficult to comment as the question is general.*