

INTERPARENTS Meeting at the European School, Brussels II

1 December 2009

INTERPARENTS met at the Brussels II European School (Woluwe) on 1 December. Twelve of the thirteen member Parents Associations were represented (apologies from Brussels 3). Chair: Carine Lingier, President of Interparents. Mr. Galvin, Director welcomed everyone and outlined the challenges facing the school at the moment one of which was **recruitment** and the consequences of the 9 year contract for teachers. Another issue within the system was the lack of an **alternative certificate**.

Carine Lingier, started the meeting with the latest communications on the Budget Committee, the European Parliament and the forthcoming AGM. She and Ana Gorey had attended the **Budget Committee** for which everyone had received the report. Even with two people present, the increased decision making powers of this Committee, especially over pedagogical matters, made it very heavy indeed and we needed to consider how best to prepare these meetings in the future. In view of the March dates, e-mail exchange and a team approach would have to suffice. With the reform, the presence of two delegates in the BC meeting was still allowed, but the second delegate would have to be paid for by Interparents.

With regard to the **European Parliament**, the Management Committee had made contacts with the Education and Budgetary Committee and initial contacts were good. A meeting with Mary Honeyball was scheduled for Wednesday. The idea was to use the March public hearing as a spring board to discussing European schools. The main message was to get the dossier on the agenda, discuss the opening up of the system and investigate involvement of DG Education rather than only DG Admin. Main item of the **General Assembly of Interparents**, 4 February 2010 is the election of the Management Committee. Associations should indicate their candidates by 15th January 2010. Also on the agenda will be financial issues, membership fee, working costs, legal representation, schools rotation, election of delegates to working groups. In the same meeting, the documents for the Teaching Committee will be reviewed. The president updated members on developments of the **Reform of the ES System**, particularly on the withdrawal of a vote from the parents and the teachers in the Admin Board (see documents on www.interparents.eu). It is not just the number of votes but their weighting which needed to be considered especially in the light of the proposed simple majority which now meant only 6 not 8 votes with the chairman's casting vote (not to mention the Commission's veto vote) and possible future Category 2 votes. Members agreed that legal action was almost inevitable as there was really no room for compromise.

The management committee had been very active recently in pushing the **transparency** issue, in assuring flexibility between written and oral examinations in the **Baccalaureate working group** as well as more time to properly consider reform, and vis-à-vis the **coherence of the ES system**.

Members then went through the agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Board of Governors. With respect to the question of **Brussels infrastructure**, the president of Brussels I had been chosen to represent the four Brussels schools for this item. Important issues as the report of the chairs of the Boards of Inspectors, the reports on the reform of the Baccalaureate and the repeat rates had been commented on in the Teaching Committees and the interventions would be based on those. The issue of transparency of the Board of Inspectors and participation of the parents in the preparation of documents would be brought up in the meeting. The Culham representative updated everyone on

developments regarding the transition phase for the **Culham school** to an Academy. Germany presented a project for a type 3 school very near to Frankfurt and Interparents would ask in the Board of Governors about the effect on the Frankfurt type 1 school. As to the type 3 school in The Hague, Interparents had not seen its concerns met. Also, the school did not commit to offer more than the 2 Baccalaureate years. The **Category 2** issue was under discussion due to amendments to the Contract. The view was expressed that Interparents should insist during the discussion of the Board on the principle that the fee should be the same amount per pupil as paid by the Commission. Another way of calculating the Cat. 2 fees was in any case necessary, as doing nothing would also have budget negative effect as the financial crisis cannot be ignored.

The next Board of Governors would be in Brussels on 14+15 April rather than in the member state of the Presidency as was tradition. The Interparents meeting would hopefully take place in Munich.

Interparents discussed the forthcoming **introduction of graphic calculators** from 4th year secondary on. There were concerns regarding the influence on the syllabus, the possible loss of skills by the pupils and the rejection of the use of such calculators in entrance and other exams in certain British universities.

Rapporteur: Ana Gorey.

This Webreport is issued for quick information under the responsibility of the Chair. It is not the Minutes of the meeting.