

School Advisory Board Meeting

Monday Sept. 13th, 4:30 - 6:15 p.m. at the School, apartment 5-1-12

Participants

- Deputy Chairman, Sara Marchetta
- School Treasurer, Sergio Bertasi
- School Administrator, Giulia Ziggiotti
- Educational Coordinator, Celeste Grassi
- Teachers' Representative, Ippolita Gallo
- Teachers' Representative, Sabrina Chiara Iurato
- Parents' Representative, Alessandra D'Itria
- Parents' Representative, Yan Gu

Observer

Head of Consular Section and School Superintendent, Luca Fraticelli

Agenda

- Introduction (Deputy Chairman)
- The present state of the school (Administrator)
- Budget 2021-22 - update (Treasurer)
- Educational activities (Educational Coordinator)
- Organizational issues: school calendar, school fee policy, afternoon rest, "children wellbeing" meeting
- Miscellaneous

Discussion and resolutions

Opening remarks by Deputy Chairman Sara Marchetta (SM).

The school year started well. The School is going to maintain its curriculum and its organization. The School is registered as embassy school in China and it is accredited as an Italian school abroad. The School is subject to local authorities (strict approach regarding everything connect to the pandemic) and Italian government (curriculum). The School is private and has to be sustainable on itself, not to be mistaken as a public school.

The didactic on-line (LEAD – legame educativo a distanza) is recognized by the Italian government and fully computed as school days, 185 in the school calendar to be completed no later than June 30th.

Board meetings are to be held every two months. School organizes meetings with families to share the knowledge about the Reggio Children Approach and the didactics, while any requests from parents is channeled through the parents' representatives, discussed and resolved by a Board decision.

School Administrator Giulia Ziggiotti (GZ) updates on the School organisation.

Students. Two classrooms: green class (4-5 years old) has 20 students, white classroom (2.5-3.5 years old) has 17 students. Three more students are expected to enter the School by the end of the year. Team. The team is the same of the previous school year. Plus, there is a new English teacher in the white class. School premises is apartment 5-1-11 and 5-1-12 as per the School year 2020-21, refurbishing during the summertime. All partnerships (food supplier, Beijing United Family Hospital etc.) have been confirmed.

School Treasurer Sergio Bertasi (SB) reviews the budget of the first two months of the School. The revenues/expenses are much aligned with the forecasts, as both are very predictable (respectively, enrolment fees and staff salary). Revenues may rise in relation to how many enrolled kids. Expenses are attentively monitored, and no more cost cuts are considered as the staff salaries have been cut in 2020-21 and not raised for the 2021-22. The pandemic has affected the School not only in the enrolment but also in extra costs, i.e. full-time school nurse and closing of the kitchen. In the next school year, the School shall consider to raise staff salaries. The School is promoting extra-curricular activities, a healthy way to boost revenues, as much as permitted by regulations. The school is welcoming third-party sponsorship and families' word-of-mouth is appreciated to spot opportunities.

School Superintendent Luca Fraticelli (LF) explains how the contribution system works. The School was accredited in 2015 by ministerial decree (kindergarten and primary section) - updated in 2020 (kindergarten). The accreditation status is renewed yearly, and the school budget is audited. The value of the contribution depends on resources allocated by the Italian government to Italian schools abroad and to the amount requested by the School based on its budget. Parameters over school classes, students etc. are considered by the Italian government when allocating and distributing resources amongst schools. Over the years the contribution paid to the School has been consistent with the requests.

Parents' representatives share families are concerned about the stability of the School and also ask if tuition fees will be raised for the next school year.

As donations by the Founder are no longer available and reserves have been almost depleted, the School shall be self-sustainable. Investors are not easy to find as the approach of the School is nonprofit.

Students' enrolment outlook and related tuition fees shall match the operating costs, for this year as much as for the years to come, considering any possible future expansion of the School too.

The School will make promotional efforts not only amongst the Italian community but also in other communities, especially those with no affiliated national schools, or those with plentiful choices. Promotion is still within restricted communities, and selling point of the School is its Reggio Emilia Approach, Italian excellence in education. Promotional word-of-mouth by parents is best promotional tool.

Fees adjustment for the next school year are connected with enrolment, premises and number of teachers. It is reasonable to expect an y-o-y increase as all other schools and will be based on the School's sustainability need.

Educational Coordinator Celeste Grassi (CG) informs the return to campus for old and new children went very well. Extra-curricular courses are rolling out, English will be only once/week as low enrolment. The School will add the language of food (atelier) in its curriculum as before the pandemic. First activity is on the occasion of the Mid-Autumn Festival, with involvement of Chinese teacher for related cultural element.

Parents' representatives share families are concerned about children sleeping at the School. New families would like to have a parent meeting before the start of the school year to be jointly briefed about the routine at the School. Families request a review of the standards for the air protocol. Families enquiry about free play at the School.

Regarding children sleeping at school during the relaxation time (children are not forced to sleep, it is a possibility offered to them), the School has organised a parents' meeting on September 28th on the well-being of the child. The invite is going to be circulated on Seesaw and parents' representatives shall invite all families to attend. The goal of the meeting is to share the principles and the daily routines that our School has chosen. It is not a discussion to remove the sleeping time.

School takes note of the request by the families about the orientation meeting before the school year start, provided that one-on-one meetings with children and families remain necessary as teachers need to become familiar with each child/family, to exchange personal information and especially at a time when no parents are allowed to campus during the adaptation time because of the pandemic. Parents' representatives undertake to provide to the School their preferred air quality standard in writing, so that the Board can consider relevant adjustments to its air protocol (developed by the scientific attaché of the Embassy of Italy at the establishment of the School). Free play at a school is both a time when the teachers play with a child or when the teachers observe children in action.

In consideration with possible school mandatory closure during the winter, the School has updated its calendar and moved the end of the first semester to December 24th (instead of December 17th). The week of prior holiday (20 – 24th December, 5 school days) has been moved in February (7 – 11th February) as an extension of Chinese New Year holiday. The updated calendar will be announced in Seesaw. The principle is to guarantee the maximum at school teaching experience for the children, notwithstanding the importance of a break in correspondence of Christmas. The School has identified the week of 20 – 24th June as potential make-up in case of longer closure during the second semester – not yet announced by the local authorities. Will be the mandatory closure of the School will be longer, LEAD will be implemented as necessary for the completion of 185 days.

No more points on the agenda.

Minuted
Giulia Ziggiotti
14 September 2021