

**Annual report
2020 – 2021
Participation council
Wolfert van Borselen school group**



Dear Reader,

It gives me great pleasure to present the annual report of the Wolfert van Borselen school group's participation council for the 2020-2021 school year. In publishing this report our chief intention is to give an impression of the participation council's activities in this period.

In my foreword to last year's report, I expressed the wish or rather hope that in the 2020-2021 school year we would be able to return to normal, having put the upheaval caused by the coronavirus pandemic behind us. That proved to be wishful thinking. We got off to a promising – i.e. more or less normal – start. But the pandemic caught up with us again in the autumn. Since then we have been confronted with a series of major and minor surges.

The pandemic has placed a heavy burden not only on society in general but also and possibly more than elsewhere on schools. Each of the parties represented in the participation council (staff, students and teachers) has first-hand experience of the impact of the pandemic. Since that also applies to the majority of our readers, there is no need for me to dwell on this matter here. Suffice it to say that everyone working for the Wolfert van Borselen school group again deserves our compliments for the boundless energy and flexibility they have shown in making the best of a very challenging situation. The participation council is well aware of your efforts.

Fortunately, the participation council is now used to holding meetings online and has been able to focus on a number of other issues apart from the coronavirus pandemic. I should like to highlight two of these issues in this foreword, since they are of particular importance to me, i.e. the first steps towards the possible formation of participation sub-councils and the response to the murder of Samuel Paty.

To achieve the best results, participation should be organised at the lowest possible level within an organisation. For this reason, the various delegations to the participation council have long wanted to explore scope to form sub-councils. Fortunately, this year the central management team was prepared to join us in investigating opportunities to achieve this.

On 16 October 2020 in a school in a suburb of Paris Samuel Paty was the victim of a brutal murder because of a lesson he had taught a few days previously. The murder caused a shockwave in society. Teachers in particular were horrified, and they wondered whether the same could happen to them. The inconceivable had suddenly become reality: you talk to your students about fundamental rights – in this case, freedom of expression – and it costs you your life. We felt the need to give a token of our respect for a murdered colleague, and alert society to the fact that violence may never be used to silence those exercising their right to freedom of expression. In this, the participation council was given the wholehearted support not only of the central management team, but also of the management teams of each of our schools. A letter was sent to parents and students on behalf of us all. We were greatly encouraged by the many positive responses. .

Before concluding this foreword, I would like to raise two final points. First, and once again, I want to turn the spotlight on Wolfert Lansing and Wolfert Dalton. Last year I was able to report a light at the end of the tunnel. Now both schools are finally out of the woods. Far more students enrolled at the two schools this year than the year before. Both schools have worked hard to achieve this. They deserve our congratulations.

Second, I would like to address a few words to our Executive Principal, Rob Fens. Rob will be retiring at the end of this school year and I want to say here how much the participation council appreciated working with him. Our partnership was both highly constructive and enjoyable. His motto – don't think in terms of problems, but in terms of solutions – will be a guiding principle for us in the years to come. We are grateful to Rob for his professionalism, and his capacity never to lose sight of the human dimension. We wish him well in the near and distant future.

I would like to conclude by hoping that you enjoy reading this report as much as we enjoyed carrying out the participation council's work. If you have any questions about our work, please do not hesitate to contact me or one of the other members of the council.

On behalf of the participation council,

Maarten van Gulik
Chair

Introducing the Wolfert van Borselen school group's participation council

The participation council

Under the Participation (Schools) Act every school is required to have a participation council – a consultative body representing the interests of each stakeholder in the school. These stakeholders are as follows:

- students
- students' parents
- teachers
- support staff, e.g. office staff, caretakers and classroom assistants.

Wolfert's participation council comprises members representing the various stakeholders, with votes distributed as follows: four votes for the students, four for the parents and eight for the staff members of the school group.

Rob Fens and Matthijs Ruitenbergh, representing the central management team and the competent authority, also attend the meetings of the participation council as our guests and discussion partners.

The participation council's work

The participation council assesses and responds to the school leadership's policy plans on subjects such as the school plan, the budget, the staff establishment and the school holidays. The council may also initiate policy. In each case, the participation council possesses advisory powers, and in many cases powers of consent, i.e. the school may only introduce certain measures if the participation council has given its consent. The participation council can therefore exert a decisive influence on the school.

N.B. The participation council is responsible for monitoring procedures and general outlines, but not for assessing individual problems or disputes.



