

**Meeting minutes  
for the School Conference Meeting  
on 8 October at 15:30 in W125**

In attendance:

Administration: Herr Bartz, Ms. Kennedy-Salchow  
Teacher Representatives: Ms. Moser, Mr. Kelly, Ms. Martin, Frau Gothe  
Parent Representatives: Mr. L. Bespolka, Ms. Vogel, Herr Kölling-Orb, Herr Graeff, Mr. Sullivan  
Student Representatives: Frau Lauterbach, Frau von zur Gathen, Herr Striegel, Mr. Simanowitz,  
Mr. N. Bespolka, Mr. K. Casper  
Hort Guests: Frau Heyelmann, Ms. Truss

*Voting members: 14 voting members present*

### **1. Approval of Agenda**

*The agenda was approved by unanimous vote.*

### **2. Approval of Minutes from 18 June 2025**

*The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.*

### **3. School Conference Norms**

Herr Bartz presented the expected norms for School Conference members:

- Be respectful and mindful of others' perspectives and opinions.
- Be engaged.
- Make mistakes – there is no single right answer.
- Ask questions.
- It is OK to experience strong emotions.
- Our beliefs come from our experiences.
- Our stories are our own.
- We agree to avoid judgement and discriminatory language.

Herr Bartz noted that in general the discussions in School Conference meetings are strictly confidential, especially any personal information.

Herr Bartz distributed JFKS visitor passes to the parent representatives.

### **4. Administration Goals for 2025/26**

Ms. Kennedy-Salchow reported that one of the administration's main goals is to "pepper" everything they do with joy, which encourages a sense of belonging. There has been an emphasis on cultivating a sense of humor and preparing happy surprises for teachers and staff.

Herr Bartz and Ms. Kennedy-Salchow presented the following topics as further goals:

### **Bilingual Program**

- All teachers, regardless of subject, teach language.
- Teachers are doing extra training in strategies for teaching different language levels in the same class.
- The administration will continue communication with the entire community about the bilingual program changes and the goals that motivate the changes.

In the elementary school, teachers will use artificial intelligence tools to support their bilingual teaching.

Although they are increasingly taught together, "partner tongue" and "mother tongue" categories are still part of a student's record in the elementary school, and students are assessed differently depending on their language level.

The high school is preparing to restructure bilingual instruction for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2026/2027 school year. That is when the current 6th-grade classes, which have already experienced the new language program in elementary school, will join the high school. The plan is to adopt the elementary school's approach and teach classes together in all subjects, including German and English. As in the ES, newcomers will have intensive German classes, with the goal of enabling them to participate in German-language instruction as quickly as possible. A working group is currently consulting with the Senate about how differences in proficiency levels will be taken into account in grading.

### **Student Support**

- The administration aims to better align the school's processes for establishing accommodation plans.
- Professional development opportunities will focus on supporting students with accommodation plans.
- The school has had success using "response to intervention" (RTI) programs, which aim to identify specific things that can help students, including those who are struggling but don't have a specific special needs diagnosis. In many cases, things like a seat near the front of the class or extra homework monitoring have helped students who had been getting 4s and 5s to improve to 3s and even 2s. The school hopes to expand this approach.
- The school aims to increase its data collection and analysis and use that both for RTI programs and to revise support programs including Math Lab and Reading Lab.
- These measures will also be used to help tailor better approaches for gifted students.

-- Overall, the aim is also to promote and improve the feeling of belonging and the learning climate and atmosphere in the classrooms and among the students. This also includes aligning responses to racism, bullying and other interpersonal conflicts.

### **Security**

This includes both on-campus security and the security of data and systems.

The electronic locks, which have been stored in the basement for more than three years, are to be installed soon. They allow for differentiated control of access, and it is possible to track who unlocked or locked which doors at specific times.

Herr Bartz noted that the school is working on improving relationships with security staff and encouraging them to be more proactive. This has been hampered by high turnover. He noted that the school may reduce payments to the security firm if problems continue. Parents and teachers asked whether it would be possible for the school to employ security personnel directly, which might help solve some of the issues. Herr Bartz says that it isn't possible for a Berlin public school to directly employ security personnel and also that trust fund money can only be used for physical improvements, not personnel costs.

Together with the State Criminal Police Office (LKA) and the SIBUZ (Berlin School Security and Crisis Management Center), the school is working on another active shooter training exercise. Initially, only teachers and staff will participate. The last school-wide active shooter drill took place in 2017, at that time with the participation of students (similar to a fire drill) and with the cooperation of the police and the embassy. Currently, such drills involving students are not permitted in regular Berlin schools, but an exception may be made for the JFKS, which the administration generally welcomes. An unintentional false alarm a few years ago showed that the established procedures were generally followed.

