

Rilke Schule

German School of Arts and Sciences

Academic Policy Committee Meeting

September 12, 2008 at 6:30 pm; 650 West International Airport Rd.



Meeting Minutes

APC Members present: Antje Carlson (Secretary), Petra Nickerson (Treasurer), Jo Sanders, Crystal Wrabetz;

Present: Cassie Jeremias, Jeff Ullom, Patti and Brett Wilbanks, Arlynda and Jerry Hermann, Greg Gould, Jim & Sherry Amundsen, Ann Weese, Carrie Ross, Liz Crawford, Denny Drury, Barbara Farmer, Scott Schillinger, Tallee Wellman, Linnee Weinberger, Debra Schwicht, Angela Wood, Stephanie Campbell, Jason Seeder & wife, Laura Steven and one other parent

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Public comments: community comments max. 2 min. each announcements
3. Announcements
4. Approval of minutes from last APC meeting
5. Reports of officers and standing committees
 - a. principal report – Crystal
 - b. finance committee report - Petra
 - c. building committee – Antje
 - d. curriculum committee report- Jo
 - e. rilke schule verein report - Denny
6. Old business
 - a. Marketing efforts RSV/APC
 - b. Grand opening planning – Antje
7. New business:
 - a. Rilke Schule food policy – APC / Jim & Sherry Amundsen
 - b. Room Rental – Stephanie Campbell / Crystal

Adjournment

Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Antje Carlson, who led the meeting in the absence of president Klaus Mayer.

Public Comments: Antje announced that elections would be postponed until a special meeting (date has yet to be decided) in the near future since APC did not have full board present.

Jim Amundsen remarked that RS policy of prohibiting student pick-up/drop-off is incorrect by stating it is according to DOT regulations. DOT does not stipulate the policy – RS should rephrase the wording.

Linnee Weinberger spoke about the traffic problems during drop off and pick up of students. Situation has gotten better over time and with more volunteers, but is still chaotic and dangerous. The problem is three lanes of traffic (1 going east on W 53rd, 1 going west and one line stopped in front of the fence to load students into cars). Suggested solutions: no U-turns in the RS parking lot on W 53rd because the pick-up wait line extends well past our parking lot – instead do a U-turn past the Hope building. Wait east of AK Housing driveway until motioned to move forward by volunteers (do not block their driveway). Reserve 3 parking spots (front row, east corner) in the RS parking lot on W 53rd for the buses from Boys & Girls Club, Arctic & Anchorage Gymnastics, as well as TaeKwonDoe. They can park their buses, gather their studentson the playground and walk them to their bus (if they don't have other students on the bus). Jeff Ullom will talk to the bus drivers. The original traffic pattern needs to be edited (Klaus) and reposted on the RS & RSV websites, and sent out in the next newsletter along with a verbal description (linnee will send it to Antje). We will try new traffic pattern for 4 weeks and then reevaluate. The volunteers also need a double-sided STOP sign (currently, our signs say STOP on one side and SLOW on the other.

Jason Seeder voiced concerns over the large size of 2nd grade (29 students) and asked if it was going to change. Petra: APC is aware of size but has no means to change – 4 kids don't warrant an extra class. Substitute TA Thomas Brown has been very helpful. One parent volunteer and PE teacher both made very positive statements about the class, the behavior, the learning environment, and especially Herr Nick's ability to keep the kids in check.

Sherry Amundsen voiced her concern that 6th grade has a lot of new kids who don't yet know German and so far, the curriculum has been focused on repetition. Do we have plans to split the German lessons into different levels? Jo: No, kids who took part in summer camp are up to speed, repetition of material from last year is normal at the beginning of the school year and new students will get help in after-school boot camp if needed.

Scott Schillinger complimented the school's progress as a representative of the German Club and mentioned that he wants to talk to the APC about future ways to help the school. Jo took the opportunity to thank the German Club again for their playground contribution – round of applause. She also mentioned that grades 5-8 will be working on an 'immigration to the US' project and will need to interview immigrants from Germany, asked if German Club members might volunteer.

