

Minutes of the participation council (MR) meeting of Thursday 14 January 2021

Online due to coronavirus pandemic

Present: Maarten van Gulik, Freek Groeneweg, Jelle Meens, Philip Westra, Marthe Poot, Inger de Wit, Sara van der Woude, Eva Lindner, Perry Nagelkerken, Jurrien Cremers, Nisa Özen, Piet de Zeeuw, Eveline Tan and Cynthia Christiani

Executive Board: Rob Fens and Matthijs Ruitenbergh

Absent with notice: Marc Engels

Absent without notice: Esther Oosten

	Participation council (MR) meeting	19:30
1.	Opening The meeting is called to order at 19.30.	
2.	Approval of the agenda The agenda is approved unchanged.	
3.	Minutes and list of decisions, MR meeting of 23 November 2020 Decision: The minutes of the MR meeting of 23 November 2020, with the list of decisions, are approved and adopted.	
4.	2020/2021 working groups: Elections/ Staff/ Finances & IT / MR 2.0 / Parent involvement / Quality of teaching The elections and MR 2.0 working groups make various announcements.	
5.	Final proposal for expenditure of strike money from the school strikes on 30&31 January 2020 (Wolfert Lyceum) Wolfert Lyceum has not yet drafted a proposal for expenditure of the strike money.	
6.	Closure of schools due to coronavirus – exam weeks and exam candidates Wolfert Bilingual: At Wolfert Bilingual, students in their final exam year will resume lessons on site on Monday 18 January. They have had school exams up to now. The students will be spread over various classrooms to ensure that they can stay 1.5 metres apart. Teachers will thus teach on site, but some of the students will attend class online, in other classrooms. The students are glad that they can return to school.	

In the junior forms, gym and drama lessons were cancelled in the first two weeks of the lockdown, because the school was still hoping that the lockdown wouldn't be prolonged.

Wolfert College:

The government has made it clear that students in their final exam year should be taught on site. The school has acted accordingly, though some members of staff have voiced their concerns. They feel that teaching on site conflicts with the principle of a lockdown, while they have little idea of how students behave outside school. Staff members are also anxious about the effects of the new coronavirus variant.

The other schools underscore staff members' concerns about the requirement to teach on site. They are also concerned that this is actually a form of online teaching, since students must stay 1.5 metres apart.

Wolfert Dalton:

Before the Christmas holidays, the school immediately switched to online teaching, which proceeded smoothly. We have now adapted the timetable. Before the Christmas holidays, we were still working with the normal timetable. Some colleagues are teaching from home, due to their personal situation, and we are facilitating them.

We have asked the student council how we can best deal with the lockdown and the students feel that we are taking their recommendations on board.

Wolfert Lansing:

Students in their final exam year are all being taught on site. Third-year students are receiving practical lessons on site, and the rest online. We allow no more than 14 students to a classroom, to ensure that they can stay 1.5 metres apart. Teachers not giving lessons or who prefer to work on site have been asked to supervise.

Wolfert RISS:

Our exam year students (grade 10 & grade 12) are now having an exam week. As of next week, grade 12 students will be attending school in the mornings. Unfortunately, grade 10 students cannot attend school. The school is having great difficulty drafting the timetable, due in part to the many teachers that work part-time.

The MR questions the situation at the RISS, because the situation as sketched above is not in accordance with the government's requirement to teach students in their final exam year on site. This will be discussed further in the consultation round.