[participation council; helps devise school policy]

Members of the participation council

Students:

Eveline Tan, Sara van der Woude, Nisa Özen and Eva Lindner

Parents:

Cynthia Christiani, Marc Engels, Perry Nagelkerken and Esther van Oosten

Staff:

Inger de Wit, Freek Groeneweg, Piet de Zeeuw, Maarten van Gulik, Jurrien Cremers, Philip Westra, Marthe Poot and Jelle Meens

This year, Wolfert Lansing was once again represented in the participation council by a staff member. This means that each school now has at least one representative on the participation council.

At the start of the school year, Eva Lindner took over from Wing Hee Cheng as a representative of Wolfert Lyceum.

An overview of the members and their term on the council is included in the annexe to this report. This was the last year on the participation council for Sara van der Woude, Eva Lindner and Nisa Özen. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their work, their commitment and their contribution in the past few years. We'll miss them, and wish them a bright future.

In accordance with the results of the elections, the following students will join the participation council in the new school year:

- Daniël Simon (Wolfert Lyceum)
- Oemaima El Ouakili (Wolfert Tweetalig)
- Lina Amghar (Wolfert Lyceum)

We would like to welcome these students to the council and look forward to working with them.

The participation council in the 2020-2021 school year

As in previous years, the participation council worked with an annual agenda (see annexe), so that certain subjects were discussed at set times in the year. These included

- the school prospectus and school plans,
- the management statutes
- the job mix,
- staff promotion norms and rules of conduct
- the staff establishment plans,
- the school holidays,
- the annual financial report,
- setting and accounting for the parental contributions.

Two members of the current participation council also hold seats on the joint participation council, which represents all public-authority secondary schools in Rotterdam. They are responsible for communications between the Wolfert participation council and the joint participation council.

Main points

This year, the participation council focused on a number of schools, while government decisions led to some interesting issues. The schools/issues were as follows.

- Wolfert Dalton due to the start of an entirely new management team,
- The future of the school group,
- The appointment of a new executive principal,
- Communications between the participation council and the various schools,
- Exploration of scope for establishing participation sub-councils,
- Adjustment of the examination syllabuses in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic,
- The quality of teaching during the coronavirus pandemic,
- The plan of approach to the National Education Programme (*Nationaal Programma Onderwijs*),
- Cutbacks planned for Wolfert Lyceum.

Each school is discussed in more detail further on in this report.

Activities of the various delegations and working groups

The staff, the students and the parents each have advisory powers or rights of consent on various issues. To ensure recommendations were thoroughly prepared, we again worked with various delegations and mixed working groups. These working groups dealt with various subjects, fleshing them out and discussing them in the participation council.

Students' delegation

The students were represented in the participation council by four delegates. After last year's election, Eva Lindner from Wolfert Lyceum joined us, taking over from Wing Hee Cheng (Wolfert Lyceum).

Our aim is to represent the interests of every student attending a Wolfert school, and we thus take part individually in the various working groups. Subjects we have addressed this year include the examination syllabuses, school holidays, communications, timetables and students' physical and mental health.

This year we also devoted considerable attention to the coronavirus pandemic, focusing on students' physical and mental health and the quality of teaching. We devoted specific attention to the students in the final and pre-final year.

This year, we will be taking our leave of Eva Lindner, Nisa Özen and Sara van der Woude. We hope next year to welcome three new student delegates to strengthen our voice in the participation council.

Contacts: Eveline Tan (Wolfert Bilingual), Nisa Özen (Wolfert Dalton), Sara van der Woude (Wolfert Bilingual) and Eva Lindner (Wolfert Lyceum)

Parents' delegation

This past school year was marked by measures to deal with the coronavirus pandemic – in particular, ensuring high-quality blended teaching and learning, despite the restrictions. We also focused on assistance to students sitting their examinations in these exceptional times, because they too are entitled to a high-quality basis for their further education. We devoted specific attention to vulnerable target groups, discussing ways of identifying and supporting them.

The parents' delegation is aware of considerable differences between the schools in relation to a number of issues, such as cancellation of lessons, use of resources and parent satisfaction. The results of the annual survey of students and staff also show that there is room for improvement in some areas. As the representatives of the parents, we will continue to monitor developments both critically and constructively, and seek a healthy match between quality of teaching and available resources at all Wolfert schools.

