

Annual report
2023 - 2024
Participation council
Wolfert van Borselen school group



Dear reader,

This is the annual report of the Wolfert van Borselen school group's participation council for the 2023-2024 school year. Our main aim in publishing this report is to give you an impression of the council's activities in this period.

In the past school year, the participation council again dealt with a whole range of topics. Apart from recurring items, like the budget and the staff establishment plan, we were confronted by a number of interesting challenges. These included applying for a grant to improve basic skills training, the role of AI in education, the need for prayer rooms, policy on mobile phones, professional development (BOOT) interviews and the executive principal's departure.

In this foreword, I'd like to draw particular attention to the fact that in the coming school year we'll be launching a pilot project with participation sub-councils at two schools – Wolfert Bilingual and Wolfert Lyceum. This project will run for two years and has been launched in response to the participation council's fervent wish to anchor the participation structure at the lowest possible level within the organisation.

The participation council has had a very difficult year as far as membership was concerned. Due to resignations among the parent and student delegations, the council had to work for a longer period with several vacant seats. Fortunately, the elections that were held recently have ensured that the participation council will be at full strength in the new school year.

Before rounding off this foreword, I would like to say a few words about the departure of Bart Oremus, the school group's executive principal. It was a great pleasure to work with him in the past three years and – if only for this reason – the participation council regrets his departure. We are grateful to him for his unrelenting commitment and constructive contribution to the school group in general and the participation council in particular. We wish Bart every success in his new job.

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,
Maarten van Gulik
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 again this year.

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

We are aware that in organising participation it is no easy matter to strike the right balance between adequate representation at school group level and the interests of the individual schools.

This school year we did the groundwork for a two-year pilot project in which two of our schools will work with participation sub-councils. This will call for a degree of creativity and improvisation on the part of all those involved, because it is well-nigh impossible to draft rules and regulations to cover every eventuality.

However, we are confident that the project will be a success, and hope it will lay the basis for participation at the most appropriate level. We will continue to work as usual with the schools where the participation structure is still based on a Staff Advisory Council (PAR), parent council and student council,.

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, Esra Gürbüz and Ruthsany Lauf

Parents:

Luc Spitholt and Suayip Özdemir (to April 2024)

Staff:

Piet de Zeeuw, Joey Niemantsverdriet, Jurriën Cremers, Lisette Crooijmans, Jaun-Mari Moraal, Paulo Oliveira Santos, Sybiel Smits 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. Each school currently 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 Jaun-Mari Moraal, Jurriën Cremers, Daniël Simon and Suayip Ozdemir. 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!

The following four new members will join the participation council in the new school year:

- Jason Wouters (staff, RISS)
- Marthe Poot (staff, Wolfert Bilingual)
- Zayrah Wahed (student, Wolfert Lyceum)
- Evelien Wauters (student, Wolfert Lyceum)

In accordance with the results of the elections, the following three parents will join the participation council as members of the parent delegation:

- Inge Donkervoort (Wolfert Dalton)
- Samira Lamkharrat (Wolfert Bilingual)
- Tugba Tiryaki (Wolfert College)

We would like to welcome them to the council, and wish them every success and much pleasure in carrying out their tasks.

The participation council in the 2023 – 2024 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.

None of our current members has a seat on the joint participation council (the participation council representing all public-authority secondary schools in Rotterdam). However, with a view to safeguarding lines of communication, the participation council maintains close contact with the three Wolfert 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.

Student delegation

The students are represented on the participation council by three delegates. In the past school year these were: Esra Gürbüz, Ruthsany Lauf and Daniël Simon.

Since we three are responsible for expressing the opinions of students attending six schools, we are always open to questions and comments. We believe that it is extremely important not only to express our own views but also to take the opinions and interests of all students on board. This year we were mainly occupied with the organisation of a sub-participation council, and at the start of the school year we discussed the use of smartphones in school. We did our best to take both our own vision and the school's into account in expressing our viewpoint on issues like these. As is the case each year, we had a seat at the table in discussions on matters including the student satisfaction survey and the rules of conduct.

