

**Annual report
2022 – 2023
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 2022-2023 school year. In publishing this report our chief intention is to give an impression of the participation council's activities in this period.

During this school year, the participation council focused its attention on – among other things – the online teaching aids used in lessons. Some are free of charge, but are accompanied by advertisements. The participation council is keen to know which apps are in use, and which can be deemed appropriate for school use. This is a topic we will follow up on in the coming school year.

During a seminar for members of the participation council and the Staff Advisory Committees (PAR) from the various schools, we examined how the participation structure is organised within our school group. The question we wanted to answer was whether we were still satisfied with this structure and whether it met our needs. The conclusion was that the Wolfert van Borselen school group has outgrown its participation structure. We plan to discuss this issue with the central management team in September.

In this school year, we started sending a newsletter to staff, parents and teachers containing a summary of the main issues discussed in our meetings. I believe that this was a good move in making the work of the participation council more visible. A special thanks is due to our secretary, Lisette Crooijmans, for drafting and sending the newsletter.

In this annual report you will find information on what the participation council did in this school year. The various delegations and working groups will also tell you in brief how they worked for the school this year.

I hope you enjoy reading this report. 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,

Freek Groeneweg,
Chair

Dear reader,

On behalf of the central management team of the Wolfert van Borselen school group, we would like to thank the members of the participation council for working so well with us this year.

We can look back on open, transparent collaboration and communication, and would like to express our appreciation for the council's commitment and constructive feedback.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the participation council's involvement in drafting the school plan, and for the flexibility it shows when procedures are delayed.

Like the participation council, we also found it no easy matter to strike the right balance between representation at school group level and the interests of the individual schools. In the coming school year, we will again work with the participation council to explore how participation can best be structured and organised.

We greatly appreciate our open conversation on this issue, and look forward to continuing it in the next school year. We hope to work in collaboration with the Staff Advisory Committee, the student council and the parents' council at each school to take further steps towards engagement and participation.

This year too, we experienced how the Staff Advisory Committees, the student councils and the parents' councils have led to greater engagement at the schools. This is in any event a step forwards in ensuring greater participation and closer involvement.

On behalf of Matthijs Ruitenbergh,

Bart Oremus

Executive Principal of the Wolfert van Borselen school group

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.

Bart Oremus 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.

The participation council *is responsible* for monitoring procedures and general outlines.

The participation council *is not responsible* for assessing individual problems or disputes.



Members of the participation council

Students:

Daniël Simon, Aya Azirar, Senne van Wijngaarden and Esra Gürbüz.

Parents:

Luc Spitholt, Suayip Ozdemir, Fenke Elskamp and Bachir Hammouche

Staff:

Freek Groeneweg, Piet de Zeeuw, Joey Niemantsverdriet, Jurriën Cremers, Lisette Crooijmans, Jaun-Mari Moraal, Paulo Oliveira Santos, and Maarten van Gulik.

The participation council aims to have a representative from every Wolfert school. This has proved difficult in the past, if too few people stand for election, or someone else gets more votes. This year, each school has at least one representative on the participation council.

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 Freek Groeneweg and Senne van Wijngaarden. 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 members will join the participation council in the new school year:

- Shenaya Misri
- Sybiel Smits

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

The participation council in the 2022-2023 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 charter
- the job mix,
- norms for moving up and rules of conduct
- the staff establishment plans,
- the school holidays,
- the annual financial report,
- setting and accounting for the parental contributions.

Freek Groeneweg currently holds a seat on the joint participation council, which represents all public-authority secondary schools in Rotterdam. He is responsible for communications between the Wolfert participation council and the joint participation council. Since Freek has reached the end of his term on the participation council, we will no longer have a representative on the joint participation council. In order to safeguard lines of communication, we will therefore maintain close contact with the three Wolfert van Borselen staff members who still hold seats on the joint participation council.

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 for discussion in the participation council. After the various delegations have introduced themselves we will discuss the work of the various working groups.

