



## ACTIVITIES REPORT 2015-2016

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## **PRESIDENT REPORT 2015-2016**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Dear parents & Dear class representatives,

The published Annual Report 2015-2016 provides an overview for all activities of our Association (APEEE) as a basis for the presentations and discussions to be held at our General Meeting of 15 December 2016.

I have taken the opportunity to prepare a synthesis of our objectives and key priorities as developed since 19 January 2016, when the new Board was constituted following the election of ten (10) new members. In the specific parts that follow you will get a thoughtful and comprehensive understanding of the new sectoral policies and their envisaged implementation.

The year ahead from December 2016 to December 2017 is full of challenges which we are committed to meet with out-of-the box thinking and determination.

Now is the time to review our state of mind, to identify new needs, to assess objectively our resources and to develop a sincere, multi-level communication with the school community, contributing to an outward looking and well-performing school of excellence.

The school which we all dream of is a shared vision! Let us join together in efforts, develop new ideas and engage passionately for our common good!

Yours sincerely,

Tassos PAPADOPOULOS

President of the EEB 3 Parents' Association

## **A year of transformation - our Association at a higher operational level**

All efforts deployed since the last General Meeting on 19 January 2016 aimed at leading our association to a higher operational level.

All services and all parameters of development (human, regulatory and communication-relevant) are currently under review within a global and comprehensive new strategy. This strategy addressed simultaneously the sectoral APEEE policies (transport, extracurricular activities and canteen/cafeteria) and its educational structures enabling them to act as a powerful player within and outside the school. Moreover, a more inclusive approach of communication opened up channels of regular interaction with all other Parents Associations in Brussels, the student communities and parents volunteering to provide input and personal support, while several events of added value for students were genuinely supported and will be further developed.

Our strategy for internal APEEE development entailed three main priorities:

- a) Adopting and consolidating new internal provisions in implementation of the amended Statutes and in pursuit of clear management objectives (internal control, payments policy, reimbursements, legal responsibility and insurance policies);
- b) Preparing tools and processes for the on-line era in our internal communication;
- c) Developing a new HR development plan, thereby ensuring business continuity and risk management, clear rules of operation, ownership of and responsibility for tasks, enhanced motivation and staff development.

### **The impact of our new Statutes**

The amended Statutes (October 2015) provided the ground for developing a solid “educational narrative” through the setting up of the preparatory Education Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Board. EAC is chaired by the Vice-President for Educational Affairs, Robert Wein. Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Councils of the school were able to take part actively in EAC, thereby seeking to form consistent views prior to important Meetings. This inclusive participation has the advantage of widening knowledge, enlarging the expertise and getting more members acquainted with current and future challenges.

Another preparatory Board Committee, the Executive Committee (EXCO) chaired by the Vice-President for Administrative Affairs, Simon Coates, played a catalytic role in analyzing thoroughly the draft Board decisions prior to its meeting, with respect to the operation of the three sectors and their financial management as well as personnel-related issues.

The Working Groups (WGs) played, in most cases, an instrumental role in daily monitoring of APEEE sectors, in corresponding directly on all relevant queries and complaints as well as in devising new approaches in specific matters. The participation in the WGs is not bound to a Board membership, thus enabling participation by motivated members of our Association. The scope of the WGs was extended to further issues, such as internal control, school trips, combating violence in the school, after-school OIB childcare facilities, while the EAC-specific WGs (such as the BAC WG, the Primary and Nursery WG, the Languages WG) will start delivering opinions during the current school year.

## **New internal policies**

### **Efficiency, transparency and accountability**

The new Board adopted in less than six months (from February to June 2016) a series of internal rules, which were not available before, thus ensuring the “Rule of Law” in decision-making process. The Rules of Procedure of the Board complement the statutory provisions whenever required<sup>1</sup>, the rules on procurement and on payments as well as the rules on reimbursement set out a clear framework engaging the bodies and the members in their mutual rights and obligations. Most importantly, the Board decided to intensify the external accounting and auditing controls throughout the budgetary period. Their recommendations are used as benchmark for constant improvements in under-performing areas. These organizational improvements sought to increase the efficiency and transparency of the internal decision-making process.

These procedural provisions went hand-in-hand with newly developed policies in the areas of canteen (new food policy) and of transport (new rules for all stakeholders, new contractual obligations for companies in terms of adopting security/precautionary measures and pilot projects for distance-tracking of vehicles).

In safeguarding member and overall association interests, we examined closely the complementarities of the insurance policies of the school and those of APEEE and we made sure that all hypothetical incidents could find an appropriate contractual resolution. In October 2016, the Board agreed to establish permanent cooperation with a legal adviser (KOAN law firm), who will be in charge of assisting in the review of all contracts as well as in providing punctual advice on specific queries (related, *inter-alia*, to the respect of data protection requirements, extra-contractual liability and staff complaints). A translation service provider (ApLingo) was also chosen for the preparation of all final documents and of website news in both English and French languages.

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<sup>1</sup> In several cases (8) in 2016 the Board took its final decision by written procedure, as the new Rules of its Procedure (Article 3) set out.

The new Board went through an all-inclusive preparatory process leading to a call for tender for online services published in May 2016. This choice will have a paramount impact on the internal development of the Association towards a modernized and more lenient procedure, *inter-alia*, for enrolments and payments. The contract with the successful bidder (Epafos) was signed in October with a clear timeframe for the delivery of the entire project by May-June 2017. The first implementation steps are underway.

### **A new management approach**

The internal administration of the Association required a fresh approach in terms of human resources capital and management tools. The Board recruited a young but experienced Office Manager (Ms Ornella di Perri) in the new post created by the General Meeting in January 2016. This person is entrusted with various significant responsibilities in terms of monitoring daily operations in all sectors, in contributing to the improvement of our communication and in liaising between the Board and various stakeholders inside and outside the school. The Secretary post, which became vacant after the consensual termination of the contract allowing retirement of a previous employee, remains vacant for the time being. At its last meeting in October 2016, the Board agreed to implement a HR development plan in cooperation with the Legal and HR Department of Partena. This will entail a fundamental review of existing Regulations based on recent legislative developments and new approaches for HR management, including appropriate job descriptions, business continuity planning, staff training and evaluation, and will eventually link to performance and remuneration incentives. The horizon of this plan is set until the end of the current school year aiming at a fresh start for all internal operations in September 2017.

### **The role of the Board**

In preparing the draft agenda of Board meetings the President's intention was to revalorize the Board's responsibility and accountability. In this vein, its meetings were deliberately open to those members that had to report back on important tasks delegated to them (Interparents meeting, Springfest co-ordinators). Operation managers of the three sectors as well as the nutritionist were invited to provide updates about their precise tasks and future objectives. The heads of the Students Committee were invited twice to Board meetings to inform the members about their thoughts and to present their school projects. Finally, SWALS representatives were accepted at two Board meetings on the basis of the new internal provisions, since they expressed the intention to participate in the planned exchange of views on important issues.

The Board was represented in several joint meetings (Joint Committees on canteen and on extra-curricular activities) and expressed parent views as members of the School Administrative Board and the School Advisory Council. A “reform agenda” was proposed seeking to enable class representatives to contribute to the identification of the key objectives and of specific indicators for the next 2017-2020 Multiannual School Plan.

Some decisions, such as the reduced Springfest organization in April 2016, were the result of a common position reflecting the interests of all pupils. The new agreement on Springfest was signed in July 2016. It delegates to APEEE the financial management of its accounts. This led in November to the first publication of the distribution of proceeds from previous years, thereby raising transparency and providing sense to the efforts from various volunteers and of all parents. Based on the Springfest Financial Committee decisions, several projects of pupils and essential needs of school activities could be covered by SF contributions. Next year's event will focus on 60 years of European integration. In parallel, APEEE followed very closely the local security situation on a daily basis and addressed parents' concerns at the highest political level. It analysed the hygiene and overall infrastructure conditions of the school and made concrete suggestions for improvement. In this context, it suggested re-opening the school to parents on the basis of clear guidelines. The accessibility of the school by car remains high on the agenda and any progress would require close consultation with the Commission Directorate of Security, the local police stations and the municipalities involved.

### **Cooperation within and outside our school**

The APEEE representatives maintained a close working relationship with the school direction also during the long transition period. The meetings with the new Director started already in May 2016 and have continued at regular intervals since then.

We firmly believe in constructive and efficient cooperation within the school community (“open community approach”) aiming at mutually beneficial (“win-win”) conditions. APEEE opened up direct channels of communication with the Students Committee by listening actively their concerns and engaging in a two-way dialogue. Some of the projects initiated by the Students' Committee were financed through Springfest proceeds. The APEEE opened itself to several volunteers engaging in school projects (such as Springfest, school librarians and the medical service). Its dialogue with external authorities (Ixelles / Auderghem police stations and ULB technical services) sought to explore any options with a view to facilitating parking placements and “Kiss & Ride” zones around the school.

Our support for the University Fair on 11 October and for the Day of Professions on 26 November 2016 are active demonstrations of the acknowledgement of the school efforts and recognition of the role of talented teachers.

