

JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL
DEUTSCH-AMERIKANISCHE GEMEINSCHAFTSSCHULE
GERMAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Minutes of the School Conference
October 11, 2017 at 15:15 h

In attendance:

Administration: Brian Salzer, Magdalena Ohlendorf
Teacher Representatives: Anne de Tarr, Timm Jones, Andrew Rockenstein, Gabi Jendretzki
Parent Representatives: Peter Schier, Kimberley Schneidereit, Lars Bespolka,
Stefan Berger, Kristen Winkler, Klaus Hentges, Nelly Heidbrink
Student Representatives: Maya Lugani, Tillmann Sherwood, Lars Brown-Heidenreich,
Miles Grant
Hort Representative: Svetlana Ostojic
Guest: Steffen Schulz, David Krupski, Melissa Wilzius

1. Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were not approved, will be sent out to the SK members for review.

3. Review/orientation to School Conference

Kristen Winkler presented an orientation for the SK members. All SK members will receive the presentation per email.

Questions were raised and answered.

Hort would like the All Faculty meetings (Gesamtkonferenz) to take place later in the day so that the Hort employees can attend and have a chance to be elected as a voting member to the SK, instead of only being in an advisory position. This should be brought up again in the next All Faculty meeting for discussion.

4. Spanish Department Topic

- a. Argentina exchange opportunity: Our students have been invited to apply for exchange partners in a German-speaking school in Argentina. The Argentinian students would come to our school from December-February, and the JFKS students would go to Argentina in July-August (that is, during our summer vacation.) The Spanish Dept. would like to ask for permission to participate in this exchange for 1-3 students per year.

Questions about selection procedure and finances were made, and answers provided.

A motion was made to support the Argentina exchange. Unanimously approved.

- b. 6-week exchange opportunity with Madrid: After consultation with our partner school in Madrid, we would like to arrange for 1-4 students per year to participate in a 6-week exchange during their 10th-grade year. This is an expansion of our current program. We would arrange this to happen at the same time as the French exchange, in order to create maximum benefit and minimum disruption. Between Winter vacation and the practicum. The one week (or 10 days) exchange would still happen. There is a conflict with MSA presentations. The students would have to do their presentation at a later date (as do the French exchange students)

A motion was made not to support the 6-week exchange. Motion failed. 0-14-0

A motion was made to support the 6-week exchange as proposed. Unanimously approval.

- c. 2 or 3 groups for Spain exchange: As we discovered last year, a language exchange becomes less meaningful when the student groups are very large. 10 days - two weeks. Therefore, we would like permission to perform our week-long Spain exchange with 2-3 smaller groups rather than one very large group. The groups would be about 15 students each. This exchange is primarily for 9th-graders, admitting students also from the 10th-grade elective as their schedules permit.

A motion was made to support the Spanish exchange, as proposed. Motion failed. 7-7-0

A motion was made to support the Spanish exchange, as proposed, for this school year, and change it for subsequent years to only include the 9th Grade and attempt to schedule it at the same time as the French Exchange. The Motion failed. 7-7-0

The decision was tabled until the next meeting, where we ask Melissa Wilzius to come back and answer more questions.

5. Security Measures - Wifi

Mr. Salzer was asked to explain where the school stands with implementing security measures. A recap of last year's proposal to increase security was made. Embassy officers made a strong case for getting better security on campus.

Six security priorities are listed, which will not be divulged, as to not sacrifice the safety of the

JFKS.

A letter was sent to District and Senat by Mr. Salzer, yet nothing has happened. Mr. Salzer approached the District about the inactivity. The Embassy is considering not to recommend the JFKS to embassy families due of the lack of security. Things we can do: limit the access to the school grounds, motion sensor lighting, etc. There is not a timeline for the installation of such measures, but Mr. Salzer continues to push. He is trying to increase campus Wifi for immediate communication purposes. The first network company that we hired tried to improve the Wifi, but couldn't finish it. A new company has the capacity and knowhow to make this happen (new server, new wiring, extended plan for campus). We need more money to finish it project. The plan is in place to get the project complete.