Students' delegation

The students are represented in the participation council by four delegates. In the past school year these were: Senne van Wijngaarden, Aya Azirar, Esra Gürbüz and Daniël Simon.

As the students' delegation, we feel responsible for the problems confronting our peers. We also try to approach certain issues from a different angle. Subjects are often discussed that have an impact on students. In these cases, it is our job to ensure that students' views are clearly stated. This year, for example, we approved the rules of conduct, and shared our opinion on the student satisfaction surveys.

If you have any questions, please send us an email.

Contacts: Senne van Wijngaarden (Wolfert Bilingual), Aya Azirar , Esra Gürbüz and Daniël Simon (Wolfert Lyceum).

Parents' delegation

Fortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is now behind us, but it has led to considerable changes to society. These include an increase in on-line meetings and teaching and greater use of online teaching aids, more serious staff shortages and, in combination with the war in Ukraine, rising inflation. The COVID-19 pandemic also appears to have changed the way our children behave.

These issues inevitably affect education, and this calls for a response from the Wolfert van Borselen school group. As the participation council parents' delegation, we can play a role here. Relevant issues discussed in the participation council in the past year include use of digital teaching aids, distribution of financial resources (e.g. to reduce the burden of work), the professional development plan and the selection and appointment of two new heads of school.

We also continue to focus on the future of the participation council within the Wolfert van Borselen school group. Scope is currently being explored to set up a workable structure in the form of participation sub-councils at each school. This is expected to lead to a closer connection between council members and the school, and thus a sharper focus on specific issues. We hope to move forward with these plans in the next school year.

There were several vacant seats within the participation council parents' delegation in the past school year, but fortunately we are now at full strength again. In the coming school year we, as representatives of the parents, will again work with the staff and students' delegations to protect the interests of our children.

Contacts: Suayip Ozdemir (Wolfert Bilingual and Wolfert College), Fenke Elskamp (RISS), Bachir Hammouche (Wolfert College) and Luc Spitholt (Wolfert Lyceum)

Staff delegation

The staff delegation comprises eight members of staff. Each school is currently represented within the staff delegation, and we regard this as a great advantage.

The use of individual and collective resources to reduce the burden of work was a major theme for the staff delegation this year. Each school was required to draft a plan setting out how the collective component of these funds would be spent. The participation council monitored this process, and is pleased to say that each school has now drafted a plan for expenditure of these funds to reduce the burden of work.

This school year, the staff delegation worked on an updated professional development plan to respond to the ambitions set out in the school work plan. We look forward to seeing how the updated professional development plan is reflected in schools' activity plans.

In response to concerns expressed by our rank and file, we regularly discussed the online teaching aids used in our school. We would like to know which aids are suitable for use throughout the school group. With this aim in mind, we have asked the central management team to make a list of available online aids, and the aids for which school group-wide licences can be purchased.

A number of staff members will reach the end of their term on the participation council this year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Freen and Senne for their hard work in the past few years.

Contacts: Joey Niemantsverdriet (Wolfert College), Paulo Oliveira Santos (Wolfert Dalton), Freek Groeneweg (Wolfert Lyceum), Lisette Crooijmans (Wolfert Lyceum), Maarten van Gulik (Wolfert Lyceum), Piet de Zeeuw (Wolfert Lansing), Jaun-Mari Moraal (Wolfert RISS) and Jurriën Cremers (Wolfert Bilingual).

Participation council (MR) 3.0 working group

After a year of relative silence on the subject, the participation council decided this year to put decentralised participation on the agenda once again. The current participation council is keen to set up participation sub-councils at school level, and to explore scope to do so with more urgency and more focus than before. The central management team was prepared to collaborate. This led to a seminar in which representatives of the Staff Advisory Committees from the six schools exchanged views with members of the participation council and Bart Oremus on participation in the Wolfert van Borselen school group's complex structure. The seminar was led by a representative of teachers' union AOb.