At the last meeting of this school year, we were introduced to the students who will join us next year. Since Daniël Simon will leave the participation council, and we already had a vacant seat, two seats were available. Evelien Wauters and Zayrah Wahed, both from Wolfert Lyceum, will join us in the new school year.

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

Contacts: Ruthsany Lauf, Esra Gürbüz and Daniël Simon.

Parent delegation

At the time of writing, the school year is reaching its end, and the summer holidays are in sight. It feels as though this was the first normal school year since the Covid pandemic. But education continues to present challenges, with clear changes to students' behaviour, the search for sufficient competent and highly motivated staff, and optimum use of the budget. As representatives of the parents, we can express our views in the participation council on ways of contending with the challenges now confronting the Wolfert van Borselen school group.

Parents can often use their experience from their daily working lives to input ideas from which the schools can benefit. In this way, they support the schools in providing students – their children – with the best possible education.

After several years of discussion and preparation, a pilot project will be launched in the coming school year, with participation sub-councils being set up at two schools: Wolfert Lyceum and Wolfert Bilingual. This will give parents the opportunity to join a sub-participation council specifically for the school attended by their children, probably giving them a greater sense of engagement. Elections will be held at the start of the new school year.

Several members of the parent delegation left the council in the past school year, but recent elections ensured that the vacant seats will be occupied again, so that we can start the new school year at full strength.

Contacts for the 2024-2025 are as follows: Luc Spitholt (Wolfert Lyceum), Tugba Tiryaki (Wolfert College), Samira Lanmkharrat (Wolfert Bilingual) and Inge Donkervoort (Wolfert Dalton)

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.

Decentralisation of the participation council was a major theme this year. The first steps were taken last year, and this year the theme was discussed at length with the central management team. These discussions led to plans for a two-year pilot project at two schools: Wolfert Lyceum and Wolfert Bilingual. Members of the participation council representing these two schools worked with the management team to draft a charter and sub-council regulations and by-laws. Elections were held at the two schools for the sub-council staff delegations, and the sub-councils will start work as of the 2024-2025 school year. Elections have already been held at Wolfert Bilingual for the parents' and student delegations, and these will be held at Wolfert Lyceum at the start of the new school year.

The staff delegation also focused on the consequences of the statutory requirement for teaching hours to be timetabled on a minimum of 189 days a year. One of the major changes for staff is allocation of time for professional development. Instead of five whole days, ten half-days will be earmarked for this purpose, freeing up more space for teaching time in the annual timetable.

Two staff members will leave the participation council this year. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Jaun-Mari and Jurriën for their input in the past years. We'd also like to thank our executive principal, Bart Oremus, for working so well with us.

Contacts: Joey Niemantsverdriet (Wolfert College), Paulo Oliveira Santos (Wolfert Dalton), Sybiel Smits (Wolfert Dalton), Lisette Crooijmans (Wolfert Lyceum), Maarten van

Gulik (Wolfert Lyceum), Piet de Zeeuw (Wolfert Lansing), Jaun-Mari Moraal (Wolfert RISS) and Jurrien Cremers (Wolfert Bilingual).

Participation council (MR) 3.0 working group

As we pointed out in last year's annual report, after a year of relative silence on the subject, scope to set up participation sub-councils at the schools was explored with more urgency in the 2022-2023 school year. This led in the 2023-2024 school year to the decision to launch a pilot project at two schools, Wolfert Bilingual and Wolfert Lyceum.

Consultations were held at various levels in the lead-up to this decision. On 1 October 2023, the heads of five of the six schools in the school group (as an international school, RISS plays no part in this process) met with the executive principal and representatives of the participation council. The meeting, which was chaired by Door Faber, was convened with the intention of reviewing the reasons why the participation council wants to set up sub-councils, and identifying any possible obstacles from the viewpoint of the heads of school. It proved to be a highly constructive discussion, and, as it later turned out, the start of the process leading to the forthcoming pilot project. The heads of Wolfert Bilingual and Wolfert Lyceum took the most positive attitude towards the participation council's wish to set up sub-councils. The others were more cautious.