Svetlana Ostojic mentions that Hort is not involved in the security procedure. The Administration should make sure that the Hort be included in the security measures. She has a lot of Embassy children in Hort, as well.

The question is whether we can expedite the process. The new Ambassador is going to write a strong letter to the Senat. They have been putting the pressure on, but are not getting a response from the Senat.

6. Lock Down Drill

For Americans, lock down drills are very normal. The JFKS has had practice drills with teachers only, so far. The faculty has been discussing lock down drill with the kids. Some ES teachers had questions, i.e. where to take cover and how to talk to their students about it. The superintendent needs to approve drills with kids. She has to get approval from the authorities (District and Senat) first, before giving us the o.k. to proceed. As soon as we get the approval, a drill will be practiced. Frau Ohlendorf said, it is common knowledge that the JFKS will be the school that will have a lock down drill. The authorities want it to be very well prepared with the police, psychologists, District and Senat input. They want to make sure it all goes well, which requires quite a lot of planning. The first lock down drill with children might take place in November.

8. Misc.

Update of progress of the digital school lists. K. Schneidereit explains the problem of there not being any school lists available, which causes problems in every part of the school community, from the lack of classroom lists, lack of emergency lists, no ability to update the Book Fund database and process payments. There have been issues with protection of personal data that the administration has been dealing with, as well as late admissions due to procedural difficulties. The delay is extraordinary and will hopefully be solved in a few days.

Severe storm warning was not passed on the JFKS parents. Parents were very upset, as kids were let out late and couldn't get home and were stranded because the BVG shut down. There should be a plan in place which should be decided by the administration. Mr. Salzer will bring this back to the Administrative team to find a solution for the future. HS students would also like to be informed. This information should be posted on the school website and parents FB page. We ask the Administration to address the topic at the PC meeting.

Forming Security Committee.

Does it make sense to form a security committee? N. Heidbrink suggests it might be a good idea to form a subcommittee of the SK. There are expert knowledge in the parent body that we can tap into. Students would like to be involved, as well. Question to Mr. Salzer, whether this would be helpful support for the administration? Mr. Salzer thinks any extra help would be appreciated.

A motion to create a subcommittee for security measures at the JFKS was made. Said committee would be made up of Students, Teachers, Administration, Parents, Hort (not necessarily members of the SK, they could be from the greater community). The committee reports to the SK. The motion was approved. Peter Schier will get the group going, but will look for someone who would continue the work, as he is in his last year at the JFKS.

7. Principals Searches

There are currently four open German administrative positions. Vice Principals in both ES and HS are newly posted. Frau Ohlendorf's position as German principal is still open. A Selection Note (Auswahlvermerk) has not been publicized yet, meaning that further applications are still being accepted.

Frau Ohlendorf described the entire complicated process for hiring German principals.

The process for the HS German principal position is no longer open to accept new applicants. The Selection Note (Auswahlvermerk) has been written. Only one candidate remains in the process.

The School Conference requests that Mr. Salzer speak with Frau Waldschütz and the ED to convey our reservations about the process. We are disturbed by the lack of choice of candidates. If at all possible, we would prefer to wait until a later time when further candidates are available. The school is functioning well currently with Mr. Schulz, as acting principal, and could so continue.

Mr. Salzer shall go with a member from the SK (Klaus Hentges) to speak with Frau Waldschütz to find a solution. Our students deserve a well-functioning school with an administrator who is widely accepted by the faculty. It was also suggested that Mr. Salzer speak with Staatsekretär Rackles. Mr. Salzer will contact Frau Waldschütz to get an appointment asap and K. Hentges will contact Dr. Jürgens, and ask advice.

Status quo is that the SK would like to have Mr. Schulz continue as Acting Principal.

Minutes submitted by: Kimberley Schneiderei