One of the first priorities of the new Board was to set up a solid network for the exchange of information and best practices among the 4 APEEEs of European Schools in Brussels. The co-operation of all Presidents was very systematic and led to the convening for the first-time of an all-Boards meeting in April 2016, which laid the ground for some closer co-operation in the future. Their joint efforts were also at the origin of the high-level meeting with Vice-President Georgieva in May 2016, where security and budgetary needs were presented convincingly. Two more meetings with the Directorate on Security of the Commission DG HR focused on the practical measures adopted since March 2016 as well as on the additional provisions in relation to the provision of APEEE services (screening of bus drivers, and review of transport contracts signed with Autocars).

The change at the top level in the Office of the Secretary-General on 1 October 2016 represented a significant turning point in the management of the entire ES system.

Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Education of the APEEEs met also prior to the Budgetary Committee meetings (October 2016) and also in the context of the Brussels Monitoring Group to discuss infrastructure problems and other common issues in the presence of the Secretary-General and of the competent Belgian authorities.

The upcoming Eurosport event in March 2017 represents the next common organisational challenge for the Brussels Schools and their Parents' Associations.



### **Challenges ahead (“Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”)**

We face considerable work during the next 12 months. We are conscious of parent' expectations and we will try to do our best when meeting foreseeable and unexpected future challenges.

- 1) The online and IT environment of APEEE should be upgraded, consolidated (in an inter-modal way) and work efficiently in line with auditors' recommendations; the role of the new IT Assistant is crucial in this respect;
- 2) The Partena human resources plan should be implemented fully, thereby providing the benchmark for any further development in this area
- 3) Progress in all sectors will continue with particular emphasis on the implementation of the new policies in canteen and transport; new bus lines and a new extracurricular program will be duly considered.
- 4) The legal/financial/operational consolidation of APEEE should be completed with respect to all outstanding issues.
- 5) APEEE should provide a trustworthy budget delivery, including the management of Springfest accounts in 2017.
- 6) More parents and all students will be invited to engage in our “open community method” with a view to developing trust, common ownership of projects and to promoting best practices for the further flourishing the European Schools' project (also in co-operation with the dynamic Alumnis networks)
- 7) The good co-operation with the school will be pursued with specific attention to ensure progress and tangible results towards clear educational objectives, thereby establishing a more open, outward-looking and vibrant school environment, where the role of parents should be valued and recognized. The school's security plan represents a good example of the action envisaged.

We are grateful for the constructive listening by all our partners and the trust demonstrated by them.

Anastassios Papadopoulos

The APEEE President

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT 2015-2016**

### **CONTRIBUTION TO THE REPORT FOR THE GENERAL MEETING**

#### **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

##### **Introduction**

A lot of the work of the VP Administration concerns routine staff and financial matters, with which I won't bore you. This report focuses on the key initiatives taken during the year.

##### **Recruitment**

Arguably the most important action was recruiting a member of staff for the new Administrative Office Manager post, as agreed at the last General Meeting.<sup>2</sup>

We received almost sixty candidates for the post, of which we invited five for a structured interview and drafting test. The Selection Board was unanimous in its decision on the candidate with the best profile for the post. We therefore recruited Ornella di Perri with effect from June.

We also recruited a temporary staff member to reinforce the transport sector. We have begun discussions on future staffing needs, with a view to having a full complement of permanent staff from early 2017.

##### **Policy documents**

We also started work on the drafting of a staff policy. This is not a revolution, but rather a gradual evolution. Indeed, much of the policy is a consolidation of existing practices. However, we also want to lay down clear and transparent rules, in the interests of both staff and parents, to minimize the need for ad hoc decisions. For example, there should be clear rules on how to reward exceptional performance (and also, though we of course hope never to have to use such provisions, how to deal with underperformance.) Partena will help us with the implementation of the policy and the updating of the "règlement de travail" which is not in line with recent developments in Belgian employment law.

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<sup>2</sup> This was necessary since, after several years of loyal service, our secretary, Jocelyne Poupé, left for a well-deserved retirement.

As the chair of the Executive Committee<sup>3</sup>, I was also actively involved in the development of other policy documents, with the same aim of establishing clear and transparent rules. Policy documents on purchases and reimbursements were adopted during the course of 2016. Work on a policy on communication is continuing.

Simon Coates

Vice-President Administration

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<sup>3</sup> The Executive Committee also dealt with budgetary issues and matters concerning the three sectors, but I'll leave those points to my colleagues.

## CANTEEN REPORT 2015/2016

### I. General overview of the canteen activities

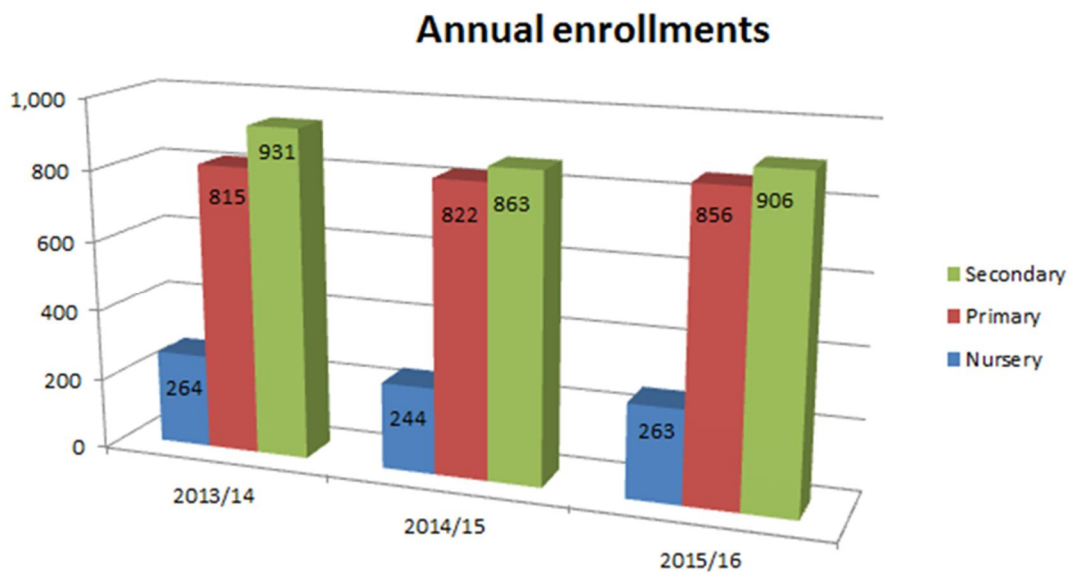
Based on an agreement with the school (hereinafter, the "canteen agreement") the activities of the canteen include the main pupil canteen, the teachers' canteen and the cafeteria, whose operation is described in detail below.

#### 1. The pupil canteen

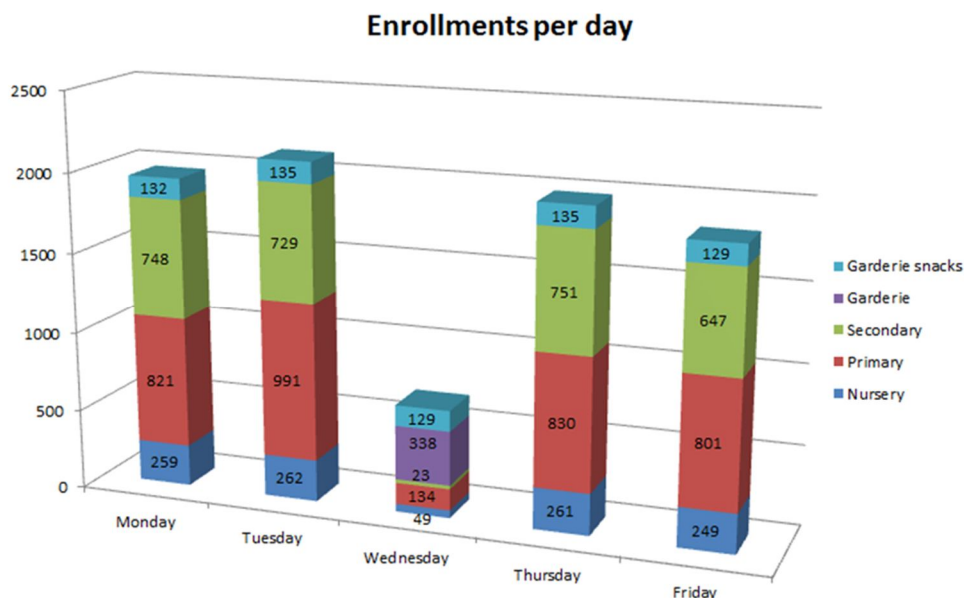
##### *Enrolments*

During the year 2015/2016, the number of pupils enrolled in the canteen ranged from 1929 to 2000. At the start of 2016/2017, the number of pupils enrolled in the canteen was 2072 (situation at 18/10/2016).

Change in registrations over the last 3 years.



Pupils enrolled per day of the week (average for the year 2015/2016)



### *Composition of menus and ingredients*

One menu per day is served. This is published on the APEEE<sup>4</sup> website including information on the possible presence of any allergens.

Food policy published on the web page: fresh fruits and vegetables produced locally and preferably organic, meat of a quality equivalent to organic products and sustainable species of fish are preferred, as are cold-pressed sunflower and olive oil.

A dietician is consulted on the composition of menus and the preparation of certain dishes.

