

## Minutes from the European School Copenhagen School Board Meeting

Date: 8 December 2016  
Time: 16.30-18.00 hrs (4:30m –6pm)  
Venue: 3.DK class room at ESCPH, Støberigade 1, 2nd Floor  
Members: Jonas Christoffersen, Poul Toftdahl, Caroline Warner,  
Henriette Vollmers-Hansen, Joel Samaha, Rasmus  
Hornecker, Anette Holst, Hanne Schmidt  
Excuses: Hans Bryuninckx  
Minutes: Stine Hvitved Leather

### Minutes:

There was a brief round of introductions for Stine Hvitved Leather, who started working at ESCPH on 1 November 2016.

#### 1. Approval of the agenda

##### 1.1. Annex – Agenda Board Meeting 08.12.2016 – Updated

Henriette requested that a few additional points be covered during the meeting:

- Continuation of swimming lessons
- After school club for 4th graders – to be discussed under item 3, Establishment of KKFO
- More singing at the school

*After this request was made, the agenda was approved.*

#### 2. Approval of minutes from board meeting on 26.09.2016

##### 2.1. Annex – ESCPH and Campus Board Meeting 26.09.2016

It was noted that the minutes from the ESCPH Board and the Campus Board meeting were written partly in Danish and partly in English.

*The minutes were then approved.*

#### 3. The school year 2016/2017 (information)

##### - Relocation to temporary buildings

Hanne Schmidt informed the Board that in August 2017, the school will be relocating to temporary school pavilions where the school was located before it moved to Skolen i Sydhavnen (Teglholmegade).



The Municipality of Copenhagen will organise the move and there will be a meeting with BUF at the beginning of January to discuss practicalities and requirements, including which facilities will be shared with Skolen i Sydhavnen (the Gym). Pia Ribberholt, teacher, will be invited to the meeting as employee Environment, Health and Safety representative.

Concerns were expressed regarding the playground/outdoor facilities for the children and whether swimming classes would still be available in the new location. It was also suggested that we use the move as an opportunity to improve the class room set-up.

***It was decided that a list of concerns, issues and suggestions would be collated and raised at the meeting with BUF.***

***It was agreed that the management of the school would provide regular updates about the move to the Parents Council.***

**- Establishment of KKFO (After School Care) for the European School**

Hanne Schmidt informed the Board that the process to establish a KKFO for the school is now well underway. The school is currently advertising for a Head of the new KKFO to start 1 March and interviews are being held in January. The KKFO is expected to open on 1 April and the pedagogues currently affiliated with ESCPH will move to the new KKFO. It was mentioned that until we move to our new location, we will need to share and cooperate closely with the KKFO in Skolen I Sydhavnen.

It was raised whether the children in the coming Nursery classes would be able to start KKFO already in May, but there simply is not enough room in the KKFO then. However, this may be possible in the years to come. It was mentioned that it would be easier to ensure that ESCPH children are cared for by ESCPH KKFO staff during the holidays, if the school receives a heads-up about the children's vacation plans.

Concern was expressed over the limited availability of After School Club spaces at Støberigade 3 and other Club options for the 4<sup>th</sup> graders next year.

***It was decided that the school's management would try to speak with the Municipality about the Club issue again and inform the Parents Council of the outcome.***

**- Application for a shorter school year**

Hanne Schmidt explained that many families struggle with the long school year as they have family abroad. This affects absentee levels and it is hard to enforce vacation during official holidays given their special situation. The long school year can also be a problem when recruiting international teachers as they may not be able to start a new job in Copenhagen as early as 1 August. Other European Schools have 180 school days a year, whereas Denmark has 200 school days. Therefore, ESCPH has applied for a 190-day school year, which would give the school two extra weeks of holiday. The

plan is to extend the summer holiday by one week and extend either Easter or Christmas by a week, depending on how the holidays fall each year. KKFO would be open during the extra holidays for pupils who need care.

The shorter school year has some impact on the length of the school days, especially in the older classes, but is manageable with a 190-day school year.

The application is currently being processed by the Municipality and they are looking favourably upon the situation.

