

From: Association des Parents (woluweparents.org)

Date: Mon, 6 Apr 2020, 11:43

Subject: APEEE: Important information on how the NATO temporary school will be filled

Dear Parents

On Wednesday, 25 March 2020, there was a meeting of the Group de Suivi - which is the forum chaired by the Secretary General that seeks to address the issues of schooling capacity in Brussels, where also the Headmasters, teachers representatives and the APEEE presidents are present. At the meeting we were informed of the solution that is being developed by the Secretary General with the Schools Directors to fill the new temporary school on the ex-NATO site in Evere.

As you most probably remember from our previous correspondence, this temporary school is being constructed to reduce the chronic overcrowding at the existing Brussels schools, and is a stop-gap measure until the permanent 5th European school is completed, also on the ex-NATO site (which will not be delivered any time soon, thus the necessity of having a temporary solution).

The plan foresees the temporary school being an annexe of EEB2, i.e. part of our school. It will be used to host some maternelle and primary classes from Woluwe, as well as new enrolments. This will entail some pupils being moved from Woluwe to the Evere site. However as it is to be part of EEB2, this would not technically count as transferring from one school to another in the view of Mr Marchegianno, the Secretary General. Overcrowding in our Secondary school can then be relieved by moving some Secondary classes into the Primary building. Mr Marchegianno considers this solution necessary in order to ensure the new site is filled rapidly - so that overcrowding can be reduced at all of the 4 Brussels schools. Pupils at Evere will return to EEB2 at the latest for their secondary education, if not earlier.

At the same time, the Berkendael site will be an annex of EEB1 to serve as a Maternelle and Primary school in a similar capacity. These moves will result in EEB1 and EEB2 becoming larger schools, with populations of over 4,000 pupils.

We understand that pupils moved to Evere will be by year level, not section, and there will be changes to the language sections at Berkendael, which may result in a small section coming to EEB2. Other than that we have no further details. When the APEEE presidents raised alternatives to this plan the Secretary General stated that no other scenarios were under consideration, hence we can conclude that this is the plan that will be presented for the approval of the Board of Governors in its April meeting. Options such as ensuring that pupils who start at Evere would move on to the 5th school for Secondary are now off the table because the delays by the Belgium authorities mean it will not be in place in time (it is still not approved. Despite having been requested for a 2017 it is unlikely to be available before 2028).

The APEEE has not been consulted on this plan or given any agreement to it, and was only informed of it in the above meeting. Our expectation was that the burden for filling the Evere site would be shared across schools with an emphasis on prioritising new enrolments to avoid transferring existing pupils. Mr Marchegiano however does not believe that this will lead to sufficient pupil numbers quickly enough.

If the proposed plan proceeds according to the timetable, the new school will open in September 2021 and thereafter EEB2 will operate on two sites - Woluwe and Evere. As well as constructing the new school, we foresee there will need to be changes undertaken at Woluwe, to ensure EEB2 can host a much enlarged pupil population, including converting freed-up Primary facilities for Secondary pupils, building more science labs for the enlarged Secondary and hiring extra teachers and support staff across Primary and Secondary. Our view is that without these changes the operation may also put the proper functioning of the then enlarged Secondary school at risk.

We have been informed that the new temporary school will offer a better range of facilities than currently available at EEB2, with larger more modern classrooms and dedicated sports facilities. We have been promised by the Secretary General a complete set of requirements for the site, so we can see both what is entailed and verify what is required from a pedagogical and APEEE Services perspective.

We understand that parents, in particular parents with pupils in Primary will want to know how they will be impacted and will want to express their views and concerns. As APEEE, we are committed to closely follow-up the situation and to ensure that the needs of the parents and pupils are taken into consideration. We have therefore set up a taskforce for this. You can contact the relevant APEEE Board members through sending an email to secretariat.apeee@woluweparents.org with the subject heading 'Evere'.

In the meantime, we have been informed by Mrs Malik that the Secretary-General is still seeking legal advice on this proposal. We have no information at this point as to either the scope or impact of such legal assessment. We also have not yet been informed as to the possible consequences of such assessment to the solution that will be put forward for decision in the next Board of Governors meeting. Nevertheless, as events appear to be moving fast, we feel it appropriate to share with you what we know so far and to be as transparent as possible.

Regards

APEEE Board

Note : This communication has been mailed to all parents. No need to forward it.