### *Compliance with health standards*

Hygiene is monitored regularly. Checks carried out regularly by the association Qualacs ([www.qualacs.be](http://www.qualacs.be)), for compliance with the standards of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System), confirm an average compliance rate of 95% (which is higher than the recommended level). Last report dated 28/04/2016

## **2. Teachers' canteen**

The APEEE also manages the teachers' canteen. The main dish on the menu is the same as that served in the pupil canteen. In addition, a soup is offered and different salads are available at the salad bar. There are also various kinds of bread and desserts (fruits and yogurts), as well as tea and coffee.

<sup>4</sup> APEEE - Association des Parents d'élèves de l'école Européenne (Association of Parents of pupils at the European School)

In 2015/16, the canteen was frequented daily by about 80 teachers.

In response to a request from the teachers' group, since September 2016 service in the teachers' canteen has been organised as self-service. Pricing policy has also changed to give more flexibility for purchasing different menu items.

### **3. The cafeteria**

The cafeteria is available to high-school pupils. It is a good alternative to the canteen as it offers not only fruit, and hot and cold sandwiches, but also pasta dishes and salads prepared daily. In 2015/16, there were approximately 400 to 500 visits per day. In the year 2015/2016 the cafeteria generated a surplus of approximately 16,000.00 Euros. This trend is already also apparent for 2016/2017.

### **4. The steward and staff**

The functions of the canteen steward are performed by Mr Didier Delhoux, and since October 2015, Mr Forton has been the chef. To prepare the meals, Mr Delhoux and Mr Forton are assisted by 3 kitchen staff, 3 dishwashers and 2 people deal with the cafeteria. During meal times, service was provided by 26 employees from the company Atalian for the year 2015-2016.

### **5. The Canteen Working Group**

Within the Board, a Canteen Working Group, which consists of Mrs Maria Saura Moreno (board member in charge of the canteen), Mrs Fani Zarifopoulou and Mr Tomas Hruby, has been set up.

The Canteen Working Group meets regularly to discuss ongoing issues, and to identify and propose measures for improving the service and offering.

### **6. The Canteen Committee**

The Canteen Committee, whose existence is determined by the canteen agreement, is an advisory body. It consists of school administration representatives and the APEEE board of directors. Teacher and pupil representatives, and the steward participate as observers. It meets on average every two months.

The three members of the Working Group participate in the meetings of the Canteen Committee in representation of the APEE.

The Canteen Committee serves as a forum to discuss all matters relating to the canteen that require coordination with the school.

During this school year, the Canteen Committee met in September and November 2015, February, April and May 2016. The main issues addressed were working with the school on projects such as the self-service for the teachers' canteen, the clearing of tables by the children, the role of supervisors, etc.

## **II. Financial situation**

In the balance sheet for 2015/16, the hotels, restaurants and catering sector of the APEE generated a surplus of €176,605.57. Subscription prices have been reduced by 0.50 cents per average price of meals since January 2016.

For the year 2016/2017, the forecast for the revenues total is €1,803,835.16, and an expenses total of €1,730,634.60. The estimated decrease in revenues of about 38,000

euros is due to reducing the canteen subscription contribution applicable since the start of the school year. The estimated increase in expenses of about 66,000 euros is due to price indexing, increase in the prices of raw materials, new fuel tax and the priority given to food quality.

The Canteen Working Group closely follows operations in the hotels, restaurants and catering sector and, if possible, will make a new price reduction offer for the year 2017/2018.

Detailed figures are presented in the report on the general financial situation.

### **III. Actions taken in 2015/16**

The following measures are being implemented:

#### **1. Price revision and adoption of reimbursements policy**

On 16/02/2016, the Board adopted lower prices in the canteen from January 2016. The reduction has been deducted from the contribution of the third quarter, or refunded as applicable.

The price list of products sold in the teachers' canteen, as well as in the cafeteria and other services of the café or other lent to the school, was revised and adopted by the Board in June 2016.

In June 2016, the Board also adopted a document harmonising the reimbursement policy for the services of the APEE.

See: [http://apeeeb3.eu/images/APEEE/APEEE\\_Reimbursement\\_policy.pdf](http://apeeeb3.eu/images/APEEE/APEEE_Reimbursement_policy.pdf)

The new policy sets out the cases for which a reimbursement is possible at the request of parents having paid for services in advance: force majeure, changes in certain justified cases, final departure from school, justified absence for 5 consecutive days during which the pupil was subscribed to the service, excluding reimbursement in any other circumstance.

#### **2. Quality of the offering**

Under the mandate of the Board, during the months of April to June, the Canteen Working Group prepared a document supporting the policy on food and the implementation mechanisms of the APEEE. The document was approved by the Board on 20th September 2016.

See document: [http://apeeeb3.eu/images/Cantine/APEEE\\_politique\\_alimentaire.pdf](http://apeeeb3.eu/images/Cantine/APEEE_politique_alimentaire.pdf)

The document has two objectives:

- to define the general principles applicable to the organisation of menus, as for the preparation of lunches in the school canteen; and
- to set up specific mechanisms to monitor the implementation of this food policy, and to assess the satisfaction of pupils and teachers.

The ultimate objective of this procedure is to ensure that the school canteen, proposed by the APEEE, enables pupils to eat well and to eat healthy food.

This document compiles the current practices used within the school canteen, just as it aims to introduce specific and practical measures to address the main concerns expressed by parents and pupils.

Some new measures put in place from September as part of the food policy:

- Serve raw vegetables (*crudités*) at the table (instead of bread) for the 1st sitting (nursery pupils, P1 and P2). According to teachers and supervisors, this has been very much appreciated by children.
- The menus accepted for the coming weeks increasingly include dishes whose components can be separated and identified, and prepared with simple and more popular recipes.

The principles and guidelines defined in this document concerning the canteen should be applied, if necessary, to the cafeteria, just as to all the snacks offered in nurseries and for extracurricular activities.

The offering in the cafeteria has been expanded to include products such as fresh fruit juice, yogurt and cereals. New soup kettles have been purchased to serve soup in the cafeteria as well.

#### **IV. Ongoing issues**

The following measures are currently under consideration:

##### **1. Monitoring implementation of the food policy.**

The Working Group is preparing the necessary mechanisms to monitor implementation of the food policy and evaluation of satisfaction, included in the document on food policy adopted in September by the Board of the APEEE, such as pupil and parent satisfaction surveys.

An evaluation of the implementation of the new APEEE food policy should take place at the end of March 2017

##### **2. Pupil Participation**

Pupil participation in the service also features among the priority topics for the year 2016/2017. In consultation with the school, the Canteen Working Group is preparing a project for all pupils from classes of P1 to clear the table at the end of the meal.

##### **3. Cafeteria**

Together with the school, the Working Group is preparing a project for refurbishment of the cafeteria. The Springfest committee has granted funding of €1,500.00 for this project.

##### **4. Noise in the dining hall**

The issue of the excessive noise level in the dining hall is still the subject of a concerted review with the school. At the meeting of the Canteen Committee, it was agreed (specify who) with the school to consider proposals to solve this problem.

##### **5. Organisation of the service**

At the time of the new school director taking office, the Canteen Working Group proposed resuming discussions with the school on the reorganisation of the service to allow pupils to have more time to eat, and for the secondary level pupils to have more flexible schedules, so they can choose more freely when to eat.



## **6. Teachers' canteen**

Since September 2016 the service in the teachers' canteen has been set up as self-service. The pricing policy has also changed to give more flexibility for purchasing different menu items. The new self-service set-up in the teachers' canteen has been well received by users.

During the months September to October, an increase in the number of customers was noted; the figures at the end of the fourth quarter need to be attained in order to evaluate the result.

Installation (?) is to be trialled with existing furniture but it is necessary to make some investments in adequate supplies, such as support rails for the trays, in consultation with the school.

The Canteen Working Group:

Maria SAURA  
Tomas HRUBY  
Fani ZARIFOPOULOU

## TRANSPORT REPORT 2015-2016

### **1. Internal Organisation:**

The APEEE Transport Working Group is made up of parent representatives of the Parents' Association (APEEE). For the school year 2015-16, it consisted of the following members: Keir FITCH (Sector Responsible), Fani ZARIFOPOULOU (since January 2016), Fiona SHOTTER and Tasos PAPADOPOULOS (until January 2016). In September 2016, following the departure of Keir and Fiona, Fani ZARIFOPOULOU was elected Sector Responsible, and Koen NOMDEN joined the Working group as member.

There are three APEEE staff members in the Transport Office: Mrs Isabelle CALLENS (administrator), Mrs Emilia QUIROGA (assistant) and Mr Aba BUBA (assistant).

Our service also employs six people to supervise the car parks, including two people who collect the nursery children upon their arrival and take them to the playground area, as well as some 40 adult supervisors and another 30 upper secondary pupil supervisors, who supervise the children on the buses (bus monitors). This year, we added two people at the entry of the school, who are in charge of verifying the drivers' identities.

The Transport Office looks after day-to-day business under the management of Mrs Callens. The Office immediately informs the members of the Working Group by e-mail or telephone if there is any particular problem. The Transport Committee (parent representatives and staff administrator) usually meets once a month to review the current situation and take decisions regarding the good functioning of the service. A meeting with the Transport Committees of the other European Schools takes place twice a year, in order to exchange ideas and to further improve services and safety.

