

**INTERPARENTS Annual General Meeting
at the European School, Brussels II 3 February 2010¹
and at the European School, Brussels III 4 February 2010**

INTERPARENTS held its Annual General meeting at the Brussels II school, Woluwe on Wednesday 3 and at the Brussels III school, Ixelles on Thursday 4 February 2010. All of the thirteen member Parents Associations were represented. Chair: Carine Lingier, President of Interparents.

Carine started the meeting with the latest communications on the **Board of Governors'** meeting in December 2009, which agreed with the acceptance of Cat 3 siblings for the next school year in the Brussels schools, discussed the creation of the Hessen Type III school near Frankfurt, rejected that of The Hague - which was invited to come up with a new proposal including a full secondary cycle rather than just the last two years, and warmly welcomed Lord Jay and his presentation of the Culham school transformation project. The Secretary General would prepare a request to the Belgian government for the creation of the Brussels V school. Discussion on the Baccalaureate reform showed that there were many opinions and it would be hard to find agreement on numbers of written and oral exams for example.

Carine Lingier and Karin van Vrede had a meeting with Mary Honeyball, Member of the **European Parliament**, who had been behind the 2005 report that led to the reform. They updated her on the reform, the opportunities it offered the European Union and the need to involve different Directorate Generals in the governance of the schools system. All suggestions and help in contacting other parliamentarians were welcome.

The Chair also reported back on the meeting with the Secretary General, specifically to reflect on the **coherence of the whole ES system** (Type I, Type II and Type III schools). A lot of requests had not been foreseen originally ie. Hague (only BAC) + Hessen (near Frankfurt Type I school). The Secretary General will prepare a reflection document for the Board of Governors.

Carine Lingier updated the Committee on the **legal situation regarding the reduction of PA voting rights in the Admin Boards**. Following the Administrative Appeal having being turned down, the Parents' Associations had already agreed that Interparents would lodge a Contentious Appeal, which was done (see this website). Interparents has already worked out alternative ways for further action, in case the current appeal would be refused. The new Admin Board Rules of Procedure, approved in December 2009, will come into force next September 2010. The Committee was reminded that the **SAC** was created to compensate for the loss of parents voting rights and that it is meant to deal with more strategic issues and preparation for the Admin Board leaving the Educational Councils for pedagogical issues.

Next Interparents meeting will take place **Tuesday 13 April Munich** to prepare for the April Board of Governors with a Roundtable on the BAC reform taking place Monday afternoon, 12 April.

The second part of the meeting was to discuss pedagogical matters and prepare the Teaching Committees. Jutta gave a report on the **Early Learning Curriculum** Working Group which aims to be

¹. This Web report is issued for general information under the responsibility of the Chair. It is not the Minutes of the meeting which will follow in due course after being approved by the participants.

taylor-made around the child using four main topics: Me and my body; me as a person; me and others and me and my world.

A one day Teaching Committee is too short and ill prepared with documentation not ready in time and this time last minute changes to meeting dates and times disrupted other preparatory meetings and caused inconvenience and extra expense. Most new programmes did not pose a problem, except for the new **Mathematics syllabus and introduction of a graphic calculator**. A presentation by the Inspector and Mr. Frühauf, secretary of the Working Group, tried to reassure Interparents, who had serious concerns regarding the lack of time to prepare teachers, translate manuals, go to tender and other aspects of implementation as well as the lack of communication, transparency and consensus between schools.

The group felt that introducing **host country language as L2** was a dangerous path particularly for small schools which could end up bilingual. They welcomed better evaluation of locally recruited staff and reiterated their concerns about the impact of a Type III school, **Hessen**, so close to the Frankfurt Type I school as well as on the inadvisability of basing a decision on the “Dossier de Conformité” mostly on unsubstantiated promises. They agreed on the **BAC timetable** and amendments on the arrangements with a request to clarify the language of Article 12 on complaints and appeals.

Although the **Counseling** report was good, it made no mention of parents’ role nor included them in the proposed Working Party. This led to a discussion about what parents are, or are not, allowed to know about their children by the school. Not being part of a working group means more corridor work needs to be done, such as the recent meeting with the chair of the **SWALS** WG who proved receptive to our ideas – inadequate definition, lack of space (2 mother-tongue classes in one room or classes in the corridors), lack of teacher inspections or guidance, no provision of replacements especially for long absences, and back up distance learning options. Interparents did acquire a seat in the new Working Group on **Repeat Rates**.

The **SEN** report was encouraging. The new SEN inspector takes a consistent, methodical approach. Increase in SEN programme for children in difficulties is due to more awareness but more work needs to be done in some sections due to cultural influences and also regarding exceptionally gifted children. We must underline that SEN is an ongoing accompanying support for the child and not something that can be “cured”. A large presence of SWALS and SEN children in a classroom is an additional reason for splitting classes but decision by Director needs to be approved by Admin Board.

The third part of the meeting was devoted to the **Annual General Assembly** which approved the finances and set annual **membership fees at 1,200€** per PA. A separate decision would be taken later should legal costs demand it. The **management committee** was up for election, either because their 2 year mandate was over or because they were unable to continue as children would leave the school at the end of the school year. Four positions and four candidates (Culham, Brussels 1, Alicante and Karlsruhe). President: Ana Gorey, Vice-President: Karin van Vrede-Leopold, Secretary: Caroline Hetterschijt, Treasury: Rachel Harvey-Kelly. Unfortunately, that meant three small schools and therefore, there needed to be more commitment from the Brussels and other big schools. After the elections, the list of delegates to the Working groups were considered and members and substitute members decided.

Rapporteur: Ana Gorey