

Meeting minutes
For the School Conference Meeting on
7 June 2023 at 15:30 in the Quiet Study Room

In attendance:

Administration:	Hr. Bartz, Mr. Fritzenschaft
Teacher Representatives:	Hr. Witte, Ms. Moser, Fr. Evers, Ms. Martin Alternate: Fr. Diemer
Parent Representatives:	Mr. Bespolka, Hr. Berger, Ms. Winkler, Hr. Erlbaum Alternates: Ms. Vogel
Student Representatives:	Mr. Winkler, Hr. Eberstein, Ms. Patt
Hort/Mittelhof Guests:	Fr. Heyelmann, Ms. Rieck
External member:	Fr. Mattig-Krone

Voting members: 13 voting members present

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

2. Approval of Minutes from 19 April, 2023

The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

3. Review of Action Item List

Spider Web: The spider web opened for use on the 26th of May.

Bus Lane: The bus lane topic has been moved to the next SK meeting. Hr. Bartz has contacted the appropriate Senate office about an update.

Code of Conduct: The Code of Conduct is being finalized and will be reviewed by the SK at the next meeting.

4. Report from the Working Group Meeting: SK-ED Roles

There is a feeling that a sort of power struggle is going on between the SK and the ED. It is also mentioned that perhaps the ED should be dealing with larger issues and the SK more with the day-to-day issues. The SK is more of an internal group making decisions. The ED is an external group deciding on higher-level matters. Somehow, in the real world, the ED ends up with a lot of the decisions in the end.

The question is raised: Who should oversee that each group deals with the appropriate issues?

Hr. Bartz states that the Berlin Schulgesetz does not cover the ED because it does not exist in any other schools. Therefore, in our special situation, we must find our own solution. The best result would be harmonization between the SK and ED and perfect collaboration. However, this is not very easy to accomplish. Hr. Bartz wishes to address this further in the next school year.

The administration pledges to try and address this issue further in the next year by schooling the members of the SK and ED further on what their roles and responsibilities are at the school and in their respective bodies.

It is also mentioned that transparency is a very important aspect as well. It is wished that less decisions are made behind closed doors and more is discussed with the full group.

5. Dates for the School Conference 23-24

Hr. Bartz proposed four dates for school conference meetings next school year, corresponding to ED meetings. Other members noted that it has frequently been useful to have five meetings. It was debated whether to add a definite 5th meeting, or add a date for an optional one if needed. A vote was taken to decide: seven members favored an optional date; four preferred five set dates.

The SK meeting dates for the next school year are the following:

27.09.23, Wednesday

21.11.23, Tuesday (due to BERMUN)

28.02.24, Wednesday

17.04.24, Wednesday, provisional (only occurs if deemed necessary)

22.05.24, Wednesday

These are all meetings at 3:30pm in W105a. They are scheduled to be similar to the ED meeting calendar.

6. Updated EMD Policy

After the 19 April meeting, Hr. Bartz discovered that the School Conference Bylaws require that motions be in both languages before they can be passed. However, these bylaws were not in effect at the time of the vote, since they had not been approved by the SK at the beginning of the year. Fr. Mattig-Krone has indicated that the bylaws provided by the Senate are in effect instead. These bylaws do not specifically address the language question.

The teachers have expressed concern about the EMD policy and its current implementation. 80% of feedback so far is negative. One teacher noted that he now sees dozens of students staring at their phones between 7:40 and 8 am. Teachers also said 11th and 12th graders were flaunting their new permission to use phones during school hours.

However, other teachers say their impression is that there has not been a drastic change since the new policy was implemented. One teacher says that it doesn't make sense that lesson plans should be posted on WebUntis but students are not allowed to access WebUntis on their devices. Especially in the 11th and 12th grades, with students that are almost 18 years old, a teacher expresses concern that we should ban their devices but not those of the administrators and staff.

Hr. Bartz expresses that students don't need to use their phones during the school day since all WebUntis notifications are supposed to be given before 7:30. Additionally, there are monitors in the school that inform students about substitutions. Teachers and students noted that only two of those monitors exist in the high school and they are both on the first floor.

Parents proposed issuing a statement that 11th and 12th graders should be more responsible. They also suggested a one year test period. Parents were reluctant to immediately rescind a policy that the SK had just approved.

A teacher suggestion is to only allow EMD usage for 11th and 12th graders on a specific floor. Additionally, they also request that this policy is reviewed with the student body so they are informed in detail. This education should be moved to the beginning of the next school year in order to educate the new 11th and 12th grades.

It is decided that the content will be discussed at the next meeting. SK Representatives should provide proposals for changes to the policy at the next meeting.