## **2. Enrolments, bus routes and duration of the journey:**

There are approximately 3,200 pupils at the school, and over 2,200 use the school buses. An increase in the number of subscriptions in the course of last year was observed, following the terrorist incidents.

There are three circuits: 45 buses run in the morning, 35 in the afternoon on first departure (all days except Friday) and 25 on second departure.

The bus routes are updated each year by the end of June on the basis of new requests and new registrations (the enrolment procedure for re-registrations and confirmations is launched in May). New bus stops are added under strict conditions and if road safety is guaranteed. A fine-tuning of the routes is made in early September in response to last minute subscriptions and overloaded buses. The bus routes can also be adjusted throughout the year, due to road works at one of the stops or in a whole area. The circuits and timetables are not available on the website due to general security reasons.

Following up on the requests of many parents whose children are enrolled in the extracurricular activities, a bus service will be added next year towards the different afterschool centres ("garderies") at the 2nd departure of 16.30.

All efforts are made to keep journey times under an hour in the mornings, an hour and a quarter in the afternoons, always bearing in mind the need to ensure efficient use of resources and contain costs.

However, given the large number of road works (e.g. closed tunnels Stephanie, Montgomery), strikes and demonstrations, and the increased traffic jams that have been observed in Brussels over the past year, it is recognised that journeys are occasionally over this limit. Where problems are identified, those routes are examined in order to seek improvements or alternative solutions in the interests of the children.

In any event, it is clear that our bus service has reached its maximum geographic limit (larger than any of the other schools) and, therefore, no further extension can be awarded.

### **3. Bus companies and contracts – annual subscription fees**

The APEEE has contracts with companies that are specialised in school transportation: Eurobussing / Keolis (largest external provider), Kim Cars, Mont Blanc, Albacars, Autocars Gilles, Hermes Lines, Sylvae Tours/Dierickx. In 2016, we signed a contract with a new company "Voyages Star" with one new bus. The contracts with these companies are renewed every one, two or three years.

Our annual subscription fee was €1,206 in 2015/16, which is below that of the other three European Schools in Brussels. The price covers all costs of buses, staff and operation of the transport service. After three years of stable annual fee, a slight increase was decided for the school year 2016/17 (€1,260) due to the additional bus lines that are introduced (especially towards the garderies), as well as the security measures that are being taken in the sector (e.g. system of geolocalisation in school busses).

### **4. Security and safety:**

One of the Committee's main objectives since it was set up is to maintain security and improve the safety of the children travelling by bus. This is why we work only with well-known and very professional companies that specialise in school transport and select their drivers carefully. Most of the drivers and supervisors have been working for us for many years.

Each year our supervisors receive training in first aid from the Red Cross. We verify their performance on a systematic basis and we make sure that their behaviour complies with the required standards, as set out in our internal Transport Regulation<sup>5</sup>. Our aim is to keep the same drivers and supervisors on the bus line throughout the year, in order for him/her to maintain a good working knowledge of its specificities and to reach a better communication with parents and pupils.

Bus drivers' moral and behavioural requirements are assessed by the bus companies employing them. We remain in contact with their employers for any unacceptable behaviour. Bus companies are also in charge of informing any replacement staff about the bus routes and their time-schedules.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://apeeeb3.eu/transport-rules>

Following this year's terrorist incidents, new security measures were immediately taken (e.g. request of certificates of good conduct of all drivers and supervisors, extra staff at the entry to school, extended permanence in the Transport Office). In cooperation with the other European Schools in Brussels and the European Commission, and with the valuable assistance of two parents that have voluntarily provided their expertise in this field, a comprehensive strategy on security in the transport sector was set up. Among other measures, this includes the introduction of a system of geolocalisation for school buses, a series of training sessions for bus drivers and supervisors, a new procedure of checking busses before departure, a revision of contractual obligations of bus companies ("cahier des charges") regarding security.

The Transport Committee will ensure that all relevant security measures are implemented in a timely and correct manner, placing security at the heart of its activity.

## **5. Conclusion – outlook for next year:**

This was our 16th year of operation. We experienced very complex road conditions, a number of general strikes and demonstrations, the introduction of new services for parents and pupils but mainly a new security environment in Brussels with all the repercussion that this entailed. We endeavoured to accommodate all new challenges and requests in an assertive way by looking at parents' interests and by taking utmost care for pupils' safety and well-being. It goes without saying that continuous improvements are always essential on a short- and mid-term basis.

We have set the following objectives for the school year 2016/17:

Firstly, to reinforce and monitor the implementation of all measures taken regarding the safety of our children. In this context, we have started introducing a new system of geolocalisation for school buses, which will allow a real-time bus tracking (follow online the exact routes, the speed of busses, parking place, traffic jams). A pilot phase was launched in September 2016 with the busses of Eurobussing, and will be extended to all our buses. Moreover, special attention will be given to our bus supervisors and their ability to ensure the well-being especially of the younger pupils during every bus journey.

Secondly, to proceed with a comprehensive review of all bus routes, in order to ensure that some children are not particularly disadvantaged compared to others, and that they do not spend more time than necessary on the bus. Such review will take account always of the fact that this is a school bus service that needs to contain costs.

Thirdly, to ensure the day-to-day operation of the service, to accommodate as much as possible the requests received and to improve the communication with parents. It should be noted that our Transport service is the most flexible of all the 4 European Schools in Brussels. Unlike in the other schools, parents are able to request changes to their regular bus routes and to take the bus after périscolaire activities.

The Transport Committee will continue to be available and ready to listen to all parents. We try to satisfy everybody and to treat all equally, to the best of our ability. We reply to all your complaints or recommendations within a very short timeframe. We have developed a robust internal conflict-resolution mechanism, which contributed significantly to increased user satisfaction. However, we are also aware that we cannot always satisfy the wishes of each individual family, especially if it results to the detriment of others.

The staff in the Transport Office and the car park always wear a smile and keep calm in any situation; we endeavour to meet all your expectations as parents so that you can be reassured and your children can be happy on their journey to and from school.

The Transport Working Group:

Fani Zarifopoulou

Koen Nomden

## EXTRACURRICULAR REPORT 2015-2016

### Organisation

#### The operational team

The operational management of the extracurricular activities is ensured by the duo formed by Mr Jacky Materna and Mr Chy Sochip for the past 10 years.

	Jacky Materna	Sochip Chy
Diplomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educator diploma A1 et A2 (Sec and Univ)</li> <li>- Regent of physical education and psychomotor</li> <li>- Advanced rescue certificate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PhD in pedagogy</li> <li>- University degree in cooperation development</li> <li>- University degree in journalism</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25 years as a gym teacher</li> <li>- Over 20 years working in extracurricular activities in EEB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 11 years working in extracurricular activities in EEB</li> <li>- 12 years as lecture at EEB III</li> </ul>

The operational team is supervised and supported by the members of the Board responsible for the extracurricular sector, together they form the “Périscolaire” working group:

- o Ms. Rosita Lake
- o Mr. Giorgos Georgiannakis
- o Mr. Holger Reichow

#### The “périscolaire” committee

The extracurricular activities are organised under the auspices of the European School of Ixelles (EEB III). The purpose of this Committee is to coordinate all extracurricular activities organised on the premises and outside of school. It allows to keep the school’s administration informed of any subject related to extracurricular activities.

The functioning of this Committee is governed by the agreement for the common management of the extracurricular activities.

The members are:

- Member of the Board of Directors of the Parents Association
  - o Ms. Rosita Lake
  - o Mr. Giorgos Georgiannakis

- o Mr. Holger Reichow
- Members of the school administration
  - o Mr. De Tournemire (Director of EEB III)
  - o Mr. Vladimir Brtnik (Deputy Director Nursery and Primary)
  - o Mr. Markus Radhuber deputy director of secondary
- Teachers Representative
  - o Ms. Silvana Gaeta

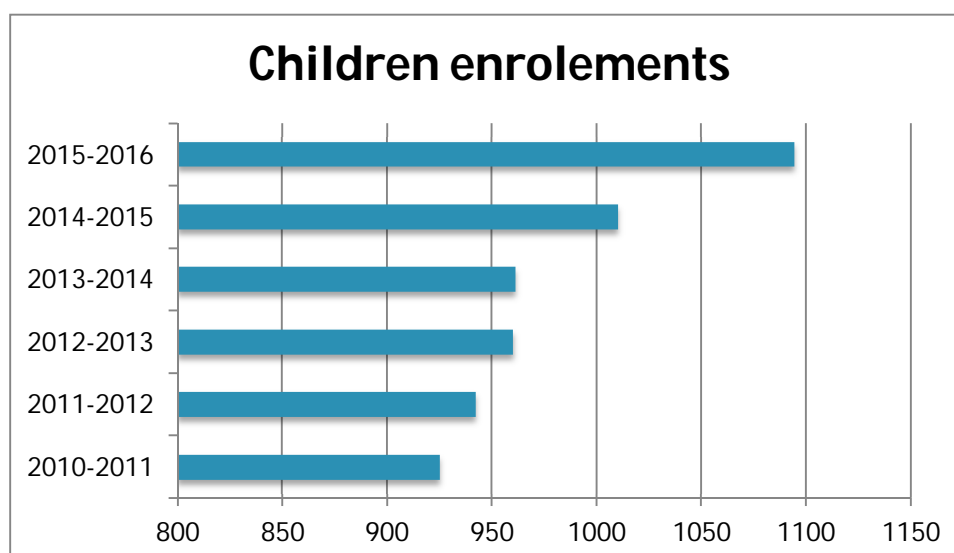
All these teams are working together to enable us to offer all students from all sections a variety of activities in a pleasant, fun and easy to enrich their lives.