At the follow-up meeting which was held on 11 January 2024 and was again chaired by Door Faber, the first tangible plans began to take shape. Saskia van der Schaaf from the education union Aob also attended the meeting to provide assistance. The various parties benefited by her expertise on this subject. For example, they learned that a sub-council need not necessarily be set up at every school, but at two or three schools. This was quite an eye opener. At this meeting, the first steps were also taken towards identifying which competences should be held by a sub-council, and which should remain with the participation council and the joint participation council.

Not long after the January meeting, the final decision was taken to launch a pilot project at Wolfert Bilingual and Wolfert Lyceum. From then on, the head of school and representatives of the participation council regularly held consultations. The school group's central management team monitored developments to ensure that the two schools were more or less in tandem, in terms of both content and progress.

The last step was to reach a final decision on the designation of competences to the sub-councils. This led to sub-council by-laws and regulations and an amended charter. All three documents were approved by the participation council by a qualified majority.

The sub-council at Wolfert Bilingual is now ready to start work in the new school year. All delegations (six members of staff, three parents and three students) are at full strength. The staff delegation at Wolfert Lyceum has been elected, and elections will be held for the parents' and student delegations at the start of the new school year.

We hope to report on the two schools' progress with the pilot project in next year's annual report.

Working group on Finance

Within the participation council, the working group on finance works with Matthijs Ruitenbergh, 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 and renovation costs as well as the various allowances and grants for which our schools are eligible were among the subjects of discussion in the working group.

The working group also 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 more closely, including 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.

The election committee

In this school year too, the election committee's Jurriën Cremers and Joey Niemantsverdriet looked for people interested in joining the participation council.

In late May, letters were sent to parents, students and staff inviting them to stand for election to the council. Just enough candidates responded to the invitation to fill the vacant seats in the staff and student delegations in the central participation council. There was therefore no need to hold elections for these delegations. As of September 2024, Jason Wouters (RISS) and Marthe Poot (Wolfert Bilingual) will join the staff delegation. Zayrah Wahed (Wolfert Lyceum) and Evelien Wauters (Wolfert Lyceum) will join the student delegation.

The election committee wishes these new members every success!

Because more parents responded to the invitation to join the council, an election had to be held for this delegation. The election was in full swing at the time of writing.

According to the new procedure for participation council and sub-council elections (*Draaiboek (D)MR verkiezingen*) the election committee should be expanded to comprise three members of staff. Two of these staff members should, by preference, work at Wolfert Lyceum and/or Wolfert Bilingual, given that elections need to be held for the sub-councils at these two schools.

Jurriën Cremers will step down from the participation council (and thus automatically from the election committee) in the new school year. In the past few years, he has succeeded in putting the participation council elections on a professional footing. He helped Joey learn the ropes, so that he can now take over the work with relative ease. The participation council is extremely grateful to Jurriën for this!

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 2023-2024 school year.

Wolfert Dalton (WD)

Wolfert Dalton is currently represented on the participation council by two staff members. In the next school year, we will also welcome a parent and student from this school to the council.

As was the case for the other schools this year, themes like the use of the collective funds to reduce pressure of work were hot issues for Wolfert Dalton this year. A staff survey resulted in the decision to appoint a new support staff member to reduce pressure of work. A new team leader will be added to the management team. The participation council also focused on growth, the financial situation and the job mix at Wolfert Dalton.

Thanks to the commitment of the staff and our wonderful new building, we have far more enrolments for the 2024-2025 school year.

Wolfert Dalton also has a highly involved parent council and Staff Advisory Council, on which the participation council members also hold seats. These groups regularly communicate with the school management team on issues which are also discussed in the participation council.

Contacts: Paul Santos and Sybiel Smits (staff)

Wolfert Bilingual (WT)

Many changes have taken place, with the appointment of a new head of school and two new team leaders.

Subjects of discussion relating to Wolfert Bilingual included the stricter guidelines for moving up a class, changes to the structure of the timetable, and the tasks of the head of year..

Wolfert Bilingual is also one of the first schools to set up a participation sub-council, with membership comprising six members of staff, three students and three parents. The participation sub-council will replace the Staff Advisory Council, among others.

