

October 2024 Board Meeting

Date: Monday 14th October 2024 from 19h to 23h55

Location: Teachers' Canteen Woluwe & Online (ZOOM)

Present in situ: Sofia AMOR – Catarina DUARTE GOMES – Andrew Janis FOLKMANIS – Pim GESQUIERE – Nicolas LACROIX – Albert RÄDLER – Francesca TUDINI – Jan VON PFALER – David ZELINGER

Present online: Célia ALVES RODRIGUES – Pierre DEBAR – Sabrina FASOLI – Andrea GRGIĆ – Bruno LARANJEIRA – Elita PETRAITIENĖ – Myriam PINI – Fabrício SANTOS – Monika SZULYOVSKY

Absent: Luca CARAPELLI – Andrea HUTTERER

Others: Hong Ha NGUYEN – Agnieszka JEAN VILLANUEVA – Paul ORLOVSKI – Keiko KAWAHARA – Anja GALLE – Clémence EUGENE

All related documents were sent to the Board members before the meeting.

Agenda Points

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda is approved.

2. Approval of the report of the Board meeting of the 10/09/2024

Decision: the Board meeting report of 10/09/2024 is approved by acclamation.

3. Notifications.

Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels: School Bus Stop

The Chair received a communication from the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics (OIB) about a Bxl II bus stop which, in their opinion, is not well placed. The OIB contacted the APEEE President who will have a call with the Vice President Administrative Affairs and the Transport service manager of the APEEE and contact the OIB.

Christmas Market 2024

The Christmas market is set for the 7th December 2024, parents have already received the forms to complete if they wish to hold a stand.

Wellbeing: Seminar on Navigating Technology & Internet Safety with Dr Eva Weiler

The wellbeing working group is organising a seminar on 26/11/2024 for interested parents on “Navigating Technology & Internet Safety” with currently 320 registered participants. Members of the Board are invited to attend and participate to the seminar.

Discussion points and Vote.

1. Budget and Financials

The Treasurer takes the floor to present the budget for the 2024-2025 school year. The Board discusses the overall costs and the advancement of the IT project.

The Treasurer introduces the budget 2024-2025 and gives the floor to the Extracurricular Activities' Manager to introduce the budget for the service for 2024-2025, explaining the numbers and changes applied for 2024-2025. The main points are:

- Prices will remain unchanged except for 2 activities: swimming (7%) and ice-skating (10%) .
- Staff costs have changed due to multiple factors, less registrations, less hiring, change in employee status
- A line that used to cover the cost of activities and bus costs were merged, whereas as of 2024-2025 the costs are split for the budget for more clarity.
- Operating results is breakeven.

The Board discusses the service budget, costs and the decrease of Woluwe Primary/Nursery registrations, which is not compensated by a rise in Evere (as not the same infrastructure and activity demand). The Board agrees that the extracurricular activities' service will need to adapt its offer to the future changes of the school (i.e in the light of possible move to Evere, infrastructural obstacles, etc).

The Treasurer introduces the transport budget 2024-2025. The main points are:

- The greater cost for 2024-2025 is the bus costs.
- A rise of the transport fee of 6%.
- Operating result of 114.865,41€.

The Treasurer introduces the canteen budget 2024-2025. The main points are:

- Rise in the food cost and subscriptions.
- Rise of the canteen fee of 5%.
- Operating result of 2.129,73€.

The General Affairs budget is presented, a correction is requested, as the numbers for the "23/24 YE income" are incorrect. Members discuss the APEEE Social Fund with the Chair asking that the Social Fund rules and its use leads to a recommendation on the membership fee and Social Fund component for the next AGM.

Action Point: the Budget working group to issue a recommendation on the review of the Social Fund rules and its use.

The Board proceeds to vote on the budget for 2024-2025, which includes a price rise of 6% for transport (= 2.365,72€), 0% price rise for the Extracurricular Activities except for ice skating with a rise of 10% and swimming with a rise of 7%, and a 5% price rise for the Canteen in Woluwe (= 6.68€, 7.62€ and 8.03€).

