



Meeting minutes
for the School Conference meeting on
27 September 2023, at 15:30 in the Quiet Study Room

In attendance:

Administration: Hr. Bartz, Ms. Martin-O'Connor, Mr. Fritzenschaft (guest)
Teacher Representatives: Hr. Witte, Ms. Moser, Ms. Martin, Fr. Evers
Parent Representatives: Mr. Bespolka, Ms. Vogel, Hr. Erlbaum, Fr. Haselmayer
Alternate: Mr. Sullivan
Student Representatives: Ms. Patt, Mr. Simanowitz, Hr. Bordet, Fr. von zur Gathen
Alternates: Fr. Ward, Ms. Zoll
Hort Guest: Ms. Heyelmann
External member: Fr. Mattig-Krone

Voting members: 14 voting members present

1. Approval of Agenda / Genehmigung der Tagesordnung

It was agreed that additional agenda items could be added under "Miscellaneous." The agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

2. Approval of Minutes from 7 June 2023 / Genehmigung des Protokolls

The minutes were approved by eight members. Four members abstained.

3. Duties and responsibilities of the SC members / Aufgaben und Zuständigkeiten der SK-Mitglieder

Hr. Bartz reviewed the duties and responsibilities of the School Conference and its members, which are outlined in [Abschnitt II Schulkonferenz](#) in the Berlin School law.



Meetings are not open or public. Members are allowed and encouraged to communicate with the constituent groups about topics discussed in meetings, but only School Conference members and invited guests are allowed to attend. Members may be obligated to keep certain discussion topics confidential.

Mr. Bepolka noted that the Educational Directorate had voted to approve the SK/ED division of responsibilities worked out last spring. He proposed that the School Conference formally discuss and decide whether to adopt them as well. They should be distributed in advance of the next meeting so that members can review them and make a decision.

4. Discussion and decision about the rules of procedure of the school conference / Diskussion und Beschluss über die Geschäftsordnung der Schulkonferenz

Hr. Bartz compared Berlin's "Muster Geschäftsordnung" with the previous JFKS School Conference bylaws. Because the bylaws were not approved last year, it is assumed that the Muster GO takes precedence, also because school law has changed since the JFKS bylaws were updated. Key differences were discussed:

--JFKS SK bylaws allow all alternate members to participate in meetings. Hr. Bartz proposed allowing alternates to attend only if a main representative cannot attend. This could keep discussions focused, make vote counting easier and make meetings more efficient.

Students and parents emphasized that alternate members represent important constituencies that will not have a voice if alternates are excluded from meetings. It will also be more difficult for alternate members to stay fully informed about the issues debated in the SK.

It was suggested that members make known ahead of the meeting whether they will attend and, if an alternate will be voting in place of a main member, who that alternate will be.

A vote was taken: Who is in favor of allowing alternate members to attend meetings? 13 yays, 1 nay

It was discussed whether alternates who attend the meetings would be allowed to participate in discussions.

A vote was taken: Alternates will be invited to speak on a case-by-case basis, depending on the topic. 9 yays, 4 nays, 1 abstention

Mr. Simanowitz will be in touch with the elementary school representatives and other students about how to divide up the main and alternate positions among the students.



--Fr. Mattig-Krone noted that Berlin school law now stipulates that one of the teacher representatives should be from Hort or Mittelhof ("pädagogisches Personal aus der ergänzenden Förderung und Betreuung oder der schulbezogenen Jugendsozialarbeit"). Fr. Heyelmann noted that she spoke with Senate officials last year about that issue, since at JFKS it would mean an imbalance in the representation of ES and HS. She was informed that in the case of JFKS, having Hort and Mittelhof represented as permanent guests is acceptable.

--It was discussed whether to require a vote to reauthorize the bylaws/Geschäftsordnung each year. There was unanimous support for not requiring a yearly reauthorization. There was consensus that it is important to review the bylaws regularly, but they should stay in effect until actively changed. Hr. Bartz noted that NEASC requires regular review of all such documents, so that going forward they will be reviewed each year.