Contacts: Jurriën Cremers (staff), Esra Gürbüz and Ruthsany Lauf (students)

Wolfert Lansing (WLa)

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

After an interim team leader had been appointed for the lower years, the 2023-2024 school year could start under the leadership of Robert-Jan Oranje.

Some of the themes discussed specifically within the school that touched on the interests of the students, parents and staff of Wolfert Lansing included the rules of conduct within the school, the norms for moving up a class, the activity plans, the school prospectus and the parental contribution. With regard to the finances, we can report with some pride that the school's balance sheet is now positive.

Other subjects of discussion included the staff and student satisfaction surveys, ambitions with regard to growth in student numbers, individual and collective funds to reduce pressure of work and distribution of LC-level jobs among the teaching staff. A great deal of attention was devoted to the ongoing, highly concerning shortage of teachers in some subjects, leading to permanent extra costs for external outsourcing of teachers.

To safeguard peace and quiet in the school, two student coordinators have been appointed, with support from two youth coaches.

As ever, the input of the working groups and the representatives of the various schools within the participation council proved to be both inspirational and supportive in finding solutions to the challenges confronting Wolfert Lansing.

Contact: Piet de Zeeuw (staff)

Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS)

The academic year of 2023/24 kicked off with preparations for the CIS/NEASC International Accreditation visit. As RISS continuously strives for improvement, it was essential to showcase our achievements since their last visit. We were thrilled with the overwhelmingly positive response, leading to RISS's re-accreditation with CIS/NEASC.

Furthermore, significant progress was made by the new Student Leadership Team. Collaborating with previous year's student councils, they produced a powerful student charter—a document outlining the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of students and teachers within our institution. Approved by the MR in 2024, this two-year project fosters a positive and respectful learning environment.

The students of RISS also played a crucial role in the consultation for the anti-bullying policy, vital in safeguarding well-being and promoting a positive school climate where every individual feels respected, valued, and free from harm.

Throughout the year, RISS focused on implementing inquiry-based learning practices in line with our guiding statements. Curriculum leaders and teachers conducted DOT observations and developed a pledge plan to ensure a cohesive approach to teaching and learning.

Simultaneously, the ATLAS Curriculum underwent rigorous review to align with the High-Quality Learning and Teaching policy and Global Citizenship intentions. Spearheaded by the Leadership Team, Curriculum Leaders, Pedagogical Leadership Team, and the broader community, this initiative aimed to enhance curriculum alignment with overarching school objectives.

In the dynamic academic year of 2023/24, RISS embarked on a journey of growth and achievement. With preparations for the CIS/NEASC International Accreditation visit, re-accreditation was secured, affirming our commitment to excellence. The collaboration of the Student Leadership Team on the student charter and student input on the anti-bullying policy underscored our dedication to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. As we look ahead to 2024/25, we do so with optimism, poised to build upon these accomplishments and create even more enriching experiences for our students, embodying a spirit of continual progress and positivity.

Contact: Jaun-Mari Moraal (staff)

Wolfert College (WC)

At the time of writing, Wolfert College was represented on the participation council by a single member of staff.

Apart from the surprising outcome of the staff satisfaction survey, no issues were discussed that were solely applicable to Wolfert College. Some items on the agenda concerned each of the schools, including Wolfert College.

For example, in this school year, discussions were held, led by the school management team and the Staff Advisory Council, on expenditure of the collective funds to reduce pressure of work at Wolfert College. The participation council monitored this process. The outcome for this school year was a multi-year proposal, agreed by a majority of the staff. The student coordinators and air conditioning are among the items that will be funded.

Partly at the request of the participation council, a student council has been set up at Wolfert College. The council has met and has now put a number of interesting proposals

to the school management team. The parents' sounding board group, which was set up last year, has also met on several occasions. However, attendance at these meeting was disappointing.

The results of this year's Wolfert-wide staff satisfaction survey were surprising, as far as Wolfert College is concerned. For this reason, they were discussed at length in the participation council, unlike the results for the other five schools.

