

Minutes of the Educational Council/ Erziehungsrat of 6th December 2012, room EU166

Chair of the meeting: Mr A Hrovath

Minutes by R Hoffmann

1. Minutes of the previous meeting and agenda approved

2. Organization of the last two school weeks

Aim for the current year is to hand out the reports on Friday of the last week of school (5th July); in year 5 the reports will be handed out on the Thursday afternoon, owing to work experience. There will be an end-of-year celebration from 8.30-9.30, followed by form time with the class teacher until about 10.00 am.

The previous three days will be reserved for projects (Projektstage) that may also include an option for residential trips. Existing projects may also use this time to develop their projects. All students in years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are obliged to choose a project and attendance is obligatory. Year 6 will use the project days for their careers advice and counselling.

Monday of the final week will be free for students and has to be available for class councils and Bac oral examinations.

In the penultimate week (week beginning 24th June), all lessons from Wednesday to Friday will finish after period 5 to allow the Oral Bac and class councils to take place. Lessons will follow a normal timetable on Monday and Tuesday in that week. The aim is to maximise lesson time and to clarify the situation as early as possible.

A similar procedure should be followed in subsequent years.

3. Homework policy

Complaints are received by Mr Hrovath on a regular basis about too much and too little homework, as well as the timing of homework. The Annual School Plan and Multi-Annual School Plans will soon contain a homework policy for the whole school. This will try to take account of national and section traditions. The secondary director does, as a matter of principle, not usually get involved in the teachers' professional judgment. Middle managers are investigating the obligations set out in the syllabuses. A prescriptive policy did not seem sensible, according to Mr Hrovath.

Different opinions were outlined in relation to the responsibilities of students regarding homework over the holidays and the amount of preparation that students should prepare themselves.

4. Harmonization of tests (Pre-Bac/Bac part examination and semester tests)

Aim is to achieve harmonization of the tests but the realization of harmonization will take time as the European Schools system has worked towards a greater degree of harmonization for a while and still has not achieved it. The new grade descriptions are also an opportunity for harmonization in marking of tests.

The pre-bac (part examination) is difficult to harmonize without dictating when teachers teach different parts of the curriculum. There is the possibility of harmonization of skills, competencies and topics without necessarily harmonizing questions. It was pointed out that within the next two years the Bac part exam will have to be harmonized which will have an impact on the topics and curriculum to be delivered in s6. Inevitably, that will lead to greater harmonization in year 6. The argument was made that the increase in harmonization will not necessarily lead to uniformity in marking and question types. That is, especially, the case in language classes where texts will vary to reflect the literature of the languages taught.

5. Continuity in the allocation of teachers for years s6 and s7

Mr Stie, on behalf of timetablers, has pointed out that the point is not a major issue for him because the continuity in that cycle is already a priority in the allocation of teachers. That also applies to years 4 and 5. A change of teacher is also sometimes desirable. There have been occasions when continuity cannot be guaranteed, and a parent representative pointed out that there had been a lack of continuity in the Italian section but expressed confidence that the school's commitment to continuity, whenever possible, would satisfy and reassure parents in that section, too.

6. Reduction of copies (work sheets)

This has been discussed with teachers and coordinators but the difficulty remains that the syllabuses do not converge a great deal with the textbooks of the national systems, necessitating the use of work sheets. There were a number of suggestions that work sheets should be scanned, compiled in booklets or uploaded on Moodle, and Mr Hrovath suggested Moodle should be used to avoid the need to photocopy quite so much.

A teacher representative mentioned the undesirability of teachers having to produce booklets which would possibly limit the flexibility of teachers in their delivery of the curriculum if a booklet were to completely replace photocopies. Parents complained that there is a difficulty for parents to follow how many worksheets were distributed. Many of the sheets are lost or quickly become illegible or unusable because they are not filed.

Student representatives also expressed the desire to have more double-sided copies to avoid the amount of paper used. Moodle is also not a tool that all students feel comfortable with or that students are not allowed to use at home.

Moodle and encouragement to file documents neatly should be promoted by teachers and parents. Mr Hrovath suggested that downloading relevant content on tablet computers and downloading of work sheets for every student would be an ambition for the future.

The acquisition of textbooks to be lent to students for the course of the year would be an alternative but the discussion of the funding did not reach a conclusion. There were suggestions from some parent representatives that the Parents' Association would be able to support the acquisition of new books.

Teacher representatives also mentioned the problems of photocopiers that frequently break down which provided a different perspective regarding the provision of better copies as well as more double-sided copies.

There appeared to be a consensus that Moodle would be the most desirable and practical step towards an initial improvement.

7. Europe Day celebration in May

Friday 3rd May 2013 is reserved for "Europa-Tag". There will be a smaller celebration every other year. The smaller Europe Day will involve an open day which will present the school during a normal school day to parents and other interested parties. The Europe Day 2014 will be a more substantial celebration on a Saturday. In 2013, as well as presentations as part of the open day, parents are invited to contribute, for instance, by organizing a buffet.

8. Any other business

All the points in this section were raised by parent representatives with the exception of d) which was brought up by Mr Hrovath.

- a) Drug testing and fraud during a drug test were mentioned by a parent representative but Mr Stie immediately interjected that there have been no drug tests. Mr Hrovath emphasized that rumours about the use of drugs or drug tests must not be spread. Students allegedly also discussed these incidents during a cigarette break with teachers. Mr Hrovath insisted that an anonymous allegation without names or specific incidents cannot be discussed at the Educational Committee (Erziehungsrat). Mr Hrovath clarified that specific allegations should be directed towards him directly without discussion at the Educational Committee (Erziehungsrat).
- b) Violence and bullying during breaks in the school playgrounds were mentioned and Mr Stie and Mr Hrovath clarified the procedure involving educational counsellors, Mr Dekker and directors.
- c) More news on the front page of the website in English, please.
- d) The email communication system of the school is now complete with only a handful of omissions. A student administration system ("My School") for the European Schools will now be rolled out to all schools from 1st March 2013. This will also include a new program for the entry of grades and completion of reports. My School will be able to deal with absences, emails, report writing and many other aspects. Marks of the individual tests will not be made available online.
- e) Reform of the Bac. There is a demand for information from parents of the higher classes. Mr Hrovath explained that this information is available on www.eurasc.org in all three major

languages. Mr Johnstone will explain the changes to the Bac during the information evening for subject choices later in the year.