Motion: The German translation of the EMD Policy should be approved as an accurate translation of the English version passed at the April meeting.

In favor: 10, Opposed: 2, Abstention: 1

7. Homework Policy

Motion: That the German translation of the Homework Policy provided should be approved as an accurate translation of the English version passed at the April meeting.

In favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstention: 1

8. School Conference Bylaws

The previous by-laws have been provided to all SK members. These incorporate changes to standard bylaws that are necessary for a German-American school. It is decided that the SK will discuss the bylaws and any possible changes at the first meeting of the next school year.

9. Diploma Track - German Proficiency Letter

Dr. Fritzenschaft states that they are working on a proficiency letter to be standardized but it is not available this year.

For this year's 12th graders, every student must request a note individually from Ms. Mack, the registrar. Dr. Fritzenschaft will ask if this letter can be handed out at graduation or prior to it.

Abitur students automatically receive on their graduation certificate that they have been instructed on a C2 English level.

Parents note that this issue was raised in January with the hope that a better solution could be found for this year's graduates.

10. LK and AP subject offerings and class sizes

Hr. Bartz assures that all options have been exhausted and for students that had difficulties finding proper classes in the next year, they have found different classes to take instead.

It has been found that it is not possible to cooperate with other schools on a class due to the scheduling, travel time, and very little potential for long-term cooperation.

A teacher noted that some classes are too small and other classes (English) are too large.

11. Ganztagschule Update

A meeting with Fr. Orgis will likely take place the week of June 12.

12. School Website

Committee members have volunteered and are to be approved:

Students: Mr. Winkler, Ms. Patt, Hr. Bordet

Parents: Ms. Winkler, Ms. Harvey

Administration: Mr. Fritzenschaft, Head of the Subcommittee, Ms. Rolle, Ms. Robertson

In favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstention: 0

An initial meeting was held already last week to discuss needs and desires for the website. Ms. Harvey will develop a proposal that the school can compare with the current provider.

13. Teacher hiring

Given the teacher shortage, parents asked whether JFKS could hire more American teachers to fill some of the gaps.

Hr. Bartz states there is no teacher shortage since all positions that are currently empty should be filled by the next school year. Due to our school's special circumstances, we have an easier time getting more teachers, especially American. There are new Senate guidelines stating that schools should be able to fill 100% of available teacher hours instead of the 97% that were previously requested due to the national teacher shortage. It is estimated that our school will get close to 100%.

14. Administration Hiring Update

Hr. Bartz said that the new American ES Principal will hopefully visit in the coming weeks.

The German ES Principal position has not yet been advertised but it should hopefully occur soon.

Hr. Bartz will remain at the high school for the next year along with Mr. Fritzenschaft.

15. Bathroom Update

Mittelhof has started a project to clean up the graffiti in the bathrooms and possibly paint and decorate some of them.

In the elementary school, bathroom access had been restricted to students that place their names on a list. This was due to extremely inappropriate messages that have been written on bathroom walls on frequent occasions. The elementary school teachers have clarified that the bathroom access has not been fully restricted but rather been temporarily controlled in order to protect the children. The students in question are in the 6th grade.

The Instagram of school foot pictures in the high school has been discontinued for a while now. This account had previously posted pictures of students and teachers.

16. Committee updates

Food Committee:

Students noted that they have not been invited to attend meetings of the Food Committee. Hr. Bartz responded that no meetings have been scheduled because there hasn't been anything for the committee to decide. The current caterer has ended the contract with the school. A new contract bidding process has been started, but due to the dreadful condition of the kitchen facilities, this is likely to be food that is cooked offsite and warmed up upon delivery.

Plates and utensils are being replaced soon.

The BIM has stated that there will be warm food in the following year in some way.

Special Needs:

Dr. Fritzenschaft gave an update from the most recent meeting: There was a reflection on the year and on the PD days of the staff. The committee has made good progress in this past year and will continue in the next school year. Professional development for the staff is being scheduled for the next year.

Building Committee:

There has been no meeting in the past year of the committee. Concern has been expressed by the members of the committee that there was no meeting in the year despite the Baupiloten project going on.

Fr. Heyelmann reported that the mold has been removed from the Hort building and it is looking to open soon again.

Hr. Bartz explains the future of the Baupiloten project. They have finished their current proposal and have turned it over to the school. However, there has been a lot of disagreement from the school so far. Hr. Bartz promises that the school and the SK will have more input on the project and on the final result.

17. Miscellaneous

No miscellaneous points were raised.

The meeting adjourned at 17:31.

Minutes submitted by Benedikt Winkler and Gretchen Vogel