Wolfert Lyceum:

Since this week, students in their final exam year have been taught online in the mornings, and have been attending school in the afternoon for crash courses in

	<p>specific subjects (by way of preparation for the school exams that start next week). In the first weeks of the lockdown, they attended school as normal. We had to adjust to meet the requirement for students to stay 1.5 metres apart. We're not yet sure how things will pan out after the school exams. Our other students are all being taught online.</p> <p>Larger rooms will be made available for the school exams. Everything is well organised, and everyone is trying to stay 1.5 metres apart.</p> <p>Questions (MR): The number of lessons has been greatly reduced, and this is giving cause for concern. This gives rise to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What's the situation with regard to vulnerable students? How is their situation being monitored? - How are the schools charting learning deficits? And what policies are being put in place to catch up, where necessary? <p>Reply (central management team): Students who don't have a quiet place to work at home, or who benefit in other ways from working at school, may come and work at school. In this way, the school facilitates a quiet workplace for students who don't have one at home. The schools have each applied for grants to enable them to provide additional support. Counsellors are on call every day to help mentors immediately tackle any problems that may arise, with the assistance of, for example, the school attendance officer.</p> <p>Lesson times have been cut to ensure that students don't spend too much time staring at their computer screens. Where possible, the syllabus will be adapted accordingly.</p>	
7.	MR Evaluation	
8.	MR Annual report	
9.	<p>Translation of the minutes</p> <p>We haven't been able to find a less expensive alternative, so the MR has decided to have a summary of the minutes translated into English. The summary will be based on the decisions reached in the meeting, giving the reader an indication of the considerations underpinning them. Parts relating to important matters – to the coronavirus pandemic for example – will be translated in full.</p>	
10.	Preparatory discussions for the consultation round	
11.	Any other business	
	Consultation round	20:30

12.	Feedback from the preparatory discussions	
13.	<p>Announcements by the central management team</p> <p>Situation in relation to the coronavirus pandemic The announcement that students in their final exam year had to be taught on site, but at 1.5 metres' distance from each other, caught us completely off guard. Of course, we are very pleased that these students may attend school, but the additional requirement that they stay 1.5 metres apart seriously complicates matters. Schools have now opted to put students in several classrooms, with the teacher providing instruction in one classroom. The students in the other classrooms receive instruction online, and the teacher goes from classroom to classroom to answer any questions. The government doesn't seem to realise just how difficult it is for schools to carry out this measure. What's more, both teachers and students are concerned about their safety, particularly in view of the emergence of mutations of the virus. We are trying to open the school as safely as possible for everyone.</p> <p>Another concern is that two of our schools are located in the municipality of Lansingerland. We have asked the municipal authorities and the municipal health service (GGD) whether it's safe to keep these schools open. The alderman responsible indicated that the GGD's advice related to primary schools only, and that secondary schools may stay open for now. We have expressed our concern and surprise at this, given the many contacts between primary school pupils and older students, but have received no further response to date.</p> <p>Question (MR): Could the MR be given an account of plans to tackle learning deficits and to provide for the needs of vulnerable students?</p> <p>Reply (central management team): The schools have all applied for grants to enable additional support for vulnerable students. Many of these grants have been awarded. Eligibility for grants has recently been extended, and rules have been relaxed. This makes it a lot easier for us to access these resources and provide our students with the best possible support.</p> <p>In collaboration with CVO (the governing body of protestant secondary schools in Rotterdam) BOOR is currently applying for an additional grant, for which applications must be submitted on a regional basis. The grant may be spent on every possible form of support.</p> <p>Question (MR): How far have students fallen behind? Do you have any clear idea of the learning deficit?</p> <p>Reply (central management team): The main problem we're now seeing is motivation. Students found it very difficult to get back into a normal routine and, due to the many uncertainties at the</p>	

moment, some exam candidates expect the national exams to be adapted, even though there are no signs that this will be the case. Our greatest challenge has been to get everything back on track. We hope that the results of the second round of school exams will give us a clearer view of our exam candidates' progress.

We also keep a record of our problem students, for example students who have disappeared from the radar, and update the list every week. We are receiving assistance from various agencies, and the school attendance officer is also involved. In this way, we hope to keep close track of our problem students, and immediately give them appropriate support, where necessary.

Question (MR) in relation to RISS:

Grade 10 and grade 12 are exam years, but only grade 12 students are attending class on site. We have the impression that grade 10 students are not attending school but are receiving instruction online. To what extent is this in line with the policy that all students in their final exam year should be taught on site?