Frau Heyelmann noted that the after-school care program needs to be included in the security concept, which is not currently the case. The school is an open all-day school, and security must also be ensured on the after-school care campus.

### **5. Student support: Special Needs**

Herr Kölling-Orb presented a motion to establish a working group that would set up a "special needs department" on the same level as other faculty departments at the school. This would mean that special needs department meetings would be held regularly and would make it easier to establish school-wide policies that are clearer for teachers, staff, and families. Other primary schools in Berlin have done this, and it has proved successful.

Frau Albanese has already been in contact with Frau Senkel and Mr. Getschow about the idea, but due to time constraints, it was not possible to send the draft motion to SK members ahead of the meeting.

SK members agreed that a formal proposal should be developed for the next SK meeting. The school administration will invite all staff and teachers involved with the topic of Special Needs/Special Education, as well as the members of the Special Needs Committee.

The school conference adopted the proposed motion with amended wording: "The school administration will invite the special needs staff from the elementary school and high school as well as members of the Special Needs Committee to a meeting with the aim of submitting a coordinated draft resolution to the school conference meeting on December 10, 2025, with the objective of establishing a 'Special Educational Needs' department."

*The resolution was adopted unanimously.*

## **6. Food Committee**

Parents noted that, according to Berlin school law, the school conference is responsible for establishing a food committee. All interested parents, students, or teachers can be members of this committee; membership in another committee is not a prerequisite, but the members must be confirmed by the school conference.

Herr Bartz notes that the contract with the caterer runs for five more years.

Parents would like to make the wider parent community aware of the chance to serve on the food committee in the next parent bulletin. That would allow the members to be finalized at the school conference meeting in December. The student representatives suggest that primarily student representatives from the primary school should be on the committee, as this is mainly a primary school issue.

Ms. Kennedy-Salchow will speak to Frau Senkel about taking over leadership of the committee.

## **7. Election of a representative to the Educational Directorate**

*Mr. L. Bespolka was unanimously elected to serve as the School Conference liaison to the ED.*

## **8. Miscellaneous**

### Electronic Media Device Policy:

Teachers suggest amending the electronic media device policy to prohibit the use of mobile phones in the high school library during the lunch period. Many students are using their phones without actually working on school-related topics. This is disruptive, and many students have been disrespectful of the librarians when they are reminded of the rules. Students are urged to encourage everyone to follow and respect the rules.

### Invitation of Student and Parent Representatives to Department Meetings:

The students note that they often do not receive invitations to the department meetings. The parents agree that this is an ongoing problem. Herr Bartz recommends that representatives contact the department heads directly and ask to be added to the invitation list.

### Budget:

Ms. Martin asks if there will be any further "supplementary funding" after the budget cuts ordered by the Senate in the spring. Herr Bartz says it is unlikely that any of the funding will be restored. Ms. Martin asks whether the SK Finance Committee could have an influence on this situation, including protesting against the cuts. Herr Bartz notes that the role of the Finance Committee is usually to review the school budget once a year. Its decision-making power is very limited. SK members note that lobbying for more funding is a different type of work than reviewing budget documents.

It is suggested that an overview of the committees (including finance and building committees) and their roles be presented at the next SK meeting so they can be formally established.

#### Construction Update:

Herr Bartz reports that the financing is still pending and there are no other developments toward a concrete timeline.

#### WiFi:

Students and teachers report that many school devices do not connect to the WiFi, which is a significant problem for students taking high-stakes tests like the PSAT or SAT. The issue seems to be that the wireless upgrade is not compatible with some of the older devices. New devices should be used when students are taking high-stakes tests.

#### Proposal from parent representatives for a school-wide survey:

Herr Kölling-Orb noted that a draft for a school-wide survey was received by some School Conference members shortly before the meeting. The survey aims to gather information on important topics for the school community.

Herr Bartz pointed out that Berlin school law applies to all surveys that involve students and staff (School Evaluation Program, Section 9, Paragraph 2 of the Berlin School Law). Students and teachers must be involved in the development of the survey, and the Student Council and the General Conference must discuss it and submit a final, agreed-upon draft to the School Conference for approval. Frau Althoff, who is responsible for coordinating the evaluation program, must be involved in any survey development. The objectives and content of all school-wide surveys should be aligned with the priorities of school development. Currently the main priority topic is the introduction of the new bilingual concept.

The administration has plans to conduct a standardized survey from the State of Berlin on the topic of "school climate" in the near future, with certain questions and topics adapted for JFKS needs.

Herr Bartz also stated that the "Survey Monkey" tool is not appropriate for school-wide surveys.

The school administration will contact the survey initiators to discuss how their ideas can be incorporated into the ongoing work on the evaluation concept.

The members of the School Conference asked the administration to provide a copy of the survey concept to be appended to these minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Minutes (German) submitted by Holger Kölling-Orb, translation by Gretchen Vogel