

JFKS Parent Council Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2018

GREETING

Meeting began at 7:06 p.m.

Brief note on bilingualism from the PCB: Speakers at the meeting will usually speak in their own language. We recognize that there are parents present who do not speak the other language. We are doing our best to have all information in both languages at the meeting, though we also have to be mindful of time issues. We remind all parents present that we have a real-time translator sitting at the table by the window. We also remind all parents that the meeting highlights that we send out after the meeting are always in both languages.

APPROVAL of amendments to the agenda:

Because Herr Schulz is not present, Bethany Vaughn will be reading his report.

Gretchen Vogel will be added as a speaker to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING'S MINUTES Minor changes to the highlights version of the minutes will be reflected in the parent newsletter. The official meeting minutes were approved without any modifications.

SCHOOL REPORTS

Student Council - Emma Nathenson and Amalia Anhalt

High school musical in the first and second weeks of December is "Guys & Dolls."
BerMUN starts November 14.

Elementary School - Racso Cortinas, American Elementary School Principal

-Student Council is collecting canned food for Leib & Seele and Berliner Tafel. Collection only goes until the end of next week (November 21). Please donate!

-Behavior Expectations in the Elementary School

One very important aspect of the work we do here at school and you support at home is teaching children how to behave and act appropriately in a community, group or classroom. To that end we use the Second Step program in the lower elementary school, 1st and 2nd grade, which teaches children to be emotion detectives so they are better able to gage a situation and react accordingly. The program teaches them to be respectful listeners, good learners and have positive self-talk.

For Entrance Class children our counseling department runs social skills groups which are geared specifically to students who need a bit of extra help in this area. Participation is based on teacher recommendation and parental consent. For 3rd-6th graders, there are teacher-led "peace circles" to address issues preemptively as well as react to actual situations when they occur. This program gives students the language to discuss their feelings. The goal is for students to recognize when someone is hurt and how to work through those feelings productively. Our Grades 5/6 levels had specific workshops that included our High School Student Advocates regarding the power of words and perceptions. And starting in December, all 6th graders will go through a violence prevention workshop with our local police department.

For a couple of years now we have noticed the overuse of the word bullying or mobbing when in fact it was a conflict situation or simply rude behavior. In order for bullying to be present, experts have identified these aspects:

1. A power difference (older vs younger student, popular vs less popular)
2. Repetitive issues. One-time incidents are not bullying.
3. If it's one-sided.

Kiss & Goodbye

A reminder that lower elementary parents need to say goodbye *outside* of the school building. The hallways are very loud and parents in the building distract the children in the classrooms and the teachers report having a harder time doing their job.

Change to Early Care Drop-off Times

The Entrance Class faculty chair announces that children in Early Care need to be delivered before 8:00 am, which is when instruction in the higher grades begin. *Bringschluss* is now at 8:00. Noise level was given as the reason for the change.

Schule Ohne Rassismus

A teacher has to be the one to shepherd the school through the certification process to become an official Schule Ohne Rassismus. The administrations' next step is to find a faculty member willing to take on the task of being a faculty advisor to this initiative.

If parents are not receiving the School Bulletin by email every month, please contact Mr. Cortinas or Andrea Robertson to be added to the list. rcortinas@jfsberlin.org or arobertson@jfsberlin.org

High School - Bethany Vaughn for Steffen Schulz, Acting High School German Principal (as read by Mr. Cortinas)

SEP IMPORTANT DATES

November 20th Middle School Concert at 7:00 pm

November 23rd MUN Guest Speaker Dr. Baumann at 3:00 pm

November 27th 8th Grade Ski Trip Parent Evening at 7:00 pm

November 28th Dom Concert at 7:00 pm

December 7th, 8th, 14th and 15th High School Musical 7:00 pm

December 18th Spanish Night 6:00 pm

SPOTLIGHT SPEAKER: JFKS Roadmap for Inclusion - Christina Limbird

Ms. Limbird is an educational psychologist and the director of Linden Global Learning. Their mission is to help schools support all different types of learners, across Berlin and Europe as well. Inclusive education hopes to provide every child with what they need for a successful education. Inclusive education is a human right, not just a trend.

Last year the school commissioned the company to evaluate JFKS' inclusion policies and about how these efforts add up. The study included focus groups and a survey of students (grades 4 and up), faculty, staff and parents. . The full report is in the library and is available to all interested parents.

The administration has asked the PCB to gather and forward any questions regarding the assessment or presentation to them as a bundle. Feel free to contact parentcouncil@jfsberlin.org with questions you would like addressed by administration.