15 votes for yes (Monika Szulyovszky, Pim Gesquiere, Andrea Grgić, Bruno Laranjeira, Janis Folkmanis, Nicolas Lacroix, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Fabrício Santos, Sabrina Fasoli, Pierre Debar, Jan von Pfaler, Myriam Pini, Francesca Tadini, Albert Rädler, Elita Petraitienė) 2 votes for no (Sofia Amor, Catarina Duarte Gomes) and 1 vote for abstain (David Zelinger).

Decision: the Board approves the Budget 2024-2025 including the price tariffication.

The staff members present thank the room and leave the meeting.

The Treasurer presents the offer of noise cancelling panels for the APEEE offices for an amount of 6.000€ and gives the floor to the APEEE safety advisor who explains that following the analysis of the reverberation of sound in the Woluwe offices, IDEWE, external service for prevention and protection at work, recommended the installation of panels but clearly informed that the panels are temporary solutions and will not cancel the entirety of the sound and noise of the office day life (i.e phone calls, conversations, interviews, etc).

The current APEEE offices do not provide adequate working conditions for the staff, they need bigger space, quiet spaces and it is highly important to communicate to Ms Malik that a more adequate solution needs to be provided for the APEEE staff and that the noise cancelling panels are a temporary solution.

The Board votes on the approval to proceed with the proposal and the works of an estimated 6.000€ cost.

17 votes for yes (Monika Szulyovszky, Pim Gesquiere, Andrea Grgić, David Zelinger, Janis Folkmanis, Nicolas Lacroix, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Fabrício Santos, Sabrina Fasoli, Pierre Debar, Jan von Pfaler, Myriam Pini, Francesca Tadini, Albert Rädler, Sofia Amor, Catarina Duarte Gomes, Elita Petraitienė) and 1 vote for abstain (Bruno Laranjeira).

Decision: the Board approves to move forward with the works of noise cancelling panels.

The APEEE safety advisor thanks the room and leaves the meeting.

2. **AGM: 9th January 2025**

a. **Approval of the price offer for the interpretation**

The Board discusses the use and necessity of interpretation for the Annual General Meeting. By acclamation, the Board agrees not to proceed with the company and will proceed with the volunteers. However if there are no volunteers, a paid external interpretation will not be hired, and the meeting will be held exclusively in English.

b. **Approval of the price offer of the voting company**

The Board discusses the voting experience from 2023 AGM, with a member stating that they presented their slide first (alphabetical order) but was listed as second on the voting list claiming this causes confusion for voters who take notes on the order of speeches.

The Board votes on the approval of the price offer for the IT voting company which is included in the approved budget 2024-2025 under the reference “meetings” within the General Affairs department.

15 votes for yes (Monika Szulyovszky, Pim Gesquiere, Andrea Grgić, Janis Folkmanis, Nicolas Lacroix, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Sofia Amor, Catarina Duarte Gomes, Sabrina Fasoli, Pierre Debar, Jan von Pfaler, Myriam Pini, Francesca Tadini, Albert Rädler, Elita Petraitienė) 1 vote for no (Fabrício Santos) and 2 vote for abstain (David Zelinger, Bruno Laranjeira).

Decision: the Board approves the price offer of the voting company.

Fabrício Santos makes a statement for the record: “for the service offered, the quote is outrageously expensive, and I am not comfortable with that. For next year the board ITWG should as a matter of priority find more affordable alternatives”.

c. **Draft agenda for the AGM 09/01/2025 – Planning**

The Chair takes the floor to introduce and present the draft agenda for the Annual General Meeting. A member makes a comment regarding the need to inform candidates that a valid Belgian ID card is mandatory for the ones who are to be elected.

Members discuss the format of the first Board information meeting scheduled on Tuesday 14th January 2025 and agree to have a hybrid format.

Members are invited to comment on the draft agenda for the next Board meeting (scheduled on 12th November 2024), on which the Board will vote. The Working Group Statutes Update will look on how to formulate the need to have a valid Belgian ID card.

3. Art 14 & Art 17

The Chair takes the floor and shares that the meeting organised on the 17th September did not create any progress regarding the general principles of articles 14 and 17, and that, following the meeting, the Statutes Update working group met and decided it was not possible to reach proposals by 9th January 2025 (AGM). The Chair suggests contacting external lawyers. However some members of the Board do not agree.

