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Original

European Schools
Office of the Secretary-General

Pedagogical Development Unit

Needs analysis of Educational Support Coordinators

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Meetings on 15, 16 and 17 April 2015 – Prague

1. Introduction

On 8, 9 and 10 April 2014, the Board of Governors gave a mandate to the Educational Support Policy Working Group to present to the Board at its meeting in December 2014 a document containing reflections on the necessity to allocate more time to the coordinators in line with their tasks and demands.

The Educational Support Policy Group decided at its 26 June 2014 working meeting to appoint a sub-working group in order to collect data and present a picture of the present situation concerning the use of coordination time and the Support coordinators' working conditions. At this meeting, it was proposed to inform the Board of Governors at their December meeting of the progress of the working group aiming at submitting a concrete text for decision at its April meeting 2015.

The sub-group's remit was to "examine the current situation in the schools, determine the current difficulties and challenges and propose solutions" (*Minutes of the meeting of the Educational Support Policy Group - Ref.: 2014-07-D-11-en-2*).

2. Method

1. A questionnaire on the role of the Educational support coordinators has been sent to all coordinators in the European Schools asking for their views on the following:
 - the current role as a coordinator
 - access to a pedagogical secretary
 - main challenges of the job to date
2. Data have been compiled by the Office of the Secretary General concerning:
 - time allocation for coordination and compilation of these data
 - number of pupils receiving support courses by school, level/year and type of support (General, moderate, Intensive A and Intensive B) and number of periods of these courses retrieved from SMS via Business Objects (BO)

3. Present steering documents

According to the *Provision of Educational support in the European Schools – Procedural document*, (Ref.: 2012-05-D-15-en-9), the purpose of the coordination is to **organize** and **implement** the Educational support successfully and efficiently.

Five key areas have been identified:

Planning and Assessing

- assisting the Director/Deputy Director in providing Educational support

Liaison

- between cycles
- within and across language sections
- harmonization within the ES system

In-service training

- identification of needs
- organizational role

Record keeping

- compiling of data
- keeping and storage of data

Consultation

- internal
- external

These duties could be modified in accordance with the particular conditions in each school and clearly defined in a **job description** that will reflect each school's particular needs.

4. Findings

4.1. The questionnaire

4.1.1. The current role as a coordinator

In each school one, two or even three coordinators have been appointed. Their jobs can be summarized as follows:

Planning and Assessment

- Assisting the Director/Deputy director in providing Educational Support
- Drafting Internal Guidelines based on the support documents which will be reviewed on an annual basis
- Drafting an Action Plan on Educational Support on a bi-annual basis and evaluating it annually
- Organizing and managing support hours in consultation with the management team
- Participating and on occasions chairing Support Advisory Group meetings

Liaison

- With all the partners in education (on individual cases)
- With parents of pupils on ISA whose child is availing of the Tripartite Agreement
- Transition between cycles
- Within and across language sections
- Harmonization within the ES system

In-service training

- Identifying needs
- Mediating support documents (official documents and Internal Guidelines based on those documents) to staff, new colleagues and to parents annually
- Presenting on areas of special needs or related topics
- Organizing external experts when necessary

Keeping records

- Managing registration of new pupils and reviewing children currently receiving Educational Support
- Collecting all documents (ILP's, GLP's and reviews) twice a year
- Compiling data
- Keeping records
- Filing and storing data

Consultation

- With regard to written planning, documentation and review of educational support hours with staff
- Between all support personnel in school (on developing a cohesive Action Plan that delineates roles and lines of communication)
- With external experts
- With other schools when a pupil is changing to a national system

The answers are often contradictory and thus highlighting the diversity of approaches across the schools . This makes it difficult to identify a clear picture across the system as a whole.

4.1.2 Access to a pedagogical secretary

Access to a pedagogical secretary varies considerably from school to school. Roles that the pedagogical secretaries undertake mentioned in the questionnaires:

- send out invitations to meetings
- minute ISA meetings (as it is difficult for the coordinator to do it if s/he is chairing the meeting and actively listening to all the participants)
- organize contracts for ISA meetings in advance of meetings
- ensure that all contracts are signed by the Director
- translate official letters, internal guidelines and internal procedural documents
- input SMS system
- finalize all Tripartite Agreements
- send out all finalized contracts with attached minutes of meetings
- update and compile all necessary documents

In schools where such a resource is available, the number and range of tasks varies. Intensive Support A contracts and the work related to Intensive Support A comes across as the most time-intensive part of the work in the schools. In this area, there seems to be the greatest need for access to a secretary in order to alleviate the burden on coordinators in terms of administration, and enable them to focus more on the pedagogical aspects of the role.

4.1.3 Main challenges of the job as a coordinator to date

The questionnaire also asked for the main challenges of an Educational Support Coordinator. The greatest challenge identified was a **shortage of time**.

Examples:

- at the beginning and at the end of each academic year and when the ISA meetings are taking place
- to meet/answer questions from colleagues (and new colleagues)
- to observe pupils
- to test pupils
- adequate time to meet with parents of pupils who are in need of support
- to harmonize between cycles and between schools
- to perform two jobs in one : pedagogical and administrative
- to attend all class conferences
- to respond to all e-mails
- to draft and evaluate effectively

The answers show that the management of Educational support is very time consuming.