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

Contact: Joey Niemantsverdriet (staff)

Wolfert Lyceum (WL)

Wolfert Lyceum is represented on the participation council by two staff members, one student and one parent.

In the past school year, Wolfert Lyceum acquired a new head of school, Angeliek van Kampen. The staff members on the participation council regularly discussed related issues, including the plan to set up sub-councils, the staff establishment plan and the activity plan. Apart from with the participation council, the head of school also talks to the student council and the Staff Advisory Council. These councils regularly address issues that are also on the participation council's agenda. As of the 2024-2025 school year, Wolfert Lyceum will set up a participation sub-council and the Staff Advisory Council will be disbanded.

Contacts: Maarten van Gulik (teacher), Lisette Crooijmans (teacher), Daniël Simon (student) and Luc Spitholt (parent).

CONTACT DETAILS

You can contact the participation council at:

mrvoorzitterwvb@wolfert.nl

mrsecretariswvb@wolfert.nl

ANNEXE: members of the participation council 2023/2024

Teaching / support staff	School	Working group	Member from	Term ends	2nd term ends
Joey Niemantsverdriet	WC	Elections, MR 3.0	2017.09	2021	2025
Lisette Crooijmans	WL	MR 3.0	2022.09	2026	
Maarten van Gulik	WL	MR 3.0	2022.09	2026	
Jaun-Mari Moraal	RISS	MR 3.0	2022.09	2026	
Jurrien Cremers	WT	Elections, MR 3.0	2018.09	2023	2027
Piet de Zeeuw	WLa	Finance & IT, MR 3.0	2020.09	2025	
Paulo Oliveira Santos	WD	Finance & IT, MR 3.0	2022.09	2026	
Sybiel Smits	WD	MR 3.0	2023.09	2027	
Parents					
Luc Spitholt	WL	MR 3.0	2019.09	2027	
Fenke Elskamp	RISS		2023.04		
Bachir Hammouche	WC		2023.04	Stepped down	
Suayip Ozdemir	WC		2023.04	Stepped down	
Students					
Daniël Simon	WL	MR 3.0	2020.09	2024	
Esra Gürbüz	WT	MR 3.0	2022.09	2026	
Ruthsany Lauf		MR 3.0	2023.09	2027	

ANNEXE: participation council 2023-2024 annual plan

	Date	School	Topics 2023/2024
1	29-08-2023	WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms for moving up in 23/24 • Activity plans • School prospectuses • School plan (1x every 4 years) • Participation council's ambitions • Working groups • Training for participation council members • Examination syllabuses for 5 schools (except RISS)
2	26-09-2023	WLa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation council 2024 budget • 2024 budget (to November) • Annual Financial Report for 2022 • Communications with the participation council's grassroots • Digital teaching aids
3	14-11-2023	WD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job mix (<i>NB! incl deferral from 2022-2023</i>) • 2023 annual report • 2024 budget • Participation council budget for 2024? • 2023-2024 annual plan (progress with multi-year school plan) • 2023-2024 special needs plan • 2023-2024 training plan • School holidays • Interview cycle (fact-finding) • Digital teaching aids
4	16-01-2024	WL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation council evaluation • Participation council 2023-2024 annual report • Preparations for elections • Building projects
5	13-02-2024	WT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections
6	12-03-2024	RISS Junior Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolments – current situation • Participation council annual report (distribution of tasks) • Accountability for expenditure of 2023/2024 parental contribution and approval of 2024/2025 parental contribution
7	16-04-2024	WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolments and consequences for staff establishment • – current situation/update • Staff establishment plan – preview • Review of interview cycle by school (looking ahead to coming school year) • Updates of participation council regulations and by-laws • Draft participation council annual report • Satisfaction surveys

8	21-05-2024	WL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms for moving up in 2024-2025 (preview) • 2024-2025 annual plans • Staff establishment plan • Participation council annual report
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview cycle - findings • Satisfaction surveys
9	18-06-2024	WD	<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 2024-2025 • Satisfaction surveys
10	02-07-2024	WLa Dinner	