The seminar was successful, producing two main conclusions: 1) we will continue to explore scope for decentralised participation councils (with a central participation council), without pre-conditions and 2) participation at school level through the Staff Advisory Committees now works better than at the start, but presents problems to which participation sub-councils could provide solutions.

As follow-up to this seminar, Bart Oremus asked the participation council to draft a document/policy paper setting out the reasons why it wants to decentralise participation, what effect this will have on the solidarity between the six schools, and the advantages from the viewpoint of the school management teams. We have since drafted the document and shared it with Bart, who has discussed/will discuss it with the heads of school.

The current situation is that a follow-up meeting will shortly be held between delegations from the central management team and the participation council, focusing on the document drafted by the participation council. We expect to report on progress in the next annual report. Finally, the main aim is to establish the structure of the decentralised participation councils in the coming school year, with a view to implementation in the 2024-2025 school year.

Contacts: Maarten van Gulik (staff, Wolfert Lyceum), Joey Niemantsverdriet (staff, Wolfert College), Jurriën Cremers (staff, Wolfert Bilingual), Freek Groeneweg (staff, Wolfert Lyceum) and Lisette Crooijmans (staff, Wolfert Lyceum)

Working group on Finance

Within the participation council, the working group on finance works with Matthijs Ruitenberg, the financial director of the Wolfert van Borselen school group, on the multi-year budget and acts as a sounding board in decision-making on financial issues. In this school year, the working group again focused on the budgets of the various schools, financial planning in general and the school group's annual financial report.

Expenditure of the collective funds to reduce pressure of work, the parental contribution, renovation costs and, for example, the rising price of gas were subjects of discussion in the working group.

The working group also briefly addressed the effects decentralisation of the participation council, as proposed by the staff, would have on subsidiarity and solidarity between the various schools. These will be studied by the participation council in the coming period.

All in all, the participation council, in its advisory capacity and occasionally using its powers of consent, succeeded in keeping careful track of the distribution of funding flows within the Wolfert van Borselen school group.

Contacts: Paulo Oliveira Santos (staff, Wolfert Dalton) and Piet de Zeeuw (staff, Wolfert Lansing)

The election committee

In this school year, too, the election committee took action to generate interest in membership of the participation council. The committee's members, Jurriën Cremers and Joey Niemantsverdriet, mailed the letters inviting candidates to stand for the participation council elections to the various school.

In March, the committee sent out interim invitations to parents to join the participation council. In response, Fenke Elskamp (RISS), Bachir Hammouche (Wolfert College) and Suayip Ozdemir (Wolfert College and Wolfert Bilingual) joined the council as of 1 April 2023.

As of the 2023-2024 school year, two seats will become vacant in the staff delegation, and one seat in the students' delegation, so we also issued invitations to stand for these positions.

Two colleagues applied for membership of the staff delegation – sitting member Jurriën Cremers (Wolfert Bilingual) and Sybiel Smits (Wolfert Dalton). No election was thus needed and the two candidates were automatically elected.

Eight candidates applied for membership of the students' delegation and an election was held. Shenaya Misri was elected, and she will take a seat on the participation council for Wolfert Dalton.

The election committee would like to wish the new members every success.

Contacts: Jurriën Cremers (staff, Wolfert Bilingual) and Joey Niemantsverdriet (staff, Wolfert College)

The participation council and the various Wolfert schools

The participation council maintained its links with the various schools not only through the schools' representatives, but also by holding meetings at each school in turn. This also enabled its members to get the feel of each school. Below you will find a summary of the main challenges confronting each school in the 2022-2023 school year.

Wolfert Dalton (WD)

Wolfert Dalton is currently represented on the participation council by a single staff member. After the last elections, no new parent or student members were elected for this school. However, looking ahead, we can welcome a second member to represent Wolfert Dalton on the participation council in the new school year.

As was the case for the other schools this year, use of the collective funds to reduce pressure of work and the National Education Programme funds were hot issues for Wolfert Dalton this year. The participation council also devoted considerable attention to growth and the financial situation, the job mix within Wolfert Dalton and the annually recurring topics.