In the next school year we will continue to work with the students' and staff delegations and the central management team to support the Wolfert school group and, in particular, to promote the interests of the students at this very special stage in their lives.

Contacts: Cynthia Christiani (Wolfert College), Marc Engels (Wolfert Bilingual), Perry Nagelkerken (Wolfert Lyceum) and Esther van Oosten (Wolfert Lyceum)

Staff delegation

The staff delegation comprises eight members of staff, as of the start of this school year representing each school in the school group. Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic was again the dominant issue in this school year, demanding considerable flexibility from all concerned. There were also concerns among all parties about the quality of teaching, but also about safeguarding a safe working and learning environment.

The staff delegation was aware of the considerable effort made by every school to organise blended forms of teaching. The schools devoted specific attention to the physical and mental health of both students and teachers, and this led some of them to adjust the length of online lessons.

The staff delegation again evaluated the interview cycle at each school and the results showed that with some exceptions this proceeded fairly smoothly. Though any problems could mainly be attributed to the coronavirus pandemic, the staff delegation will again focus on the interview cycle in the next school year.

In the next school year, the staff delegation also plans to work with the parents' and students' delegations to ensure quality of teaching and promote staff members' personal development.

Contacts: Jelle Meens (Wolfert College), Inger de Wit (Wolfert Dalton), Maarten van Gulik (Wolfert Lyceum), Freek Groeneweg (Wolfert Lyceum), Piet de Zeeuw (Wolfert Lansing), Philip Westra (Wolfert RISS), Jurrien Cremers (Wolfert Bilingual), Marthe Poot (Wolfert Bilingual)

Participation council working groups

Participation Council (MT) 2.0 working group

Parents, students and staff are represented in the Participation Council (MT) 2.0 working group. The working group's aim is to explore scope for representation at a lower level within the organisation, i.e. at school level, through participation sub-councils, enabling the participation council to function as effectively as possible. This aim is widely supported by the participation council, with each delegation clearly aware of the advantages.

In this school year, in consultation with the central management team, we decided to explore opportunities to organise participation at the lowest possible level within the organisation. The first talks, led by an external organisation, have already taken place.

Contacts: Cynthia Christiani (parent, Wolfert College), Eveline Tan (student, Wolfert Bilingual), Maarten van Gulik (staff, Wolfert Lyceum) and Jelle Meens (staff, Wolfert College)

Working group on finance

The working group on finance works with Matthijs Ruitenbergh, the financial director of the Wolfert van Borselen school group, on the budget and acts as a sounding board in decision-making on financial issues. In this school year, the working group focused on the following subjects

- the budget and financial planning,
- the 2019 financial report

This year, partly in response to requests from the parents' delegation, the working group on finance devoted specific attention to the parental contribution and accountability for it. We had several conversations with the financial director of the school group on this issue, and these led to a number of adjustments. Reports relating to expenditure of the parental contribution will be more extensive and will be easier to access at both the schools and on the website.

In this school year the participation council also devoted considerable attention to expenditure of strike money and the learning support grant. It goes without saying that the National Education Programme (NPO), with the prospect of large sums of money to clear the learning deficits caused by the coronavirus pandemic, was discussed at length. How the grants will be used to provide students at each of the schools with the best possible support will be announced at a later date. The participation council will of course closely monitor allocation of this money.

Contacts: Perry Nagelkerken (parent, Wolfert Lyceum), Philip Westra (staff, Wolfert RISS), Piet de Zeeuw (staff, Wolfert Lansing) & Freek Groeneweg (staff, Wolfert Lyceum)

Staff working group

In this school year, the staff working group mainly focused on annually recurring themes. These included the interview cycle, expenditure of strike money and allocation of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science block grant. We also devoted attention to the cutbacks at

Wolfert Lyceum in the 2021/2022 school year, and their implications for members of staff at this school.

A number of themes relating to the coronavirus pandemic were also discussed. For example, the participation council gave its support to staff members who for personal reasons couldn't or did not wish to teach on-site. The following subjects were also discussed:

- Blended teaching,
- Extra pressure of work,
- Physical and mental health,
- National Education Programme – plan of approach.

In the next school year, the working group wants to focus specifically on the staff and student satisfaction surveys at each school and the interview cycles. We also look forward to the arrival of our new executive principal.