SEP Please see attached presentation slides.

Questions and Answers:

Wie kam es zu dieser Initiative und wer hat das bezahlt?

Die Schule hat das selber entschieden. The counselors and administration wanted to learn and grow.

Is the steering group still in existence a year later? Is Ms. Limbird still accompanying the group?

We don't know what the school's next steps are. There were 66 different recommendations that the group narrowed down to 15 recommendations that would have the most impact.

Question for Herr Schulz/Mr. Cortinas, who were no longer present at the meeting.

Are they acting upon the company's recommendations? Does the steering group still exist?

Was ist der Inklusionsindex für die Schule?

Das war der Anfangspunkt, was gemessen wurde. Ms. Limbird said the school isn't perfect, but also not terrible. In fact, its results were slightly above average.

Committee Reports

ED nothing to report

SC See attached notes

BEA nothing to report (summary to be provided)

Working Group on Anti-bullying

The School Conference set up this group and started recruiting interested parents. They met last Thursday with Herr Schulz. There are a lot of parent volunteers (25) in this group. The teachers have workshops over the next few days to develop a policy, and Herr Schulz will meet with the parents at the end of the month to discuss their ideas. The group plans to start a survey for the whole school community, in the hopes of making the topic more accessible for all. The group hopes to remove the taboo from the subject to make it easier for affected parties to discuss it publicly. The group needs more faculty and students to join. The main goal of the group is to focus efforts to be as effective as possible. The group is not closed - if someone is passionate about participating, please join. Email parentcouncil@jfsksberlin.org to join.

Traffic Committee – not present

Bethany Vaughn requested additional parental help to assist the traffic committee, especially German speakers, that can help try and move proposals on traffic along that could help with the back gate issue.

Food Committee - Luisa Weiss

The Food Committee is very aware of the high increase in complaints from students and parents on the quality of the food in recent months. The caterer is having a hard time hiring a new chef after the previous one quit, which is contributing to the low quality. The food committee will be meeting before the end of the year, hopefully, to discuss the situation and how improvements may be found. The school has one of the largest number of eaters and meals served in Berlin schools and a small kitchen. Meeting the different needs of both the ES and HS and allowing for more choice to select from is a challenge for the caterer.

Q & A

Is there a nutritional requirement that fruit and vegetables have to be served?

- Yes, there are specific and strict requirements established by the Senate.

Are the requirements being met by the caterer?

- Yes, we believe the requirements are being met.

Comment by a parent who eats at the school every day was that the food over the last two months has been atrocious.

Language Parity - Gretchen Vogel

The group's mission is to, among other things, support parents who are hoping to improve their language skills in the school's other language and therefore is setting up tandem learning groups, as well as a book club and wine tastings and other social events. If you're interested in joining, email parentcouncil@Jfksberlin.org

Verein - Buck Chisolm (Treasurer)

The Verein would like to remind the school community that the group has funds that any student, teacher or parent can apply to receive. The Verein would encourage applicants to give their applications some thought and care, explaining the project thoughtfully and detailing if efforts are being made to also raise money elsewhere. See the attached slides for more information. The Verein can be contacted at info@theverein.com

Additionally, if you are a family that requires financial assistance with a class trip or other financial challenge, please write to Theresa Helou at familyneeds@theverein.com. All correspondence is handled confidentially and will only be seen by Theresa and one other person at the Verein.

Miscellaneous

Garden Day was a big success - thank you to all who participated Special thanks to the PCB organizer Kira Melzer and Tracey Tober from the Verein for her mentorship!

Drug and Alcohol Prevention: Caroline Lugani, the PCB and Haus Reil have organized a parent informational evening on drug & alcohol prevention on January 21st at 7 pm in the Aula. The presentation will be held in English. An expert from the Fachstelle für Suchtprävention Berlin has been invited to speak. There will be two 45-minute segments. The expert will report on the different substances on the market and provide information about the legal aspects of drugs and alcohol (Jugendschutzgesetz) for youths and parents. She will also discuss why teenagers consume illegal drugs and counsel parents on how to help their children when they are exposed to these illicit/addictive drugs. Second part of the evening will be Q&A session. Then the expert will leave and the group can continue to talk until 9:30 pm. A similar evening was organized in 2013. It is open to all to ask questions or just listen, however, it's probably most relevant for parents of 6th graders and up.

The next Parent Council meeting is on January 29, 2019 at 7:00 pm.
The meeting ended at 8:54 p.m.