Reply (central management team):

This is not what we have been told. We will look into this matter.

Question (MR):

Staff members have voiced their concerns about teaching on site. The central management team recognises these concerns. Can staff members who do not feel safe teaching on site seek alternatives, in consultation with their school management team?

Reply (central management team):

We share these concerns and the situation is different for every member of staff. We will work together to seek the best solution, and no one will be obliged to teach on site if none can be found.

Announcement in relation to the Programme of Testing and Completion (PTA):

We are trying to prepare our exam candidates as best we can, and also to unburden them wherever possible. This is clearly in accordance with the views of the Secondary Education Council (VO-raad). The universities are exerting considerable pressure on schools to submit lists of the marks scored by students applying for courses to which quotas apply. They are making few allowances for the current situation. The Secondary Education Council has discussed this matter at length with the universities, but they won't budge.

For this reason, we have decided to help our students wherever we can. While we want students in their final exam year to start their further education with the best possible grounding, we also want to show our understanding for their current situation.

	<p>The universities are asking for the marks scored in the first two rounds of school exams. We have instructed the exam administrators to disregard for now the marks of students wanting to re-sit a school exam. The schools may all adjust their PTAs, and many have already done so. We will provide the MR with an overview before the next meeting.</p> <p>Question (MR): Have the schools adjusted their PTAs in time for students to benefit? Many schools have already completed the first two rounds of school exams.</p> <p>Reply (central management team): Adjustments have already been made in the PTAs for the second and third round of school exams to cater for students' needs. Schools may make adjustments all year, provided the inspectorate is informed.</p> <p>Comment (MR) on behalf of the students in their final exam year: Students now in their final exam year have been seriously affected by the coronavirus pandemic for the last two school years. We are extremely concerned about this. Grants do not solve everything. We want to share our concerns with the central management team and the MR.</p> <p>These students are, however, happy that an exception has been made for them so that they can attend school.</p> <p>Reply (central management team): We are trying to prepare our exam candidates as thoroughly as possible, and we fully understand these concerns. We have every confidence in your capacities and trust that both students and teachers will do everything they can to make a go of it. But the fact is that we will be in this situation for the foreseeable future and can only wait and see how things unfold.</p> <p>Question (MR): What do you expect the pass rate to be this year?</p> <p>Reply (central management team): It's inconceivable that every student taking their final exams in the Netherlands will be allowed to fail. The education minister will certainly monitor the situation.</p>	
s14.	<p>School holidays</p> <p>Question (Wolfert RISS): Christmas this year falls at the weekend and, given the international nature of the school, this may give rise to problems for students and staff members wanting to spend Christmas with their family abroad. To what extent may RISS depart from the school holiday schedule?</p> <p>Reply (central management team): We take account of this each year. RISS may break up for the Christmas holidays a few days earlier, and deduct these days from the summer holidays.</p>	

	Decision: The MR approves the school holiday schedule.	
15.	<p>Plan of approach to improve the Wolfert Dalton’s performance</p> <p>In the last meeting, the MR requested Wolfert Dalton to fill in the column headed ‘owner’. This has now been done, and the document has been discussed with the MR representative for Wolfert Dalton.</p> <p>Decision: the MR approves Wolfert Dalton’s plan of approach.</p>	
16.	<p>19/20 annual report</p> <p>The 19/20 annual report has been presented to the MR for its information.</p>	
17.	<p>21/22 Teacher training plan</p> <p>Question (MR): The supervision of new trainee teachers at various schools didn’t always go to plan and that’s why this is an important document. Some of the objectives are poorly formulated. For example, one objective is to improve trainee satisfaction levels by providing more frequent supervision. Shouldn’t the objective here be simply to step up supervision? Trainee satisfaction should not be an objective in itself; supervision needs to be properly arranged.</p> <p>Reply (central management team): We agree, these objectives are not formulated precisely enough, but we think that this is what is meant. We’ll pass on your comments. Having said that, our school group’s performance is among the best in the region.</p> <p>Reply (MR): Action 4 objective 1 – Assessment interviews (including panel and individual interviews) with trainees at the various schools. Isn’t it important for assessment interviews to be held in the course of the training? How often are they held and when?</p> <p>Reply (central management team): Interviews are held in the course of the training. And we also work with questionnaires, panel interviews and individual interviews. There are most certainly more occasions on which we assess trainees’ performance. As feedback, we’ll point out that not only the final result but also the process is important.</p> <p>Question (MR) on objective 5: Objective 5 talks about recruiting new colleagues who want to play a role in training future teachers, but doesn’t say how they will be recruited.</p> <p>Reply (central management team): Generally speaking, the school coordinator does this together with the head of school. Much depends on the need for new teacher trainers, given that at most schools there are many colleagues with the requisite training. The system works well.</p>	