Contacts: Inger de Wit (staff, Wolfert Dalton), Jelle Meens (staff, Wolfert College) and Marthe Poot (staff, Wolfert Bilingual)

The election committee

This year no one stepped down from the participation council before completing their term. However, we will now be taking the leave of four of our members. Three students have passed their final examinations and will thus have to be replaced by three new members. A member of staff whose first term came to an end this year was not re-elected for a second term. A new staff member, representing Wolfert College, will take a seat on the council next year. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Joey Niemantsverdriet and thank Maarten van Gulik for all the work he has done for the participation council in the past years.

Contacts: Jurrien Cremers (staff, Wolfert Bilingual), Sara van der Woude (student, Wolfert Bilingual), Eva Lindner (student, Wolfert Lyceum)

The participation council and the various Wolfert schools

In a normal year, the participation council maintains links with the various schools not only through their representatives but also by holding meetings at each school in turn. Unfortunately, this year we could only meet online. The participation council hopes to return to meeting at the schools in the new school year.

Wolfert RISS made a specific request for the minutes of the participation council meetings to be translated into English. Since the council wishes to keep its grassroots as well informed as possible of its activities, it agreed to do so. However, it soon proved too expensive to have the minutes of every meeting translated. The same applied to a summary. This year we have decided on a compromise. Only the annual report will be translated, not the minutes of the meetings. In the next school year, the participation council plans to assess the situation again, but hopes to have a clearer idea of a possible transition to sub-councils. If we succeed in making the transition to participation sub-councils at school level, the minutes of the Wolfert RISS meetings will be taken in English.

Below you will find a summary of the main challenges confronting the individual schools in the 2020/2021 school year

Wolfert Dalton (WD)

Wolfert Dalton is represented on the participation council by both staff and students.

After a period of unrest in relation to the management of the school, with members of the participation council seeking a workable relationship with school leaders, the arrival of a new management team has restored order to the school. The new management team and the participation council work well together and we regularly have constructive talks. The school is now on the right path, and now looks to the future, with the prospect of a new building, improved, innovative teaching and successful efforts to recruit new students.

Like all the other schools, Wolfert Dalton focused on the coronavirus measures and their implications for our students and staff. Fortunately, we also had time for day-to-day affairs and innovation in teaching.

We have now started the recruitment procedure for a new team leader. The participation council is involved and has nominated two colleagues to take part in it.

Contacts: Inger de Wit (staff) and Nisa Özen (student)

Wolfert Bilingual (WT)

Wolfert Bilingual is represented on the participation council by staff, parents and students.

The coronavirus pandemic was the main challenge this year. We devoted specific attention to communicating with and the wellbeing of both students and teachers. With the introduction of blended teaching methods, even more flexibility was required of them. The participation council urged extra attention for examination candidates, students in their pre-final year and vulnerable students.

Given the international nature of our school, school journeys were a frequent topic of discussion during the pandemic. The school sought alternative methods of ensuring students' international development. In the next school year, the school management team will be exploring opportunities to enable a number of these journeys to take place.

Of course, the school also focused on the usual topics, like the staff establishment plan, the budget and setting and accounting for the parental contribution.

Contacts: Jurrien Cremers and Marthe Poot (staff), Marc Engels (parent), and Sara van der Woude and Eveline Tan (students)

Wolfert Lansing (WLa)

Wolfert Lansing is represented in the participation council by a member of staff.

At the start of the new school year in September 2020, Wolfert Lansing was again officially represented in the participation council by a new staff delegate. The ambitions expressed by both staff and management team to turn the school around again after a period of unrest and to prepare it for a promising future, have now been achieved.

Themes discussed in the participation council which were of specific relevance to the students, teachers and staff of this school included the move to the new building, restrictions to practical training caused by the coronavirus measures, the staff and student satisfaction

survey, the staff establishment plan and the professional development of the teaching staff. The participation council's input proved to be both inspiring and supportive.

Contact: Piet de Zeeuw (staff)

Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS)

Wolfert RISS is represented on the participation council by a member of staff.

Like all other schools, the RISS was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic and the second lockdown. The main challenges included starting online teaching and facilitating on-site teaching for examination candidates. The members of the participation council worked hard to ensure that all RISS examination candidates could attend school full time.

The RISS also introduced a new mobile phone policy and was the first school within the Wolfert school group to do so. After some discussion, this document was approved by the participation council, on condition that the policy would be evaluated. In the next few years, the possible establishment of an International Campus and merger with the Blijberg school will be challenges in which the participation council will play a major role.