The extracurricular committee approves the program and investment of the year.

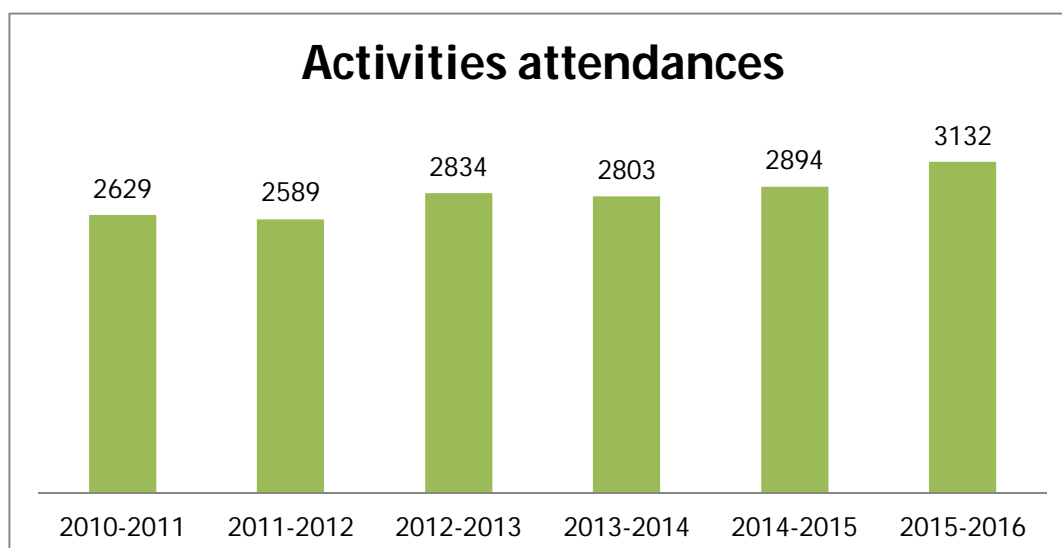
## The Extracurricular activities in 2015-2016

2015-2016 was not a year like others in many respects. Indeed, in addition to the usual challenges, we had to adapt our operations to the new security constraints and to the reorganisation of Wednesday lunch activities following the new offer of hot meals for all by the canteen.

We reached for the first time the milestone of 3,000 attendances, which is a new record for extracurricular activities of the EEB III. This is a direct consequence of the increased number of students attending the EEB III. Moreover, the capacity difficulties faced by OIB childcare services also had an impact on increasing the attendances to the extracurricular activities.





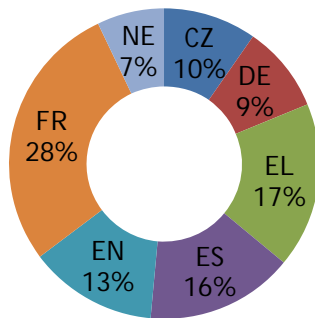


In 2015-2016 we held over 248 in all, including 192 collective activities, of which 62 cultural activities, 17 musical groups and 57 sport activities. There are also 11 other activities. The remaining are individual music classes and “snack and go”.

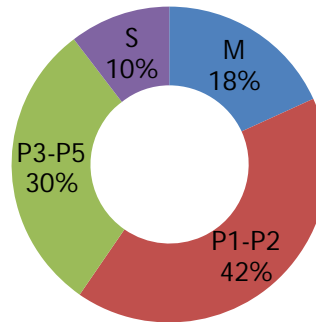
16 activities were cancelled due to insufficient participants of, which 11 were for the secondary

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
<b>Activities</b>						
Activities organised	237	223	245	238	227	248
Children enrolments	925	942	960	961	1010	1094
Activities attendances	2629	2589	2834	2803	2894	3132
Average/child	2,842	2,748	2,952	2,917	2,865	2,863
School population	2902	2919	2892	2870	2906	2989
<b>Instructors</b>						
Independents	22	28	22	26	18	21
Term contracts	42	38	43	42	38	43
Total	64	62	65	68	56	64

### Enrolments per sector 2015 -2016



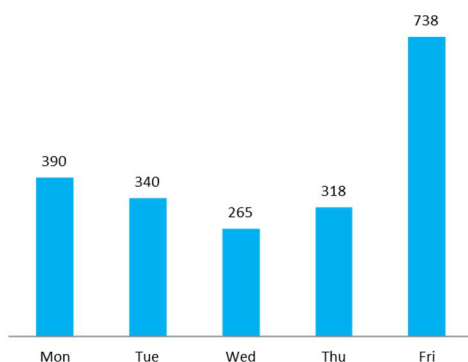
### Enrolments per cycle 2015-2016



With more than new 50 students enrolled from Nursery to 3rd primary in 2015-2016, enrolments extracurricular activities saw an increase of more than 8%, while the school population has increased about 3%. However the average activities per child enrolled remains identical to the school year 2014-2015.

The martial arts, introduction to martial arts, gymnastics and the English drama classes had been very successful this year and therefore had the largest waiting lists.

### Split per days of the week



**80%** of Fridays activities are attended by nursery and P1-P2 pupils

**58,5%** of Fridays activities are attended by P1-P2 pupils

**+24%** of our total activities are on Friday between 12:15 to 15:20

It goes without saying that as the school, the extracurricular activities sector faces difficulties to satisfy all registrations requests. Therefore, the extracurricular activities committee looked for rooms for rent near the school in order to duplicate the successful activities. Unfortunately those search have not yielded the expected results.

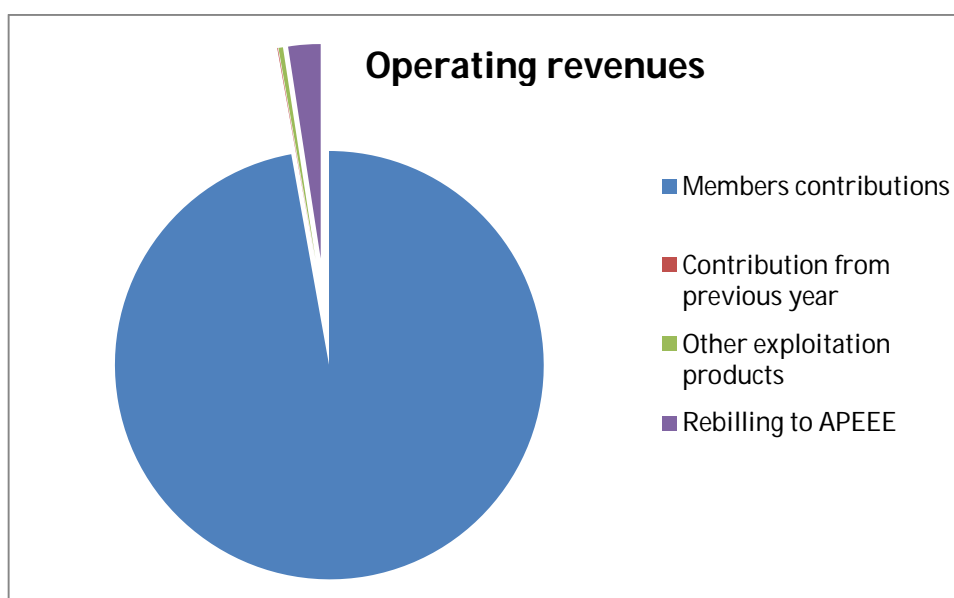
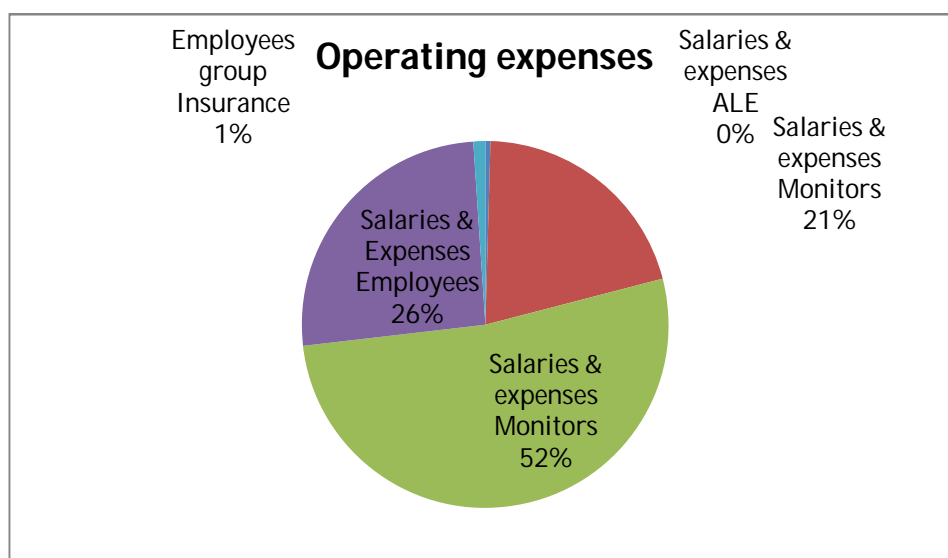
## Financial report

The high number of enrolments led to a boost of the operating income, which resulted as well in an increased operating result.