Apart from a staff member in the participation council, Wolfert Dalton has an active student council, parents' council and Staff Advisory Committee. The participation council member is also a member of the Staff Advisory Committee. These groups are in regular contact with the school management team to discuss issues which are also addressed in the participation council.

Contact: Paul Santos (staff)

Wolfert Bilingual (WT)

Like last year, changes took place in the management team. A team leader was replaced and a new, additional team leader was appointed, while a new head of school is set to take over from the interim head in the new school year.

The Staff Advisory Committee was expanded to include eight staff members, and agreements have been reached with a view to streamlining and improving its work. Topics addressed by the committee included the funds to reduce pressure of work, the norms for moving up a class and other staff-related issues.

Contacts: Jurriën Cremers (staff), Senne van Wijngaarden and Esra Gürbüz (students)

Wolfert Lansing (WLs)

Wolfert Lansing is represented on the participation council by a single staff member.

Under the inspiring leadership of the brand new head of school, Robert-Jan Oranje, the school hit the ground running at the start of the new school year. The participation council closely monitored the solutions found to the challenges facing the school.

A few of topics affecting the interests of students, parents and teachers at Wolfert Lansing were specifically discussed in the participation council. They included the school's financial report, the norms for moving up a class, the school prospectus and the parental contribution.

The participation council also focused on the student satisfaction survey, Wolfert Lansing's ambitions in relation to expansion of student numbers and their impact on the other Wolfert schools, the professional development of staff and the distribution of jobs. The input of the working groups and representatives of the other schools on the participation council often proved both inspiring and supportive.

Contact: Piet de Zeeuw (staff)

Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS)

At the onset of the academic year, RISS had a hectic schedule with the visit of the CIS/NEASC. The CIS/NEASC International Accreditation process is an extensive and meticulous assessment of an entire school to ascertain its compliance with globally recognized standards and proffer suggestions for continuous improvement. CIS-Accredited schools meet these standards and offer exceptional international education emphasising the development of crucial skills, knowledge, and qualities required for preparing students as global citizens. Consequently, students who attend CIS-Accredited schools are in high demand by universities worldwide as they acquire an exceptional international education that prepares them for success in diverse future endeavours.

RISS was, therefore, overjoyed when it was granted candidate status for CIS Accreditation. An excerpt from their report reads as follows:

“RISS demonstrated several strengths during the preparatory visit and presented evidence of school improvement since the last CIS visit. Most notably, the school's strengths include:

- A community committed to their guiding statements
- A strong sense of community and family
- An ongoing commitment to well-being, through the mission and core values
- A culture of collaboration and learning
- Significant school progress since the previous accreditation”

Apart from the accreditation, RISS continuously worked on its school improvement plan for 2022-2023 with a focus on leadership, curriculum, community, well-being, professional development, and organisation. One of the improvement points is to enhance community connections. RISS collaborated closely with Hogeschool Rotterdam to establish a better internship program.

In conclusion, RISS has made significant strides towards CIS Accreditation and has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing an outstanding international education that prepares students for success as global citizens. As RISS continues the accreditation process in 2023/24, it is clear that the school is dedicated to ongoing improvement and is focused on cultivating a culture of collaboration, learning, and community. With a continued focus on leadership, curriculum, community, well-being, professional development, and

organisation, RISS is well-positioned to achieve success in the coming year and to continue to provide exceptional educational opportunities for its students.

Contacts: Jaun-Mari Moraal (staff) and Fenke Elskamp (parent)

Wolfert College (WC)

Wolfert College is represented on the participation council by a member of staff, two parents and a student.

In this school year no issues specifically applicable to Wolfert College were discussed in the participation council. There were, however, items on the agenda that applied to each of the schools, including Wolfert College.

For example, the use of the collective funds for reducing pressure of work, under the leadership of the Staff Advisory Committee and the school management team, was discussed in the participation council, which monitored this process. A proposal was ultimately put forward that met with the approval of a majority of staff members.