Linnee Weinberger came back to traffic problems and asked for consequences for unsafe behavior. Parents have been dropping students off at the gas station and across the street from the fence, have been backing up into the crosswalk (nearly ran over 4 students) etc. Linnee requested to send home from letters explaining the traffic pattern and rules with these offending parents to enforce our policies. If they keep offending, to hold their children in the school for pick-up, forcing the parent to park the car, walk in the school and sign their child out. She asked if an APD officer could come one day to enforce traffic. Crystal has requested one but APD declined. Antje requested a list of unacceptable behavior from Linnee. Ann Weese suggested purchasing plastic mannequins (slow down dummies) to stand in the crosswalk, but that would impair traffic flow. Linnee invited George Vakalis (ASD) to witness drop-off and he did come one morning. He is working on trying to get some solutions implanted for RS (probably a cross walk), but signage is unlikely. Classes need to be released exactly at the same time to speed up pick-up. Idea was to give 2-minute warning over radio. Crystal said the problem was old batteries in some of the wall clocks in the classrooms, they are all being exchanged and the clocks are reset. It was

also made clear that parents cannot have mini-conferences with teachers at time of pick-up and that the playground will be closed to ALL children from 2:45pm until 3pm to make sure that students stay in their class line until picked up.

Brett Wilbanks stated that rescheduling the election of the open APC slots is against the current RS bylaws. Antje and Petra reiterated that election will happen with full board asap.

Announcements: None.

Approval of minutes: Petra motioned to approve the minutes from the APC meeting August 8th. Jo seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Principal Report – Crystal: Crystal stated that APC is working hard on resolving the anticipated budget shortfall of approximately \$60,000. We currently have 216 students enrolled. She announced that we hired Marilyn Ballagh as our Special Ed. Teacher and that music teacher Kevin Downie is planning on starting a band/orchestra program for grades 5-8 M & W morning from 7:30am to 8:15 am, beginning in October. She also talked about the current recruiting efforts by sending flyers to students on the wait list of some of the other language immersion programs and to some preschools. Furthermore, she talked about welcoming the director of Amity (the organization that set up our intern visits) at RS this week.

Finance Committee Report – Petra: Petra explained the deficit situation (less students than anticipated, receive roughly \$8,000/student). RS ended last school year with a surplus, however that money has been encumbered in the categories of teaching supplies and equipment – thus cannot be spent on any other expenses (i.e. salaries, benefits, rent). Patty Wilbanks asked if we transferred all budgeted 08/09 money out of equipment and supplies to other areas such as salaries. Petra confirmed. Furthermore, all extra costs have been cut from the current budget such as advertising, substitute teachers. APC is working on further solutions to deficit. Greg Gould asked if we had looked into which of our parents might be qualified subs to use their volunteer hours that way. Laura Stevens asked what grants we applied for? FLAP grant – Jo said it is a lengthy process and we have to work closely with ASD. German government grants (15,000 Euro and 1,500 Euro mini grant), 1 paid teacher from Germany (have not found somebody who has met stringent ASD standards).

Building Committee Report – Antje: The broken valves have now been fixed. Patty Wilbanks asked about the status of the fence and if the Oct. 1st deadline was still in place. Antje answered that the fence project was currently on hold due to our budget situation. Landlord is willing to have fence built but wants 100% reimbursement from school which we cannot afford right now.

Curriculum Committee Report – Jo: Jo is developing German lesson plans for history and geography and is working on the above mentioned immigration project that came to us through AATG. Terri Wood asked how teachers communicated what was taught last year in their classroom to avoid duplications (the example given was spelling lists). Jo answered that most of the curriculum is dictated by ASD curriculum. Teachers are required to write an end-of-the-year summary of what they covered for their successors. Also, grades 2 - 4 are going to be using the same curriculum textbooks, so teachers will know what was taught.

RSV Report – Denny: Open House is planned for Tuesday, 9/16/08 from 7 – 8:30pm. RSV has a general meeting next Monday, 9/15/08. The next radio ad I scheduled to run from 9/22 through 9/28. It is a corrected version and it says that RS is still accepting students.

