

BASAC/IAC Minutes
29 March 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the March 29, 2012 BASAC/IAC Meeting

- 1) The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM and welcomed those in attendance.
- 2) Members attending: Two parent representatives, the student representative and three teacher representatives. Also attending: the School Principal, the USAG Brussels commander and the Community Commander's Representative (FMWR Director).
- 3) Minutes from the January 2012 meeting were approved.
- 4) Old Business: None.
- 5) Principal's Report: the Principal's two main items for the BASAC were already scheduled to be covered under "New Business".
- 6) Garrison Commander's (GC's) Report:

New Youth Center – there is no specific date for completion and opening, but the target is summer 2012. There are several issues to resolve before the GC can sign for the building, including leaks in the roof. Only after signing for the building can resourcing of several interior requirements begin.

Snack Trailer – the GC is enacting a plan/program to get the trailer emplaced on the concrete foundation despite limited funds and resources.

Change of Command Ceremony from the outgoing GC (LTC Ziemba) to the incoming civilian Garrison Manager, Mr Patrick Rothbauer is 12 June, 1000 Hours, followed by a reception.

Question for GC raised as Installation Advisory Council, by Mark McVickers: What is the status of purchasing additional land for the Sterrebeek Annex?, since this has been an open issue for many years and there are various rumors circulating around the community again.

Rumors of imminent purchase and existing plans for development are unfounded and incorrect. Some parcels of nearby fields (not entire fields and not even connected parcels) have been re-zoned. However, they have been re-zoned for recreation only. So no development or construction would be allowed. While the GC is willing to purchase them, and possibly maintain them as sports

fields until such a time as they might be further re-zoned, no funds to do so are available. The Garrison currently has no money to purchase these parcels.

7) Student Representative's Report:

Ms. Jane Rudy reported on activities of several classes. These included work on community events and fundraisers. She highlighted the field day on 25 May, the Talent Show and ongoing fundraising of the Juniors and Seniors for the prom. The prom will take place on 27 May. This is the Sunday evening before the Memorial Day federal holiday. She also reported Spring Sports and AP classes as underway and proceeding well.

Ms. Rudy was also encouraged to report on her participation as one of two DODEA representatives in the Senate Youth Program. Participants earned a place in a superb program, meeting with the President, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Secretary of Defense, Director of NASA and several more of our National leaders. Congratulations were given to Ms Rudy for this great achievement.

8) New Business:

8.a.) Item 1 - Attendance Policy

The BASAC President opened this discussion by quickly summarizing and evaluating DODEA's new attendance policy. The policy is assessed as strict but reasonable and importantly, as affording the individual School Principal latitude with terms such as "exigent circumstances" and "family situation".

The Principal reviewed the overall issue comprehensively.

The history is that DODDS' attendance policy has been entirely localized for many years, but that DODDS has recently been under pressure to formalize a universal policy.

The main concern at BAS is the relevance of a universal policy to the uncommon characteristics of BAS (a school with a high percentage of strong students, high parental involvement and low truancy rates) and overseas assignment (experiential learning opportunities; need for travel to fulfill responsibilities to extended family).

The Principal reviewed important and valid points on both sides of the question. On the one hand it is impossible to teach students who are not in the class. Catching-up students who missed class takes time away from other students' learning.

One parent underlined the Principal's review of the importance of experiential learning and the limited opportunity for this which an overseas assignment offers. While fully respecting that there must be limits – for very practical reasons – this parent offered that the policy should distinguish between truancy and responsible decisions on the part of parents.

The Current Situation is: the policy is nearing the end of its “graduated leniency” year and next year may be fully in-force across DODEA. DODEA will seek feedback from Principals at the end of this school year. Inputs from Parents and Teachers will be important, as these are likely to influence the future application of the policy.

There are, and will continue to be several measures on the part of teachers and administration to cope with

The BASAC concluded that the policy is manageable for the Brussels community so long as the flexibility is retained at the individual School Principal level, but that this policy could be of more use to the school if it included some additional points.

The BASAC decided **to solicit further feedback from the community on this issue and then, in its next meeting, decide on the way ahead explore the proposal of a letter to the relevant DoDDS authorities and to include this in our annual report.** ~~to include these points in a letter to the District(?) and in its end of year report. The letter will state that on behalf of our school, the BASAC offers appreciation for the leniency offered in this 1st year of the policy and enumerate specific reasons why this leniency is important and should be continued in the form a degree of decision authority for the Principal.~~ The following ~~possible~~ recommendations ~~were offered for the committee to consider:ill also be made.~~ The policy should provide clear guidance on when make-up work is to be provided to students. The policy should clarify “exigent circumstances” but preserve the Principal’s recourse to his/her own ~~judgement~~**judgment**. The policy should provide for an appeal or dispute-resolution mechanism, and that this should be as local as possible. The policy should encourage parents and students to seek the make-up work prior to the absence itself. The policy should emphasize the important difference between “Excused” and “Unexcused”, particularly with different options for coping with each, and could further usefully include a third category such as “Parental Decision”.

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8.b.) Item 2 - Space Availability for Partnership for Peace

The Principal reviewed the overall issue comprehensively. The existing situation by which dependent children of Partnership for Peace countries’ personnel at NATO has always been on a “Space Available” basis. BASAC Chairman’s research with DODEA confirmed that not DoD policy, but US Law specifies that DODDS can only pay for command-sponsored students. Budget reductions dictate that BAS will now be staffed for fewer students, requiring DODDS to recognize that space is not available at BAS and enforce the policy.

Views were expressed by Parent Rep’s, Teacher Rep’s, the Student Rep. and Administration. All agreed that the situation was regrettable, because the PfP students enrich the class’ experience. However, changing the decision is not within BAS, BASAC or even DODDS-Europe’s authority. There will simply be

less teachers at BAS than would be required to handle the student population if the PfP students were included. All present also recognized that oversized classes and an excessive student-to-teacher ratio negatively affects everyone: students, teachers and even parents.

Given these facts, the Principal would be required to limit the number of PfP students which BAS can accept for SY 12-13. ~~Historically, the number of PfP students is usually about 30.~~ He anticipated that the most cuts would have to occur in the incoming 1st and 7th grades. High-School students would be kept in BAS regardless because he understands that the damage and disruption of changing schools is greatest during High-School. ~~Those most likely to be cut would be those with attendance and/or discipline problems and those requiring English as a 2nd Language assistance, because these require the greatest resources—and this is the cause of the cuts.~~ The US Mission and Delegation have given formal notification and informal follow-up to the PfP personnel at NATO and remain involved while the school works with these personnel in their role as parents.

9) Open Session: No issues were raised, no Issue Forms were submitted.

10) The Chairman announced the next meeting will occur on 17 May 2012 at 1730 in the BAS Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Secretary