	<p>Question (MR): Could we have access to the document relating to the trainee satisfaction survey?</p> <p>Reply (central management team): There's a passage on the survey in the annual report, but we can send the relevant document to the MR if you're interested.</p> <p>Decision: the MR approves the 21/22 teacher training plan.</p>	
18.	<p>RISS Mobile Phone Policy</p> <p>Reply (RISS): There's widespread support for this policy among staff, parents and the student council.</p> <p>The reason for pursuing this policy is that it is in line with the school's international nature. The school also wants to encourage its students to communicate with each other, and not only by telephone with friends from other countries. Cyber bullying has also been a problem.</p> <p>Questions (MR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From the Dutch point of view, this policy is quite radical. How do the students see it? Some members of the MR have their doubts, but point out that it might be in line with the school's identity. - If the idea behind this is to counter misuse of social media, shouldn't the school be taking more action to ensure proper use of social media instead of deciding that it should be banned altogether? - How will this policy be enforced? Why did the school decide to permit mobile phone use on specific days? Doesn't this run counter to the thinking behind the policy? - Is banning students from bringing their mobile phones into school for three days an acceptable penalty, given the fact that some of them have long journeys to and from school? <p>Reply (RISS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students who are banned from bringing their phones into school for three days hand them in to the caretaker on arrival. So they are accessible during their journey to and from school. <p>Comment on text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page 4 senior campus: "students will keep their phones in their bags (...) and switched off during their time at school, especially during lessons". The phrase "especially during lessons" contradicts the first part of the sentence. <p>Conclusion (MR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MR will give the policy the benefit of the doubt, and is curious to see how it will work in practice. Other schools may well learn from this. However, the MR believes it would be sensible to carry out an evaluation of this policy at a certain point, taking on board the views of all RISS students. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MR proposes conducting an evaluation after three months, provided the school has been fully operational, and has had the opportunity to actually implement the policy. <p>Further comments (MR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the school plan to stop students gaming on their laptops? - Account should be taken of students in special circumstances, for whom an exception should be made. In consultation with parents and the school management team, these students should be allowed to keep their phones on their person. <p>Decision: the MR will approve the Mobile Phone Policy provided it is evaluated after three months, with a large group of students taking part in the evaluation. The evaluation may only be conducted if the school has been fully operational, and has thus been able actually to implement the policy.</p>	
	<p>End The meeting ended at 22:23</p>	

Next MR meeting: Tuesday 16 February; school: **online**

	Date of meeting	List of decisions
1	14/01/2021	The minutes of the MR meeting of 23 November are approved and adopted.
2	14/01/2021	The MR approves the school holiday schedule.
3	14/01/2021	The MR approves the Wolfert Dalton's plan of approach
4	14/01/2021	The MR approves the 21/22 teacher training plan
5	14/01/2021	The MR approves the RISS Mobile Phone Policy provided it is evaluated after three months, with a large group of students taking part in the evaluation. The evaluation may only be conducted if the school has been fully operational and has actually implemented the policy.