As was the case at the other schools, the Staff Advisory Committee was analysed in the framework of MR 2.0. A student council will be formed in the next school year and the newly established parents' sounding board group has met once during this school year.

Apart from the above, we also discussed annually recurring topics such as finances, the annual plan and the staff establishment plan.

Contacts:

Joey Niemantsverdriet (staff)
Aya Azirar (student)
Bachir Hammouche and Suayip Ozdemir (parents)

Wolfert Lyceum (WL)

Wolfert Lyceum is represented on the participation council by a staff member, two students and three parents.

Topics of discussion in the past year were the staff establishment plan and the activity plan. Head of school Peter Wind holds regular talks not only with the participation council but also with the student council, the parents' council and the Staff Advisory Committee. Topics discussed in these forums often appear on the participation council's agenda.

Contacts: Freek Groeneweg (staff), Maarten van Gulik (staff), Lisette Crooijmans (staff) and Daniël Simon (student).

CONTACT DETAILS

You can contact the participation council at:

mrvoorzitterwvb@wolfert.nl

mrsecretariswvb@wolfert.nl

ANNEXE: members of the participation council 2022-2023

Teaching/ support staff	School	Working group	Member from	Term ends	2nd term ends
Freek Groeneweg	WL	MR 3.0	2014.09	2018	2023
Joey Niemantsverdriet	WC	Elections	2017.09	2021	
Lisette Crooijmans	WL	Staff	2022.09	2026	
Maarten van Gulik	WL	Staff, MR 3.0	2022.09	2026	
Jaun-Mari Moraal	RISS	Staff	2022.09	2026	
Jurrien Cremers	WT	Elections, Quality of teaching	2018.09	2023	2027
Piet de Zeeuw	WLa	Finance & IT	2020.09	2024	
Paulo Oliveira Santos	WD	Finance & IT	2022.09	2026	
Parents					
Luc Spitholt	WL		2019.09		
Fenke Elskamp	RISS		2023.04		
Bachir Hammouche	WC		2023.04		
Suayip Ozdemir	WC		2023.04		
Students					
Daniël Simon	WL	MR 3.0	2020.09		
Senne van Wijngaarden	WL	MR 3.0	2022.09		
Aya Azirar	WT		2022.09		
Esra Gürbüz			2022.09		

ANNEXE: participation council 2022-2023 annual plan

	Date	School	Topics 2022/2023
1	28-08-2022	WT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms for moving up in 2022-2023 • Activity plans • School prospectuses • School plan • Participation council ambitions • Working groups • Training for participation council members
2	20-09-2022	Extra meeting Wolfert RISS Senior Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School plan • Examination syllabuses for 5 schools (excluding RISS)
3	11-10-2022	WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation council budget for 2023 • 2023 budget • 2021 annual financial report • Job mix (N.B. including 2022-2023 mutations) • Communication with participation council's grassroots • Interview cycle (fact-finding)
4	29-11-2022	WLa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022-2023 annual plan (progress in relation to multiannual school plan) • 2022-2023 special needs plan • 2022-2023 training plan • School holidays
5	10-01-2023	WL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation council evaluation • 2022-2023 participation council annual plan • Preparations for elections • Building projects
6	14-02-2023	RISS Junior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections • Accountability for expenditure of 2022/2023 parental contribution and approval of 2023/2024 parental contribution • Adjustments to examination syllabuses in connection with COVID-19 (information)
7	21-03-2023	WD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 annual report • Enrolments – current situation • Participation council annual report (distribution of tasks)
8	18-04-2023	WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolments and consequences for staff establishment – current situation/update • Staff establishment plan – preview

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of interview cycle by school (looking ahead to coming school year) • Updates of participation council by-laws • Participation council annual report (draft) • Satisfaction surveys
9	30-05-2023	WT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms for moving up in 2023-2024 (preview) • Staff establishment plan • Participation council annual report • Interview cycle - findings
10	20-06-2023	WL	<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 • Norms for moving up in 2023-2024
11	29-06-2023	Dinner	