

School Advisory Board Meeting – Minutes

Monday 24 January 2022, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m., Apt. 5-1-12

Attendees

- Deputy Chairman, Sara Marchetta
- School Treasurer, Sergio Bertasi (on-line)
- School Administrator, Giulia Ziggiotti (on-line)
- Educational Coordinator, Celeste Grassi
- Teachers' Representative, Ippolita Gallo
- Teachers' Representative, Sabrina Chiara Iurato
- Parents' Representative, Alessandra D'Itria
- Parents' Representative, Yan Gu
- Head of Consular Section and School Superintendent, Simone Panfili (on-line)

Agenda

- Introduction (Deputy Chairman)
- The present state of the School (Administrator)
- Balance 2021
- School Year Budget Forecast as of 30 June 2022
- School Fee Increase and 2022-23 Year Budget Forecast
- Report from the School Administrator on organizational issues: winter holiday, prevention and control measures, school calendar, Open Day, School Administrator not in Beijing from 14 March to 6 April 2022
- Educational Activities: Report from the Educational Coordinator
- Miscellaneous

Discussion and Resolutions

Sara Marchetta (SM) opens the meeting, introducing Simone Panfili, new Head of the Consular Section and Superintendent.

The present state of the School is stable. The number of students is in line with the expectations, and all teachers are in Beijing.

The School is still open, but predictions for longer CNY and winter holidays materialized (ref. Beijing Education Commission, return to School would not be earlier than 21st February – as per Chinese public schools), and current expectations to reopen on 21st February are very small. Therefore, the School is ready to switch to LEAD (online learning) and to consider, after consultations with families, to extend the School calendar by one week in June (20-24 June).

Simone Panfili (SP) confirms his support to the School for any matter where the Embassy can help, especially liaisons with the local authorities.

Giulia Ziggiotti (GZ) provides the current enrolment data. 19 students in Green classroom and 17 in White classroom for a total of 36 students.

Teachers are in constant trainings with Reggio Children.

According to the School calendar, Chinese New Year holidays are from Monday 31 January to Friday 11 February (back to School on Monday 14 February). If longer by one week, the School will consider extension of the school calendar by one week in June. If more than one week, the School will switch to LEAD (online learning).

Regarding the prevention and control of the epidemic:

AA) the School did an epidemic drill to face the situation of a confirmed case/close contact within the school community while the local authorities arrive at the School to assess the situation and lead further steps.

Main points of this scenario:

- Children and staff have to stay in the School;
- The child who is confirmed case/close contact shall stay with the School Nurse in the isolation room (the School isolation room is located next to the entrance of the playground);
- Teachers will be ALL THE TIME with the children (teachers have knowledge on how to take the utmost emotional care of them).

Based on a previous case in a Chinese public school, we acknowledge the following:

- Nucleic acid tests will be done, and families shall be patient to wait for confirmation of pick-up time after test results will be available;
- Based on test results, the local authorities will give further instructions (observation at home/quarantine);
- School reopening and return to School for children is to be confirmed by the authorities.

BB) Staff and students shall avoid unnecessary traveling. People who go out from Beijing, further to the requirements to return to Beijing, to return to campus shall: (a) have been in Beijing for the past 14 days; and (b) provide nucleic acid test conducted within 48 hours prior to their return to campus.

GZ announces the Open Day is planned for Saturday 12 March.

GZ informs she will not in Beijing from 14 March to 6 April 2022. The educational Coordinator and Finance and Administrator Manager as main contacts during that period.

Sergio Bertasi (SB) affirms that the forecasts for the closing of the current school year on 30th June 2022 show that the School is in a stable position. If the School will not face any unexpected expense, and if the enrolment target (39 children) will be achieved, the 2022-23 school year budget will be stable.

SM informs about increase of tuition fees by 10%, RMB 88,000.00 (Italian families) and RMB 99,000.00 (International Families), Lunch Service RMB 13,250.00 (all).

The increase is aimed at: (1) long-term sustainability of the School, to set-aside a reserve fund; (2) purchasing of didactic materials; (3) realignment of teachers and staff's salary to pre-Covid level (not easy to recruit foreign teachers in Beijing and the School wants to maintain its current team, trained on the Reggio Emilia Approach for the quality of education offered).

Additionally, SM informs that:

- the School Fee Policies has been updated, taking away the Covid-related Force Majeure clause. No-refund for tuition fees when the children are not at the School, and no make-up classes. School will switch to LEAD (online learning), as LEAD is fully recognised as School days by the Italian Ministry of Education. The 2022-23 School calendar will be planned to ensure school in presence as much as possible.
- In future years, there will be a regular y-o-y adjustment of tuition fees as other international schools.

Alessandra D'Itria (ADI) asks if Primary School will reopen.

SM replies that the Primary School is not in the plan. Reasons:

- Primary School was not sustainable, due to the low number of enrolled kids, even if at the time the School enjoyed generous donations;
- Based on current trend, not many Italian families are at the School, nor are expected to join for many years, that is full primary cycle.

Celeste Grassi (CG) provides an update about the didactic:

- the Chinese New Year celebration (ref. "Welcome to Spring 2022 Marathon" on 18th January) went well, thanks to the help of the families too;
- extra-curricular courses for the semester March/June 2022 are planned and leaflet will be sent to families for pre-enrolment;
- one child moved from White to Green classroom at the beginning of January – transition was planned in agreement with the family, and adaptation went well.

CG asks families' feedback on Seesaw communication. Teachers post lot of photos and videos, other than agenda, menu and newsletter. Parents' response is low. Is current communication useful and effective to let families understanding the activities undertaken by the children? Parents representatives confirm appreciation and will share with other families. ADI shares it is difficult to comment from parents' Seesaw accounts – technical difficulty may hamper parents' prompt feedback. Yan Gu (YG) shares some parents may defer from being the first/only one to comment. CG replies teachers would be happy to receive feedback and suggestion in all ways, like private message in Seesaw etc.

Ippolita Gallo (IG) explains how the training with Reggio Children experts is conducted. Main points: regular zoom calls with experts who has been in our School pre-Covid; sharing with them project hypothesis and plans, children's documentation. On-going development for the teaching staff and support for projects.

SM asks about timeline for the preparation of 2022-23 School calendar.

GZ replies that tentative 2022-23 school calendar will be circulated on Open Day and confirmed for families by 15th May, due date for the first payment of tuition fees. School start is likely to be 1st September 2022 as per Chinese public schools.

ADI asks what are the School plans for the week of 14-18th February?

GZ replies that if holidays are extended by one week only, the School proposal, as done in first semester, is to extend the winter holiday accordingly and make up the extra week in June. Therefore, the School will end on 24th June (not 17th).

Will the holidays longer, the School shall switch to LEAD to make sure 185 school days are completed after February 21st.

ADI asks if another "Families and School in dialogue" event will be planned in the second semester and what would be the topic. CG confirms, topic would be technology. More details will be shared based on return to School.

SM closes the meeting at 5:30 p.m.