SWALS Timetable, Organization of studies

meeting summary 08.09.2021

After receiving many complaints from you about SWALS timetables, parents representatives had a meeting with the school management, where we raised the following issues about the new timetables.

- Too many L1 lessons on the Tuesday, Thursday(S1 only) afternoons which are free for the majority of the non-SWALS (no school bus, too many gaps in the timetable).
- Tuesday, Thursday afternoon lessons for young secondary S1, S2 SWALS who miss the school bus (too young to travel alone on the public transportation or wait without supervision).
- Application of lesson merging rules might be too strict.
- Certain SWALS groups have 3 L1 lessons on the same day.

The school management informed us about the followings:

- The school management is strictly following the rules of the European Schools. They are doing their best in order to offer the same conditions to SWALS and non-SWALS, but it is not possible to have a better timetable and respect the limitations set by the regulators at the same time.
- The free afternoon is not defined in the rules of the ES, there is just a vague guideline which says that the school “The school should use all five weekly working days efficiently” when creating the timetable. (*APEEEL2: different schools have different timetable structures e.g. some have the same number of lessons every day, or free Friday afternoon. The concept of the common free Tuesday afternoon in Lux 2. came up a few years ago to have a common time slot when teachers can arrange their duties which requires cooperation between school staff. This was not primarily set to provide a free afternoon for every student*).
- Actually there are also other lessons on Tuesday, Thursday afternoon such as ONL, religion, ancient greek.
- It is difficult to set up better SWALS timetables as there are many constraints:
    - Our school has many (6) SWALS language groups which is much more than an average European School.
    - The number of SWALS is relatively high compared to other ESs. As there are more SWALS students in secondary school than before. The number of SWALS

groups having different L1 and L2 language pairs (combinations of L1-L2 selections) is growing, which makes finding free common time slots difficult.
    - Trying to make Tuesday afternoon free for as many secondary students as possible, introduces additional constraints for all including teachers because it reduces the number of free periods for the pupils during a school day.
    - Having more teachers would help but there are strict rules in place on how many lessons a seconded teacher must have in a week in order to work for the school. (*APEEEL2: for locally recruited teachers there is no such rule*) . One teacher per SWALS L1) with full timetable, causes problems placing the L1 periods.
    - The school is trying to fill up open positions, whenever the rules allow it to hire additional teachers for the SWALS L1 teaching.
- However the school management understands that this issue is the worst for S1 they have no means to distinguish or prioritize this age group when creating the timetable.
- The directors of the European Schools are instructed to apply the maximum possible merged lessons allowed by the rules. The execution of this directive is reviewed on a regular basis, there is no possibility for a subjective consideration.
- The school reviewed the merged lessons and found only one mistake (*APEEEL2: for this mistake the timetable is already adjusted*).
- Having 3 L1 lessons on the same day is not beneficial for the students, this will be corrected in the timetable if possible. *(APEEEL2: since the meeting we were informed that the school couldn't find a solution for reorganizing the triple lessons).*
- The school is still in the process of reviewing the timetables, we should expect certain changes (APEEEL2: with the changes introduced last Monday 13.09.2021 the timetables considered to be final)
- We received an update on the S1 Sloven timetable review.

As a long term solution the following points came up as general discussion without any decision or action plan.

- Creating a new language section would allow the school more flexibility (*APEEEL2: the demography, the enrollment statistics do not justify the creation of a new section for any SWALS language group. For certain languages only 2-4 age groups could benefit from this, the others would have to attend even more merged lessons and have very small classes with only 2-5 student*)
- Reducing the number of SWALS L1-L2 combinations (students of a specific SWALS language in the same grade would choose only one of the three available L2 languages) could facilitate timetables by reducing the number of constraints. E.g. If all Hungarian pupils in a given grade were in the EN section, timetables for this group would be much easier to create. Gaps and lessons in the free afternoon could be avoided.
- Informing the parents of the SWALS already in P5 not to plan anything for Tuesdays and Thursdays until they see the timetable.

The meeting has ended without any open questions (about SWALS timetable) from parents.

We would like to thank Mrs Soekov, Mr O'Coimin, Mrs Henriksen, Mr Belpaume for offering their time to answer parents' representatives' questions and clarify the situation.

The APEEEL2 SWALS working group would like to further investigate the problems.

We asked the school management to better inform parents about the corresponding European School rules and their local implementation.

As the current situation seems to be the consequence of the regulations in place, which are not adapted to the circumstances we have in Lux 2., we would like to contact the regulators and the national inspectors to:

1. Draw attention to the issues by presenting examples of what SWALS and their families have to deal with.
2. Despite the school management's efforts, goodwill and cooperation it is very difficult to improve the situation without the revision of certain rules of the ES. The implementation of the current regulations in place do not guarantee a good pedagogical background for L1 teaching and disadvantageous to SWALS (studies and wellbeing).
3. Request a short term solution by allowing more freedom and subjective consideration in certain aspects of the current rules.
4. Request setting up the financial and organizational framework which will guarantee for SWALS to have the same quality of L1 education and student life as non-SWALS.

If you have any comments, suggestions on this topic please send them in an email to office@apeeel2.lu with the subject “SWALS timetable”