The contributions of our members represent almost our only source of income.

The expenses incurred by the extracurricular activities are mainly personnel expenses.

This year there was a slight decrease of costs for goods and services due to the direct support for Wednesdays hot meals contributions by the canteen sector.



## Other

For 2016-2017 we plan to focus on activities for pupils from S1 to S3, as this segment is under-represented in our activities. This is largely due to the lack of transport after the activities.

With the announcement of the closure of the pool VUB for renovation, our swimming lessons had to be moved which implies a transfer there.

We will continue to explore solutions to duplicate our course of gymnastics' arts and football.

We have launched a recreational activity in Dutch for students of Nursery to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade primary and a cinema workshop for secondary.

In 2015-2016 the extracurricular committee decided to invest in the renewal of certain equipment to ensure greater safety of children's sports.

This year entries were opened at 22:00 on June 6 on the paper registration basis and first come, first served.

We hope that for the next enrollment period that the online registration system will already be operational.

The Extracurricular Activities Working Group:

Rosita Lake

Georgios Georgiannakis

## COMMUNICATION REPORT 2015-2016

This communication report addresses the achievements in the following areas:

(1) Internal communications

(2) Progress in relation to the future introduction of online enrolments

The former position of VP communication was divided into two separate areas - ICT (responsible Rob Kloots) and communication (VP COM Eva Jeslinkova). This report concern only the communication part, the ICT will be dealt separately.

### 1. Internal communication

The Board wishes to adopt a more open and transparent communication approach. A better information on Board's works should allow to more parents to interest themselves in the APEEE's activity on one hand and to offer a better accountability of the Board to the members. The Board decided therefore to publish a brief summary of each of its meetings immediately in addition to the full reports which are published after their adoption by the Board.

Information concerning sectors but also other information of general interest continue to be published on the APEEE website. Special attention is given to the content of messages, their tone and readability.

As a target, the APEEE aims to launch a similar system to the school's SMS where all information would be directly sent to the parents without passing by the current email cascade. This system would guarantee a more regular spread of information to all parents and avoid delays. This system should also allow to group non-urgent messages into one (newsletter) message sent by the end of the week. Currently Mr Kloots is working on this system from the technical point.

Last but not least APEEE is working on a better timing of messages which means sending of urgent messages sufficiently in advance for parents to get the information on time but also programming of information on events (early announcement, operational information before the event, and debriefing after the event).

## **2. Online enrolments**

The Board has decided to launch a project for the implementation of an online enrolment system for all APEEE services (currently transports, cantine and périscolaire). A working group analysed the needs and terms of reference and launched a call for tenders in May. There were received five proposals and the successful tendered was decided in June. A contract has been established in September and the new online enrolment system should be operational by April, in time for to be used by the 2017-2018 school year.

Eva Jeslinkova

Vice President Communication

## TREASURER REPORT 2015-2016

### Results 2015/16:

The APEEE's financial situation has overall improved compared to the previous period 2014/15 to a positive result of € 295.022,24 against € 215.845,68 initially budgeted. This result partly reflects a number of changes, improvements and decisions taken by the previous and the current Board.

In general terms, it is to be noted that the internal Rules adopted by the Board in 2016 set out an even more stringent framework for external control of APEEE accounts, while the internal control measures were also reinforced thanks to a systematic overview of financial results by the APEEE Working Group on finances and internal control, which was set up by the Board.

The 2015/16 financial results are summarised below:

1. The Horeca sector (pupils' canteen, teachers canteen, cafeteria) shows a surplus of € 176.605,57 that is € 11.725,17 more than the initially budgeted surplus. This was mainly due to increased revenues caused by security measures (secondary children cannot leave the school). It is reminded in this respect that the cost per meal was reduced by 0.50 euro in February 2016.
2. The transport sector shows a surplus of € 24.591,20 that is better than the initially budgeted deficit of € 3.250,00. This result is mainly due to increased demand for transport services and some payments from previous years.
3. The extra-curricular activities sector shows a surplus of € 59.428,59 against an initially budgeted surplus of € 15.924,71. This is mainly due to the increased number of activities and inscriptions, while the increase in expenditure was less than the additional income.
4. The general affairs budget shows a surplus of € 34.396,88 that is 3.893,69 less than the initial budgeted amount. This is partially due to increased expenditure because of the retirement of one of the APEEE employees and the recruitment of an Administrative Office Manager as decided upon at the previous General meeting in January 2016.
5. The 2016 Springfest shows a deficit of € 14.889,28. This is mainly due to the non-participation of parents and the non-organisation of the EuroVillage. In short, for the future, the APEEE's position could be summarised: "without parents participation and without EuroVillage, no Springfest is to be organised under APEEE responsibility".

In conclusion, the overall financial situation of the APEEE has improved further during the reporting period 2015/16. The existing buffers are a provision for unforeseen expenses as these sectors bear most of the risks for the APEEE. Therefore the Boards' objective for the following years should be to achieve an equilibrium adapting the price of the APEEE services where necessary.

### **Actions taken and on-going work in view to increase transparency:**

1. **Springfest (SF):** The new SF convention was signed in July 2016 and the amount exceeding the € 30.000 reserve (for the organisation of the next SF), after deduction of this year's deficit (including the purchase of wireless microphones (€ 7.147,06) and the € 350 for the school project "Pie Tchibanda" ), the proceeds were distributed according to the SF convention. Thus, the SF Committee decided to disburse approximately € 19 thousands according to the following breakdown: ~40% for pupils' external activities, ~26% for school internal activities and ~34% for charities. For more details please refer to the APEEE website, where the results of the SF Committee will be published.
2. **Partition keys** are used to allocate costs that cannot be directly and exclusively allocated to a specific sector because the goods or services serve some or all sectors. The working group on finances and internal control has proposed to review the partition keys; but reflection on this issue continues with the view to take a decision in time before next year's budget.
3. **Recommendations** made by the auditors are being taken into account in order to improve APEEE's internal workflow and reduce certain risks.
4. An **APEEE students' account** will be considered by the Board to be used only for activities for pupils, teachers and parents, provided that the APEEE budgetary impact shall be neutral.
5. The **SF and the students' accounts** shall be monitored and presented separately from the General Affairs account of the APEEE.

### **Budget 2016/17:**

Following the Boards' decision, the budget for 2016/17 takes into account among others, the following main issues:

1. Partition keys used are as in previous years, i.e. canteen 45%, transport 40%, extra-curricular activities 10% and General Affairs 5%;
2. The implementation of the results of the "Advensys report" on the IT systems of APEEE (since March 2015);



3. The costs of the e-enrolment system approved by the Board in October 2016;
4. The costs of various activities known to the Board at the moment of the preparation of the budget (Oct. 2016), such as costs related to legal advice for contracts signed by the APEEE, the new HR Development plan, translation costs;
5. The SF and the students account are budgeted as a cost-neutral APEEE activity (involvement of parents and access to the activities will be crucial to make this a feasible assumption).

The budget foresees a surplus of approximately € 113 thousands (Horeca sector surplus of € 72 thousands, Transport sector surplus of € 8 thousands, Extra-curricular activities sector deficit of € 24 thousands and General Affair surplus of € 57 thousands).

Komninos Diamantaras

The Treasurer

## PEDAGOGICAL AFFAIRS REPORT 2015-2016

### Overview

2015-2016 was a difficult year for advancing pedagogical affairs at the European schools. Due to the focus on security related aspects, less time was devoted to pedagogical issues by central European school and decentralised school management.

In addition, this school year saw the beginning of a transition phase regarding our school management. Director Pino left at the end of the year, Deputy Director Brtnik (Nursery/Primary) is entering his final year in 2016-2017, Deputy Director Radhuber's (Secondary) term will come to an end in the foreseeable future as well. By September 2018 the entire school management of school year 2015/2016 will have been replaced, which will require engagement with the new school management also on pedagogical issues.

In these challenging times, we still have been actively following the core issues in the pedagogical field in the European school system:

- Decisions to open the Berkendael school as an annex to the Uccle school have been taken during the school year. However, as with any new site, there is a rather modest intake of pupils for the new site of Berkendael as of September 2016 and thus for the time being no real potential for alleviating the serious overcrowding at our school.
- Discussions of a pedagogical reform are still ongoing in the European Schools. In 2015-2016 these focussed on the development of a language policy. Other areas such as curriculum development and ensuring key competences for life-long learning in secondary studies will be addressed in the year ahead, however, it is unlikely that a widespread reform will be implemented in the short term;
- Preparations of a new marking system in the secondary school have been ongoing with a revision of existing secondary programmes to supplement attainment descriptors for all subject areas. The new system will be introduced in Sept. 2017 for all S1-S5;

- In primary, several syllabi have been developed recently for introduction in September 2016 (such as the syllabi for Discovery of the World and for Ethics) or will be introduced during the next year (such as the syllabus for European hours). The new marking system in primary in force since 2014 will be complemented with attainment descriptors for the specific subjects, such as Mathematics, L1 and Physical Education.