Antje expressed her disappointment with the performance of the advertising committee (Denny) and asked to dissolve it and start anew. No motion was made.

Arlynda Hermann is working with the German Club to have a small group of RS students perform at this year's Oktoberfest.

RSV has started the first fundraiser this year, a Reader's Digest catalog sale. One parent contacted Crystal, very upset because his daughter had told him she had to go door-to-door or write an essay about it if she didn't. Crystal reassured the parent that door-to-door selling was not required. It actually states on the fundraising materials "Please no door-to-door selling" in multiple locations.

Marketing Efforts: Ann Weese and Greg Gould immediately stepped forward to build a temporary (2 week) recruitment committee. The goal is to recruit a minimum of 10 students (all grades except 2nd grade) by Sept. 30th. Ideas included:

- a big sign at school front "Enrolling Now" – Terri Wood will create it
- 'We made Grade' campaign, advertising our Adequate Yearly Progress achievement
- Testimonials from parents who brought their students from successful programs – Terri Wood will collect testimonials from up to 16 families that we will post on our website
- Target chamber of commerce to be included in 'Welcome to Anchorage' packets
- Parent volunteers are willing to help send out flyers to waitlisted students
- APC should include the ASD October enrollment rule on the website (the school will receive funds for every child enrolled during the month of October – the child doesn't have to be attending to count, i.e. can be sick)
- Target preschools with flyers to draw in people for the upcoming open house (preschoolers targeted for next year, they also might have older sibling) – Ann Weese
- We should have a brag wall, maybe an electronic reader board facing Int'l
- On the website's home page, we should have bulleted list (still enrolling, made AYP, German government sponsored, etc.)
- More signage on the front to identify building as a school

Grand Opening Planning - Antje: The food is ordered. We are expecting 200 people. Next meeting is 9/18/08 at 4:30pm at the school. The meeting is open to the public. Denny found the distributor who supplies all ASD schools with flag. The price for one US flag, one German flag, and one Alaskan flag, plus ceremonial flag stands is \$235. The order needs to be confirmed by the beginning of next week for the flags to be here by October 1st.

Food Policy: Jim and Sherry Amundsen expressed their displeasure with the inconsistencies of the RS food policies (the paragraph on the website does not match the note sent home with their daughter) and that the RS food policy didn't follow the ASD policy. Antje advised the parents to form a committee, recruit members and write an extensive food policy, including items such as

how to read a food label. The policy should be brought back before the APC for approval. In the mean time, the APC will move ahead to try and get a waiver from the ASD board for its current food policy (10/13/08). The consistency of enforcement by teachers was questioned. It appears that many items that were allowed to be eaten last year have been forbidden this year (fruit snacks, Nutrigrain bars, yoghurt covered raisins, etc.). The APC decided to go back to last year's enforcement rules (no sodas, no cookies, no sugar, no yogurts). One parent said that teachers have been taking away foods and advised that teachers should make sure not to take away the child's main meal. The APC encourages teachers to ask kids to put away sugary snacks but not to physically take them away. If the student doesn't have anything else to eat, we rather have the student eat a sugary item than to go hungry.

Room Rental Proposal – Stephanie Campbell: Stephanie Campbell, one of RS's teachers, proposed that her dance group rent the multipurpose room one night a week (Wednesday) for between \$10 to \$50 a quarter. The group will use the room between 6:30pm and 8:30pm the latest. The dance group performs Middle Eastern dances at events such as the State Fair. They don't charge for their performances and don't receive compensation. While they are not a nonprofit organization, they do not have any funds since they don't charge membership fees. Members will pay the rental fee out of their own pockets. Antje bargained to have the group perform at an RS event as part of the rental agreement. Jo moved to accept the proposal, Petra seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Comments: Sherry Amundsen asked if RS was part of the Johns Hopkins Gifted Student Web. Petra answered in the negative and asked what the program was. A RS staff member would have to arrange for testing of gifted RS students through the Johns Hopkins Organization. APC will research this program.

Meeting was adjourned by Antje Carlson at 8:32pm.

Executive session followed the public meeting.

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