The Board met on 17th September 2024 to discuss the general principles of Articles 14 and 17, without reviewing specific texts. Based on these principles, the Statutes Update working group would have drafted a tailored text reflecting the expressed guidelines and agreements within the Board. The aim was to present a proposal based on broad consensus, with the Board agreeing that a broad consensus should gather at least two-thirds of its members present for the vote and that two-thirds of those present should be in favor of the proposal. However, during the meeting, some Board expressed that if two or three Board members were strongly opposed to a proposal, the text should not be presented to the General Assembly. During the 17th September meeting, the quorum was lost after the discussion on "broad consensus.", thus discussions on the general principles were cancelled. If the Board is unable to further discuss the general principles and approve a mandate for the working group to draft a text, the working group indicated that the timeline for producing a draft for Articles 14 and 17 would not be met.

The Board discusses the importance of the drafting of the articles and the importance for members to attend the discussions to have their concerns raised and opinions heard. The Board agrees it needs to agree on following steps with some requesting an extraordinary Board meeting with this singular topic on the agenda.

Some Board members stated that we have enough material to start working directly on the texts of the articles. Both the texts of the working group and the one of individual members were judged compliant to the law by the lawyer and it is now a matter of finding a compromise between the two. They opposed to use more time to discuss about principles and calls for a Board meeting to discuss on the few divergences among the text and vote on a compromise.

The Working Group coordinator Statutes Update responded that it is indeed easy to draft a compromise text. And this has indeed been done within the Working Group in March 2024. However, this compromise text did not find any explicit support within the Working Group. Therefore, the Working Group, with the support of the board, took the view that there should be first be a good understanding of the general principles, before concentrating discussions about words and sentences.

Action Point: the President to take ownership of the revision.

4. Overcrowding Status

The Chair gives the floor to the members to express their opinions on the overcrowding situation in a tour de table.

Sofia Amor makes a statement for the record:

“The Board is asked to agree on a Statement on its position on the Brussels Steering Committee discussions of 3 October 2024.

The proposed text takes a position on behalf of APEEE, objecting to a possible decision of a bloc move to Evere.

To my understanding the APEEE does not have at this stage a mandate from EEB2 parents to favour or object to a potential bloc move nor to its potential calendar.

Parents were not consulted by APEEE. This file is one of the most sensitive and key for EEB2 parents. It is our duty to consult parents. I cannot in any moment agree with a decision to communicate a APEEE position on an envisaged bloc move and calendar without a prior parents’ consultation and thus with no parents’ mandate.

As explicitly referred in other occasions, and here stressed again, at this stage and without a parents’ mandate to support a particular solution, the APEEE shall:

- *Request clarity on the status of Evere.*
- *Request guarantee of Evere’s continuation after 2027.*
- *Request a detailed data and analysis of Evere’s capacity.*
- *Request clarification on the envisaged actions planned in Evere in order to allowing a potential bloc move in 2026 of the M/P Woluwe pupils as with the current Evere configuration and the available information it is understand that those pupils won’t fit into Evere.*
- *State its engagement to support the school in all attempts to alleviate the existent dramatic overcrowding.*

As soon as APEEE receives the requested information it is our duty to inform and consult the parents.

Finally, the statement explicitly refers to the “Commission’s position” expressed during the meeting. We were informed that this position was not confirmed in writing thus it is not possible to have a comprehensive and clear understanding of the Commission’s position. Despite this lack of confirmation, the Board is requested to formulate its position as such “and send it at least to the Commission, our best ally, quite quickly so that they get confirmation of our position before they comment on the draft report of the steering committee”. It is not clear in which way the Commission is our best ally. Allies shall be assessed based on a parents’ mandate which is non-existent at this stage.

As a Board Member, I have the legal obligation to represent parents and act based on a mandate. It is also my obligation to recall that parents shall be informed and consulted in due time of all discussions and potential decisions.

In the absence of such a mandate at this stage I vote no to the proposed draft statement as it clearly favours one position.”

Catarina Duarte Gomes and Francesca Tudini support Sofia’s position and would like to remind that we not only represent primary parents but also secondary parents. A consultation to parents is needed and further information with detailed and concrete information should be sent.