Interested parents (with children in nursery, primary and/or secondary) may consult the European school website on the syllabi currently applicable:

<http://www.eurasc.eu/en/European-Schools/studies-certificates/syllabuses>

At Ixelles school, the following topics have been closely followed:

- Overcrowding continues to remain a serious threat to various pedagogical aspects of our school life. The current number of pupils is above 3000 (nominal capacity of the school is around 2650 pupils). The school management is fully aware of this and is considering measures like helping pupils not to feel harassed to counter stress due to overcrowding;
- The issue of teacher replacements remains a fundamental aspect of pedagogy in our school. The share of teachers seconded by Member States is decreasing which requires the school to recruit more staff directly. The UK systematically did not replace seconded teachers for years and Brexit will perpetuate that problem;
- The issue of teacher absences due to sickness or training with little or no replacement in secondary remains an important issue;
- We have been stressing the need for parents to have access to the school for pedagogical reasons. The regular personal exchange in particular between teachers and parents of younger children is indispensable for the pedagogical development of the pupils. Throughout the year, we have been pushing the school management to facilitate exchange between teachers and parents for the benefit of the children educated in our school and we will continue to strive for such facilitation.
- In view of all these developments, we continued our cooperation with the other Brussels European Schools to coordinate our input to Interparents (IP), the organisation representing the parents of all 14 European Schools at the central bodies of the European School System such as the Board of Governors (BoG) or the Joint Teaching Committee (JTC).

Joanna Charlat in her final year in our APEEE continued to represent our association at various IP meetings. Ronald Albers continued as our contact for educational support in IP. Jo Turner represented our APEEE in the Central Enrolment Authority of the Brussels European schools.

At our school, following the adoption of the new statutes of our APEEE in November 2015, the new Pedagogical Advisory Committee (PC) was formed in January as the new main body following pedagogical issues in our APEEE. The PC consists of elected Board members from all seven sections and brings together also the parent representatives from the two Education Councils from nursery/primary and secondary, as well as representatives for Slovak SWALS and ONL Irish. Several working groups have been created to follow pedagogical issues in primary, on pedagogical reform, teaching, languages, BAC and career guidance.

### **Specific pedagogical issues**

#### **Pedagogical reform – preparation of a reform beyond the previously discussed secondary reform is ongoing**

Following the introduction of a small reform of S1-S3 studies in 2014 (earlier start of L3 in S1, modification of choice of ICT and Latin and change of teaching language for religion and ethics in L2 as of S3), an evaluation study rejected the planned S4-S7 reform in 2015 and suggested more fundamental work to ensure coherence of curriculum standards, the set-up of a language policy and a better integration of the key competences for life-long learning<sup>6</sup> in secondary studies.

The focus this year has been on developing a future language policy for the European schools. A working group met during the year and we have kept close contact with the IP members and with inspectors of that group. Discussions focussed on a possible earlier introduction of L2 (in nursery) and L3 (in primary). However, while the proposals for earlier introduction of L3 aim at starting L3 language courses already in primary, the use of L2 in nursery appears to be limited to a playful exposure of children to their L2 without the earlier start of L2 language courses in nursery. Other issues discussed were the way to determine the dominant language of a child (in particular in cases of doubt), the need to have subject teachers receive training of how to teach non-native speaking pupils and the possibility to introduce distance learning for pupils with a much higher proficiency than the level foreseen in a given language course. The process for establishing a European schools language policy is ongoing and will have to be integrated into a coherent reform proposal for which the other issues mentioned above still have not been discussed yet.

We will continue to be actively involved in the discussions of the reform issues which we expect to be discussed during school year 2016-2017.

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<sup>6</sup> (1) communication in the mother tongue; (2) communication in foreign languages; (3) mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; (4) digital competence; (5) learning to learn; (6) social and civic competences; (7) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; (8) cultural awareness and expression

## New marking system in secondary

The BoG already in 2011 decided that a reform of the marking system from the current system with ten different marks to a system with seven different marks should be implemented once the necessary preparatory work has been made. In April 2015 the BoG finally agreed on an introduction of a new marking system by September 2017 in S1-S5 and a gradual implementation until full application to all secondary levels by 2019-2020.

To recall, the new system introduces 7 grades but there will still be a 10 points scale. Instead of the current 6.0 the lowest positive point value will be 5.0 (grade E) in the future:

Grade	Points	EN	FR	DE	Description
A	10.0 9.0	Excellent	Excellent	Ausgezeichnet	excellent though not flawless
B	8.9 8.0	Very good	Très bon	Sehr gut	very good performance
C	7.9 7.0	Good	Bon	Gut	good performance
D	6.9 6.0	Satisfactory	Satisfaisant	Befriedigend	satisfactory performance
E	5.9 5.0	Sufficient	Suffisant	Ausreichend	performance corresponding to the minimum
F	4.9 3.0	Weak (failed)	Insuffisant (échec)	Mangelhaft (Minderleistung)	weak performance almost entirely failing
FX	2.9 0	Very weak (failed)	Très insuffisant (échec)	Ungenügend (Minderleistung)	weak performance entirely failing

The introduction of the new system is currently prepared by adding competence based evaluation criteria (attainment descriptors) to the syllabi of all subjects. Training of teachers is starting at school level during the school year 2016-2017. There will be no

period of parallel marking in the same class but teachers will have to apply the old system (for S6, S7) and the new system (for S1 – S5) in parallel in different classes for the school years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

Inspectors are working with Member State education authorities to ensure a proper understanding of the new marking scheme in the Member States, including universities.

Our focus will be to ensure proper implementation of the new system in September 2017 and full BAC recognition in all Member States.

### **Seconded teachers**

Since several years the European schools have been witnessing a reduction of the number of seconded teachers particularly from Member States which provide a much larger share of teachers than the number of pupils of their nationality would indicate (particularly UK and Ireland). For UK teachers, it was thought last year that we might be back to normal by 2017 and UK might start seconding teachers again. However, with Brexit it is very unlikely that the UK will ever recommence sending new teachers.

The issue of increased local hires of teachers is thus a growing concern particularly as regards teachers in the EN section or providing L2 or L3 in EN. However, the problem of lack of secondments is not limited to UK but also other Member States (such as BE for teachers to the FR section) are refusing or delaying secondments.

Teachers hired directly by the school are not necessarily natives from the Member States that have seconded these teachers in the past. It should be noted that the BoG accepts “non-native” teaching in all subjects of secondary except for L1, including core subjects such as Maths, L2 or Sciences.

The increase of local hires is followed by us very closely. Contrary to seconded teachers it is not the national inspector but the school management that is in charge of selecting suitable candidates and of pedagogical supervision and control. We will thus continue to engage with the school management to ensure that the quality of teaching does not deteriorate due to the described changes.

### **Educational support**

In the area of educational support, the main issues concern implementing the new policy, which has been in place since 2013. Often, parents concerned find it difficult to understand the differences between the various types of educational support (General, Moderate and Intensive), the procedures for initiating support and the follow-up. The school is working on school-specific guidelines to clarify requirements and procedures, but they have still not been finalised. For issues on educational support, the APEEE channels its input to the European School policy level through Interparents, as the issues encountered are often very similar across the schools. Priorities raised last year, which remain topical in the period ahead, include:

- Qualifications and specific training of staff giving educational support, more opportunities for specialized seconded support teachers
- Clarification of roles between support teachers and support assistants. Status of support assistants.
- Resolving bottlenecks in the provision of intervention of specialist through tripartite agreements.
- Facilitating the procedures on extra-ordinary special arrangements in the BAC phase (S6-S7). These have to be requested in S5 with substantial documentation. The good intentions and efforts of the schools, Secretariat General and inspectors are acknowledged and already the process has improved.
- Transition between cycles, proper handover of information and preparation
- Integration of pupils with serious impairments
- Work load of support coordinators, leading also to difficulties to maintain documentation.

## **European school infrastructure in Brussels and overcrowding**

The need for additional school infrastructure in Brussels has already been identified by the BoG in 2010. Since September 2016 new enrolments in the FR, DE and newly created SK and LV sections have been directed to the site of Berkendael (previously used by Uccle due to renovations). However, with its capacity for 1000 pupils Berkendael is not sufficient in view of the annual growth of the Brussels school population by approx. 400 pupils. Another school is announced for 2019 and the discussion about its possible site at present revolves around the current premises of NATO in Evere.

For our school this means that the current overcrowding of approx. 400 pupils in excess of the nominal capacity of 2,650 pupils (that's an occupation rate of 115%, the highest of all four Brussels schools), is not likely to change anytime soon. With the ongoing pressure on all existing schools there continues to be no real opportunity in the near future to reduce the overcrowding at our school.

Overcrowding thus remains a serious issue at our school. This creates several practical problems: limited space in commonly used areas such as the canteen or the school courts, lack of classroom space and reduced possibility to use resources such as sport and library facilities.

Regarding Slovak pupils, they still have the opportunity to join our school as students without a language section (SWALS) if they have siblings in our school. Other Slovak pupils are now enrolled in Berkendael. It should be stressed that the enrolment in Berkendael is also an option for Slovak pupils with siblings at our school, particularly if their dominant language is Slovak and not any other language offered at our school

### **Report from the Nursery and Primary Education Council meetings**

Each language section elects a representative to the Education Councils organised by the school. For the nursery and primary these parent representatives represented the seven primary sections and the nursery at our school: Katerina Oresanska/Jakub Nice (CS), Barbara Eggers (DE), Eleanna Stergiouli (EL), David Verrier (EN), Elena Martin Alonso (ES), Pierre-Henri Page (FR), Gijsbertus Schilthuis (NE) and Etienne Marchand (nursery).