Hr. Bartz will incorporate the discussed changes into the JFKS Bylaws. The document will be distributed before the next meeting so that a vote to approve them can be held.

5. Request to change Electronic Media Device Policy / Antrag auf Änderung EMD Policy

Hr. Witte reported that some teachers are quite unhappy with the more permissive rules regarding cell phones and other electronic media devices that the SK passed in April. These were also discussed at the SK meeting in June, and the arguments remain largely the same.

The teachers are divided. Some support the more permissive rules. Others say they have noticed a dramatic increase in the use of mobile phones on campus by all members of the community: teachers, students, parents and staff. Mr. Witte noted that if students are forbidden from using their phones, teachers also need to be better role models.

Students argued that 11th and 12th graders should be given a bit more time to demonstrate that they can handle the new rules.

It was noted that the proposed rules distributed before the meeting were incomplete, referring to the student handbook for specifics. The student handbook has not been updated with the rules adopted by the SK in April.

It was proposed that a subcommittee meet to further discuss the issues.

Hr. Witte withdrew his motion.



6. Information on the status of Ganzttag / Information zum Stand Ganzttag

Hr. Bartz reported that at the meeting in June it was agreed that JFKS can have until February to put together its proposal for all-day status, whether partial or compulsory. Until then, the school continues to receive funding as if it were a compulsory all-day school. At the June meeting, the Senate authorities again said that they may be able to approve variations from the official rules for a compulsory all-day school. Hr. Erlbaum asked for such a reassurance in writing. Hr. Bartz said he did not think such a request would be productive at this stage.

7. Miscellaneous / Verschiedenes

--**Administration hiring update:** Hr. Bartz reported that the position for the elementary school German assistant principal will be advertised soon. The position of the elementary school German principal is still blocked by legal proceedings and cannot yet be advertised.

The Senate authorities have said Hr. Bartz can remain as the permanent high school German principal, pending confirmation from the Educational Directorate at its October 10 meeting.

Members asked for clarification about why the school conference would not be consulted first, before sending the recommendation to the ED for a final vote. Hr. Bartz answered that because it is a special appointment by the superintendent, he is the only candidate. Therefore, the school conference's usual role, which is to recommend a preferred candidate from among several applicants, doesn't come into play. The ED is still involved because JFKS school law requires the ED to approve the hiring of all faculty and administrators. SK members asked for a clearer explanation for why the SK is not involved, even if there is only one candidate. Hr. Bartz said he would look into it. Fr. Mattig-Krone agreed that it would be best practice to include the SK in the process.

Fr. Evers emphasized that the lack of German administrators at the elementary school is unsustainable. It was discussed whether to invite Fr. Orgis to answer questions about the situation at the next meeting. Hr. Bartz emphasized that Fr. Orgis is doing all she can to solve the issues, but she is blocked by the legal situation.

--**Technology update:** Hr. Witte raised the fact that this week his classroom had no internet, no SpeedBox and the copiers were out of toner, so could not be used. Teachers and students emphasized that the current state of technology support is making it difficult for teachers to do their jobs. Problems with student email accounts means they cannot access important information.



Hr. Bartz said he is aware of the issues. He agrees that it is a huge problem at the school. There is a fast internet connection coming into the school, but it is not configured properly to reach all classrooms. Toner has been ordered, so that the copiers should be working again very soon. There is a meeting planned on 4 October to address some of the issues.

Hr. Erlbaum noted that the Verein can help pay for equipment.

Hr. Bartz said there is still 171,000 euros in funding from the Digitalpakt. Departments should make their requests via the department heads and Fr. Borschel (not via the technology department).

--**Bathrooms:** Fr. Moser asked when the 2nd floor boys bathroom will be reopened. Students agreed this is an urgent problem. Hr. Bartz will ask the Hausmeister to address the issue.

--Because of time constraints, remaining topics were moved to the agenda for the next meeting in November: Introduction of SK members; Code of Conduct update; Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA) policies; policies on early dismissal due to heat; Proficiency letters for students in diploma track; and reports from Food, Building, Finance and JEDI/special needs committees

The meeting adjourned at 17:30.

Minutes submitted by Gretchen Vogel