- **Admissions process and criteria**

o **3.1. Annex – Admission to European School Copenhagen**

A document has been developed by the Municipality of Copenhagen to provide greater clarity regarding the Admissions Process and Criteria for the school. The criteria remain the same as previously, as these have been set by the politicians, but there is now a reference to an Admissions Board (which consists of Hanne Schmidt, Anette Holst and a person from the Municipality) and the admissions process is explained step by step.

Parents at the school have expressed concern that there is no 'siblings guarantee' at the school, and a group of parents have therefore sent a petition to change this to the City of Copenhagen's Department of Children and Youth. In the response from the City of Copenhagen, it was explained that the criteria cannot be changed for admission to the school in 2017/18 but a review will be undertaken to examine whether new criteria are required after that.

It was mentioned at the meeting that the 'siblings issue' has not yet presented a problem, but there is no guarantee that it is not going to be an issue in the future and that it might reduce applications from the intended target users of the school as other schools offer a 'siblings guarantee'.

Jonas Christoffersen expressed concerns about lack of clarity in the document and suggested that we add at the top of the document that the admission process is set by the Municipality based on political criteria. He also suggested that it would make more sense to explain the application process before the criteria under Step 1.

***It was agreed that Jonas Christoffersen would review the document so that we can ask the Municipality to consider improving the wording.***

- **Staff wellbeing survey**

o **3.2. Annex – Staff Wellbeing Survey Results**

Anette Holst explained that at the last meeting there was a discussion about staff leaving the school and in response the school has undertaken a mini survey about staff wellbeing.

Anette said she was happy to read the feedback regarding the working environment at the school and the relationship between management and teachers, but there were also things that could be better.

The survey results were discussed at the MED meeting on 6 December and the following areas were highlighted for improvement:

- Noise and a lack of preparation space and meeting rooms: This is hard to improve right now but will be addressed when we move to our new building.
- Teacher training: There is a need for a procedure to clarify what kind of training the teachers can apply for, and especially training available to the teachers in the English section.
- Lack of privacy/space: It was mentioned that some teachers find it hard to get space for themselves because they are interrupted by the parents.
- 30 min. lessons are not ideal and the school will try to reduce these in the next school year.

It was discussed how the teachers in the Danish and English section have different expectations and limits when it comes to the children's behaviour and there is a need to find a good balance.

***The school will be working to address the issues raised in the Staff Wellbeing Survey.***

#### **4. ESCPH and SAG shared vision statement (decision to submit to the Campus Board for approval)**

- Annex – Shared Vision

Anette Holst explained that the long vision statement was created during a common board meeting, and the shorter version was the product of subsequent deliberations by the management of the schools. It was emphasised that there must be a shared vision statement for all the schools but ESCPH can also develop its own vision and values.

It was raised that the sentence 'we foster the highest academic standards and a passion for life' has a very similar meaning to 'we create the future voices of the world' and one of them might suffice. It was also mentioned that ESCPH is a school that places great emphasis on science, but it was felt that this is captured in the sentence 'highest academic standards'. It was suggested that the word 'mind set' should be written 'mindset'.

***It was decided to put forward the School Board's preference for the short vision statement to the Campus Board.***

#### **5. Process for development of ESCPH values statement (decision)**

Hanne Schmidt explained that draft values were developed during the school's infancy but there is now a need for these to be taken to the next level. The plan is to start the process to develop the values in the staff groups, then put the

values forward to the Parents Council for input, and then to the Board, before a final presentation at a strategic meeting in May.

***It was decided that an update on the development of ESCPH values would be provided at the next Board meeting on 30 March 2017.***

## **6. Collaboration between school and parents – the role of the Parents Council (decision)**

- Annex – Parents Council

Anette Holst explained that there has been some discussion about the role of the Parents Council in recent months and there was a need to be clear and capture the role of the Parents Council on paper.

The Parents Council document explains that the role of the Parents Council is mostly to facilitate dialogue between the school and the parents and not to discuss specific or person-related complaints. However, it is also clear that the Parents Council would like a closer connection and better understanding of the work of the Board, and one way of ensuring this is by inviting the Board's parent representatives to the Parents Council meetings.

Henriette asked when the parent reps on the Board are up for election and Anette explained that parent reps are on the Board for four years and the next election is one and a half years from now.