Discussions at Education Council meetings covered various issues. This year much focus was on how to cope with the restricted parent access for situations such as volunteering in the library, participation in school events (Springfest, class events) and garderie pick-up. We addressed issues of communication from parents to the school for sicknesses of their children and from the infirmary to parents about accidents. We discussed playground supervision and considered measures to counter aggression and bullying in the school yard.

There was some discussion about teaching of different subjects (Music, Arts, Sports, ICT) and the organisation of education in primary. For instance, section teachers are encouraged to swap classes to bring in their specific qualifications. We spoke about P5-



S1 transition and the idea of S1 mentors of P5 pupils was considered (but not further pursued).

The suspension of swimming lessons due to the renovation of the VUB pool was also debated. The homework policy was discussed and a reminder was given to the teachers as to the existing guidance to limit daily homework demands. Finally, we also exchanged on the school trip destinations, which for the P5 trip will change in 2016-2017.

### **Report from the Secondary Education Council meetings**

In the secondary, the following parents represented the sections in the Education Council: Borek Neskudla (CS), Michael Pieber (DE), Ioannis Sakiotis (EL), Georges Spyrou (EN), Verónica Reigosa Pasquier (ES), Christine Courillon (FR) and Rob Kloots (NE).

Apart from the issues already mentioned above (secondary reform, marking reform and teacher secondments), discussions at the Education Council covered amongst others the following issues: The more frequent use of SMS by teachers as a means of communication was addressed several times not least following the corresponding motion at the General Assembly in January 2016. A policy on SMS will be developed for introduction in early 2017.

This year teachers raised the issue of harmonisation and the related burden for them in terms of coordination with each other and translation of exam questions (for specific subjects where harmonisation demands identical questions). In this context we addressed the concentration of 9 exams in 5 school days for S5 pupils and the school confirmed that it is not happy with this either. The issue will be followed up via IP.

The Education Council again discussed the constraints of the current complexities of the centralised BAC, including issues of clarity of exams translations and the challenges to ensure equal treatment of all S7-pupils in all 14 European schools.

On school trips, some discussion occurred about the potential for more social projects rather than pure fun trips to fancy destinations to reinforce the European spirit of these trips. On cost transparency of school trips, it was pointed out that cross subsidising is minimal and that the high costs are justified by a certain quality of the program. The school informed about an anonymised way to obtain financial support from the social fund of the school.

The school presented its activities on drugs information (training in S4, S5 and S7), anti-bullying (survey in S2) and the support group "study skills" for pupils repeating or having comparably low grades. The school also informed about the European School Science Symposium in Uccle (EL and DE classes from our school participated in 2015-2016).

Pupils representatives questioned the differentiation between S4/S5 pupils and S6/S7 pupils as regards leaving the school during lunch break in the context of the security measures during this school year.

### **Report from the School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings**

The SAC is the joint nursery/primary and secondary pedagogical forum of the school comprising the entire Direction, teachers from nursery, primary and secondary as well as parents and secondary pupil representatives. In 2015-2016 the SAC met twice.

One major discussion was about the multi-annual plan and annual plan of our school to take up recommendations from the inspectors based on a school inspection in 2014. The inspectors recommended improvements of the overarching educational vision for the future, by determining the priorities and stating which pedagogical and educational aspects are to be developed. They also suggested incorporating self-evaluation procedures and tools to improve quality assurance. Finally, the inspectors encouraged harmonisation of assessment and of planning within and across sections.

Work on the multi-annual plan and the annual plan has been postponed to the arrival of the new Director and will be taken up in school year 2016-2017.

At the SAC we also came back to issues already discussed in the Education Councils, notably security, SMS use by teachers and harmonisation. We also had a discussion with the teachers and Directors on the ongoing process of developing a language policy. Regarding the earlier introduction of L2 and L3, primary teachers in the SAC pointed out the challenges of such changes in view of the diversity of our pupils.

### **Outlook**

Following the departure of Director Pino, we will actively engage with the new school Director, Mr de Tournemire, to ensure that the cooperation with the school on pedagogical issues continues as in the past years or even possibly be enhanced. This comprises maintaining option choices for our pupils in secondary, debating the issue of lost lessons, ensuring the recruitment of suitable teachers (in terms of professional and language proficiency) in particular for core subjects, continuing discussions on the functioning of L2 and L3 teaching and of key transitions (nursery-P1, P5-S1, S3-S4, S5-S6).

In addition, we will continue to address the pedagogical aspects of overcrowding and of the security measures taken at our school with the Direction. In this context we will strive for more opportunities for exchange between teachers and parents, also outside formalised class meetings or individual parent-teacher meetings.

We will further intensify our work in the Pedagogic Advisory Committee and its working groups on primary, pedagogical reform, teaching, languages, BAC and career guidance.

In close cooperation with the other Brussels schools, we will continue to follow the further developments as regards a possible future pedagogical reform and the shaping of European school infrastructure in Brussels.

Robert Wein

Vice President Pedagogical Affairs

## LIBRARY COMMITTEE REPORT 2015-2016

The Library Committee has two main tasks taken charge of at the start of the 2016-2017 school year by Charlotte SUZON HILL :

- the coordination of parent volunteers for the library of the primary classes, and
- the organisation of the annual book fair.

Regarding the library, some parent volunteers ensure its opening during lunchtime hours on Mondays and Tuesdays to admit children, read books to them and, if necessary, complete tasks to help Annick Tasiaux, the librarian.

Other parents of Greek, Slovak and Czech nationality help with encoding books for their language section, given their alphabet is specific.

The annual book fair has been an event organised at EEB3<sup>7</sup> for years. It has two objectives:

- Its main objective is to bring together students of all linguistic areas through a cultural event. Once again, this year we will have eight different stands, one per section, and also one for the Slovak language.

To ensure this linguistic representation at the best price, the representatives of the Czech and Slovak sections are arranging to bring books directly from Prague and Bratislava.

The book fair will in fact take place over one day, on 24th November 2016, but it will also include other activities specific to each section, taking place over several days around the day of the fair: exploration of books selected for them, during a presentation in their class, or, at the school theatre, reading books to younger children by older pupils, organisation of a book design competition by pupils themselves, and invitation of the authors.

- The second objective of the fair is to raise funds for the library. The various bookshops present will give 10 to 20% of sales to the primary school. These funds will be used to purchase new books for all language sections.

This year, enhanced security measures will accompany both the management and presence of volunteers each week, and the organisation of the book fair.

Charlotte SUZON HILL

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<sup>7</sup> EEB3 - Ecole Européenne Bruxelles III (European School of Brussels III)

## **WORKING GROUP FOR “PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL”**

**2015-2016**

During the meeting held on 15 November 2015, three main courses of action had been desired by the parents present:

- Consideration given to playground supervision and management, in particular that of the primary schools.
- Implementation of a liaison system to be established as part of the APEEE<sup>8</sup> for parents confronted by a situation of violence for their child.
- The need for actions to educate pupils in reducing violence.

Faced with the news in November 2015 and April 2016, and the establishment of strict security measures at the school, a second meeting scheduled before the end of the school year was unable to take place.

Nevertheless, the Working Group continued its deliberations by meeting with the nursery and primary schools' psychologist in April 2016 – Mrs Génicot – and by convening a meeting for 10 November 2016 with the management and the contact persons for prevention/safeguarding within the school.

It emerges that the school:

- is engaged in specific actions to prevent violence, which parents are not necessarily informed about,
- is not currently prepared to embark on formally implementing violence prevention programmes, such as those in other European schools (e.g., KIVA<sup>9</sup> programme), despite the wish expressed by many parents,
- has implemented procedures for proven cases of violence and has reinforced, at the start of the school year 2016, the team of contacts available at the school, particularly in the nursery and primary schools. This information, however, lacks visibility with parents, since management does not wish, for security reasons, to publish it directly on the school website.

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<sup>8</sup> APEEE - Association des Parents d'élèves de l'école Européenne (Association of Parents of pupils at the European School)

<sup>9</sup> KiVa - a research-based antibullying program developed in the University of Turku, Finland

The Working Group on “the prevention of violence at school” wishes:

- to receive support from the APEEE to continue its work in collaboration with the parent volunteers and the school, and in so doing, with complete independence from the Educational Committee (and education councils), since this Working Group's scope of activities is not linked to the objectives related to teaching;
- to commit the school to: 1) informing the parents more about the actions taken within school on prevention and safeguarding, and 2) distributing to them regularly, the contact persons' names and the existing procedures in the event of violence;
- to continue deliberating with the school on the implementation of a prevention programme, such as those in other European schools, which would cost about 3 euros per pupil.
- that APEEE appoint a liaison person within APEEE for parents confronted with a situation of violence for their child, and set up a specific email box dedicated to this.

Agnes Boucheron (French representative of APEEE for primary-nursery school, - representative in P1FR, S1FR)

Maria José Castellano Fuentes (representative in MES, P3ES)

Hélène Moraut Pestanes (S1FR)