Contact: Philip Westra (staff)

Wolfert College (WC)

Wolfert College is represented on the participation council by both staff and parents.

The coronavirus pandemic and the problems to which it led were the main challenges in the past school year. The impact of the pandemic on the school and on the wellbeing of students and staff were also major concerns for the participation council, with a commitment to clear, comprehensive communication and a focus on blended forms of teaching. The aim was customisation wherever possible, and problems and solutions were discussed in the participation council. Apart from the coronavirus measures, we of course discussed the annually recurring themes like finance, the annual plan, the staff establishment plan and so on.

Contacts Cynthia Christiani (parent) and Jelle Meens (staff)

Wolfert Lyceum (WL)

Wolfert Lyceum is represented on the Wolfert van Borselen school group's participation council by two members of staff, two parents and one student.

In the past school year we discussed the staff establishment plan and the results and implications of the staff, parent and student satisfaction surveys. The participation council and the staff advisory council (PAR) regularly enter into discussion with the head of school on matters including the budget, financial reports and progress with them, and other subjects on the participation council's agenda.

Contacts: Maarten van Gulik (teacher), Freek Groeneweg (teacher), Perry Nagelkerken (parent), Esther van Oosten (parent) and Eva Lindner (student)

CONTACT DETAILS

You can contact the participation council at:

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mrsecretariswvb@wolfert.nl

ANNEXE: members of the participation council, 2020/2021

Teaching / support staff	School	Working group	Member from	Term ends	2nd term ends
Inger de Wit	WD	Staff, MR 2.0	2015.09	2019	2023
Freek Groeneweg	WL	Finance	2014.09	2018	2022
Maarten van Gulik	WL	MR 2.0, Quality of teaching	2017.09	2021	
Philip Westra	RISS	Finance	2018.09	2022	
Marthe Poot	WT	Staff	2018.09	2022	
Jelle Meens	WC	Staff, MR 2.0	2018.09	2022	
Jurrien Cremers	WT	Elections, Quality of teaching	2018.09	2022	
Piet de Zeeuw	WLa	ICT, Finance	2020.09	2024	
PARENTS					
Marc Engels	WT		2019.09	2023	
Cynthia Christiani	WC	MR 2.0, Quality of teaching	2019.09	2023	
Perry van Nagelkerken	WL	Finance, Parent involvement	2019.09	2023	
Esther van Oosten	WL	Quality of teaching, Parent involvement	2019.09	2023	
STUDENTS					
Nisa Özen	WD		2018.09	2021	
Sara van der Woude	WT	Elections	2019.09	2021	
Eva Linder	WL	Elections	2018.09	2021	
Eveline Tan	WT	MR 2.0	2018.09	2022	

ANNEXE: 2020-2021 annual plan

	Date	School	Subjects 2020/2021
1	09-09-2020	On-site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examination syllabus (PTA) - 5 schools (excluding RISS) ● School prospectuses 2020-2021 ● Decision on strike money, based on participation council proposal ● Participation council ambitions ● Norms for moving up a class at Wolfert Dalton ● Working groups ● Training for participation council members
2	06-10-2020	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2020 begroting ● 2019 financial report ● Job mix ● Communications with participation council's grassroots ● Interview cycle (fact finding)
3	23-11-2020	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 21-22 annual plan (progress with multi year school plan) ● 21-22 annual special needs plan ● 21-22 annual training plan ● School holidays
4	14-01-2021	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation council evaluation ● Participation council 20/21 annual report ● Preparations for elections ● Building projects
5	16-02-2021	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation council budget ● Elections ● Use of 2019-2020 parental contribution and size of parental contribution in 2020-2021 ● Adjustments to examination syllabus related to pandemic
6	24-03-2021	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2020 annual report ● Enrolments – current status ● Participation council annual report
7	21-04-2021	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrolments – current status/update and consequences for staff establishment ● Preview of staff establishment plan ● Interview cycle at each school (prospects for coming year) ● Participation council regulations and school rules updates ● Draft participation council annual report ● Satisfaction surveys
8	25-05-2021	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 21/22 norms for moving up a class (preview) ● Staff establishment plan (final version) ● Participation council annual report ● Interview cycle findings
9	13-07-2021	On-site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approval of staff establishment plan ● Election results ● Participation council agenda for coming school year ● Activity plans (6 schools) ● Rules of conduct

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21/22 norms for moving up a class
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