***The role of the Parents Council document was approved by the Board.***

***It was agreed that the minutes, agenda and annexes (unless confidential) can be shared with the Parents Council.***

***It was also agreed that in future, if the Board approves a document, the Parents Council can still make comments, and if they have comments, then Jonas Christoffersen, as Chairman of the Board, is empowered to approve the final version or bring the comments to the next Board meeting.***

## **7. Homework policy (decision)**

- Annex - Homework Policy

Joel Samaha explained that the Homework Policy will help align the practices of the teachers and inform new teachers and parents what is expected of them. The Policy should ensure that the children develop an understanding of the need to do homework and provide a clear progression of expectations leading into Secondary. The policy is also flexible enough that the teachers can use some discretion in their application of the policy.

It was mentioned that the policy should be uploaded to the school website to make it clear what is expected of pupils, parents and teachers.

The question was raised as to whether the policy should be accompanied by a homework café, but it was explained that the children should only be assigned

homework that they can do by themselves. If the children need help, they can speak to their teachers about it.

***It was decided that the Policy should go back to the teachers for a final review, then to the Parents Council and finally to Jonas Christoffersen for sign off.***

## **8. Reading Policy (decision)**

- Annex - Reading Policy

Rasmus Hornecker explained that the Reading Policy is an internal policy aimed at the teachers and that a reading brochure is being developed for the parents, in both Danish and English. This brochure will contain information about the expectation of parents and what the parents can expect from the teachers.

It was suggested that the Reading Policy be published on our website and given to new teachers when they start working at ESCPH.

***The Reading Policy was approved by the Board.***

It was also discussed whether there should be a Teaching Policy for the parents about behavioural expectations for the children. It was mentioned that this goes back to staff wellbeing and the development of common values for the school, and it was suggested that at some point the management / Board will need set the direction on this.

## **9. AOB**

***It was agreed that the final email before the Board meeting should include the agenda and all the annexes to avoid confusion about the required documents for the meetings.***

Concern was expressed as to whether swimming lessons would continue when the school moves to a new location. Swimming classes are decided by the Municipality and Hanne is investigating whether these will continue next year.

It was requested that singing be emphasised more strongly at the school, e.g. with daily morning song. Currently the school gets together for morning song once a week. Instruction in musical instruments was also requested but this is provided through Copenhagen Music School and there are currently no facilities to offer that in the school.

Henriette Vollmers-Hansen asked if the parent reps are involved in the hiring of new staff and Hanne Schmidt confirmed that this was the case when recruiting teachers.

## Summary of decisions and further actions

Agenda Item	Decision / Further Action
1. Approve Agenda	<i>The agenda was approved.</i>
2. Approve Minutes	<i>The minutes were approved.</i>
3. - Relocation to temporary buildings	<i>It was decided that a list of concerns, issues and suggestions would be collated and raised at the meeting with BUF.</i>  <i>It was agreed that the management of the school would provide regular updates about the move to the Parents Council.</i>
3. - Establishment of KKFO	<i>It was decided that the school's management would try to speak with the Municipality about the Club issue again and inform the Parents Council of the outcome.</i>
3. - Admission Process and Criteria	<i>It was agreed that Jonas Christoffersen would review the document so that we can ask the Municipality to consider improving the wording.</i>
3. - Staff Wellbeing Survey Results	<i>The school will be working to address the issues raised in the Staff Wellbeing Survey.</i>
4. Shared Vision	<i>It was decided to put forward the School Board's preference for the short vision statement to the Campus Board.</i>
5. Development of ESCPH Values	<i>It was decided that an update on the development of ESCPH values would be provided at the next Board meeting on 30 March 2017.</i>
6. Parents Council	<i>The role of the Parents Council document was approved by the Board.</i>  <i>It was agreed that the minutes, agenda and annexes (unless confidential) can be shared with the Parents Council.</i>  <i>It was also agreed that in future, if the Board approves a document, the Parents Council can still make comments, and if they have comments, then Jonas Christoffersen, as Chairman of the Board, is empowered to approve the final version or bring the comments to the next Board meeting.</i>
7. Homework Policy	<i>It was decided that the Policy should go back to the teachers for a final review, then to the Parents Council and finally to Jonas Christoffersen for sign off.</i>
8. Reading Policy	<i>The Reading Policy was approved by the Board.</i>
9. AOB	<i>It was agreed that the final email before the Board meeting should include the agenda and all the annexes to avoid confusion about the required documents for the meetings.</i>