The diverging opinions expressed are:

- Make use of the space in Evere
- If making Woluwe a Secondary only school, the Belgian government will close Evere
- Consult parents and ask for their input
- Inform parents about the temporary status of Evere
- Voice the concerns (lack of teachers, etc)
- Remind 1 school, 2 sites
- Thought through plan for the upcoming future (5-to-10-year plan)

A member emphasizes that, in 2022, the Board had adopted the following position: to avoid exacerbating the situation in the Primary and Nursery levels, to refrain from encouraging divisions between sections, to protect the Italian section from relocation, to not actively oppose the separation of siblings between Primary and Secondary, and to not object to the gradual reduction of the DE, IT, EN, and FR sections at Woluwe. The last two points were intended to help alleviate overcrowding in the Secondary level.

Célia Alves Rodrigues makes a statement for the record:

“I fully agree with Jan and others that we have the mandate and a moral, as well as a legal, duty to inform all parents about the situation at the Evere campus, particularly regarding the lack of proper planning. Like or not we were given this mandate when we were elected in January. We cannot pick and choose what we inform. As stakeholders with access to critical information, it is our responsibility to share the facts clearly and transparently. This is not only essential but also something I am personally committed to, as I have a child currently in S1.

First, we must emphasize that the Evere campus is a temporary solution. To date, no concrete plans have been presented for students finishing P5 there. This uncertainty is concerning, and parents deserve to know the facts as they stand.

Secondly, we know that there is insufficient space at Evere without significant adjustments. We can look at last year's temporary move as an example: the relocation of around 300 students resulted in severe disruptions—students lost teaching time, and numerous logistical issues arose, including the use of playgrounds and the canteen.

While the commission bases its decisions on thorough data analysis, our school's ability to conduct such analysis is limited, and their calculations have often proven less accurate. This disparity should not be overlooked.

I would also like to remind everyone that Woluwe currently faces the most severe overcrowding in secondary education across all four Brussels schools. While there is immense pressure on us to address this issue, simply transferring the problem to Evere, where up to 1,600 students could overwhelm the infrastructure, is not a sustainable or responsible solution. Are we prepared to accept that our school might once again bear a disproportionate share of the burden and be transformed into a 'super secondary'?

Moreover, I have heard arguments regarding timetables and scheduling challenges. However, it's important to highlight that these challenges are complex and also, in part, due to a shortage of teachers and their limited availability.

As I've mentioned before, it would be totally irresponsible not to voice these concerns openly and transparently. We must inform the entire community and all stakeholders about the realities we face and engage in meaningful consultation as we move forward.”

Some Board Members stated that they consider having a mandate to decide on an Evere position because the topic has been going on for several years now, sections have been consulted many times in the past, numerous meetings were organized on this topic, messages and emails shared. Furthermore, the line to take that is proposed does not jeopardize the position of any group in the parents community but asks questions and requests further explanations. The line to take respects and protects acquired rights.

Several members (Sofia Amor, Catarina Duarte Gomes, Francesca Tudini) stressed once again that the Board has no mandate to vote on a statement that would include a support or rejection to a particular option as parents were not consulted.

The President proposed to vote on an open mandate to be given to the Coordinator of the Overcrowding TF who would be in charge to of drafting a statement to be sent to the European Commission. Several members strongly opposed to what they considered to be a request to vote on a “blank check” with no vote afterwards by the Board. The proposal was withdrawn. There was no vote nor agreement on a possible text to be sent on behalf of the Board to the Commission.

The need to inform comprehensively the parents being requested unanimously, the Board agrees to inform the parent community with accurate facts as soon as possible.

5. **Pre-draft Internal Rules.** Not discussed due to lack of time.
6. **Registered Letters.** Not discussed due to lack of time.
7. **Statements & Recordings.** Not discussed due to lack of time.
8. **Approval of the reports of the Board meetings of the 13/05/2025, 06/06/2024 & 27/06/2024.** Not discussed due to lack of time.

Any Other Business.

Meeting ended at 23h55

Next Board meeting is scheduled on Tuesday 12th November 2024.