4.1.4 Other tasks carried out

Below is a list of other jobs support coordinators in different schools report to carry out that are not mentioned in the Procedural document:

Recruitment tasks

- organize teachers' replacement
- recruit support teachers
- interview new assistants
- find the most qualified teachers to give support lessons

Web/intranet issues

- create groups in SMS
- manage extranet
- manage Webmail
- manage Learning Gateway

Administrative work

- print and fill in report cards
- update lists

Problem solving issues

- crises management
- mediation
- discussions with and giving advice to parents, pupils, teachers etc

Testing

- testing language skills

4.2. Time allocation for coordination

In the document, *Provision of Educational support in the European Schools – Procedural document*, (Ref.: 2012-05-D-15-en-9), educational support coordination time is not defined.

“The ES does not recommend or require a time allocation for a support coordinator to carry out the responsibilities of the position. The time allocation will reflect each school’s particular needs. The time allocated should be sufficient to perform the job effectively and professionally. Schools need to familiarize themselves with the role of the support coordinator as outlined in this document and make a sound decision regarding time for the support coordinator.”

Educational support is still in a transitional phase and the data collected to date reflect how the process is evolving.

The information provided in the questionnaire illustrates the different approaches that schools have taken to both the allocation of time and the amount of personnel coordinating educational support. The most common model is one coordinator for N/P and one for S, while others are organized differently, e.g. having one coordinator for General/Moderate support and another one for ISA/ISB. One school has got one coordinator for all forms of support in the whole school (N/P+S).

5. Allocation of Internal Structures

The provisions for Internal structures in the nursery, primary and secondary cycles were decided by the Board of Governors in 2011 (see *Annex I to document 2011-01-D-33-en-9*).

The calculation method allocates 1 hour of Internal Structures for the nursery and primary schools per 65 pupils. This amount includes cycle coordination and subject coordination. At present, this amount includes also the Educational Support coordination.

The calculation method for the secondary cycle allocates 1 period of Internal Structures for 40 students in the secondary cycle. This amount includes cycle coordination, subject coordination and timetabling coordination reductions. At present, this amount includes also the Educational Support coordination.

The secondary schools which have over 1000 pupils should have a right to 6 additional periods of Internal Structures.

The statutory timetable reductions for Staff Committee representatives as well as the specific reductions for European School system level tasks are not included in the global amount of Internal Structures of a School.

The overall vision is that the present provision for Internal Structures is not sufficient. Therefore, it has been concluded, that it is not possible to meet the increased needs of the Educational Support coordination within the Internal Structure framework.

6. A new Educational Support budget line

Since January 1, 2015, the European Schools have foreseen a new budget nomenclature (see *document 2014-10-D-22-en-2*). A new budget line (601104 Educational Support) has now been created, which combines all the staff expenses related to the Educational support (old Learning Support, SWALS Support and SEN support).

The rules for calculating the budget provision for the Educational support have been fixed on 2011 (see *Annex II to document 2011-01-D-33-en-9*) but provisions have been retroactively indexed since 2011 (when they have been fixed) for the definition of the 2016 budget and will be annually indexed in the future. Here are the figures used for the definition of the budget 2016:

- In the Nursery and Primary cycle, the budget provision is 157.62 euro/pupil.
- In the Secondary cycle, the provision is 183.89 euro/pupil.
- The SWALS support is 577.95 euro/SWALS pupil in both cycle.

7. Conclusions of the questionnaire to the Support coordinators

7.1 Extra resources

One of the main purposes of the introduction and development of the new documents related to Educational support is to improve the quality of provision for the children in the school and to create a system and a structure which is more child-friendly and flexible.

In order to implement the procedure and policy document more effectively from an educational, administrative and financial perspective, a more common approach would be advisable, whilst at the same time maintaining the autonomy for each school to meet its needs within the spirit of the new documents is essential.

It has been concluded, that it is not possible to meet the increased needs of the Educational Support coordination within the Internal Structure framework.

It is therefore proposed to modify accordingly the decision of the Board of Governors related to the Internal Structures.

Starting from 1 September 2015, the Internal Structures would not include the Educational Support coordination but the provision for Educational Support coordination would come from the Educational Support staff expenditures budget line (601104). That would then give a more transparent information about the Budget provision and expenditure related to the Educational Support.

7.2 Compensation of extra hours during peak timeframes

Management of schools may evaluate the necessity to compensate support coordinators for attending ISA meetings and class councils during the academic year.

7.3 Respect of different roles and functions

The use of a pedagogical secretary to support the administration of educational support would be part of the needs analysis. When a school would be willing to allocate to the educational support coordinator(s) tasks listed in the section "**Other tasks carried out**", extra resources, in terms of time allocation, should be found within the school.

8. Opinion of the Joint Board of Inspectors

As time was short, the Joint Board of Inspectors decided to discuss this item directly at the Joint Teaching Committee.

9. Opinion of the Joint Teaching Committee

The Joint Teaching Committee expressed a generally favourable opinion on the proposal.

Interparents could not yet support the proposal since the figures relating to budget use had not been discussed in the Working Group.

The document would be submitted to the Budgetary Committee for an opinion, then to the Board of Governors for a decision.

10. Proposal for the Budgetary Committee

The Budgetary Committee is invited to give an opinion on the proposed changes:

- 1) the provision for Educational Support coordination would no more be included in the general provision for Internal structures, but would come from the budget line 601104 starting from September 2015;
- 2) Management of schools are given the possibility to evaluate the necessity to compensate (on top of the coordination time) support coordinators for attending ISA meetings and class councils during the academic year, on top of the coordination time, when the latter should be found insufficient;

3) Tasks listed in the section “Other tasks carried out” should not normally be requested from Educational Support coordinators (pedagogical profile).

This document is submitted to the Budgetary Committee for its opinion before submission to the Board of Governors for final approval.

The document will enter into force as of 1 September 2015.

The Provision document for Educational support and Annexes I and II of document 2011-01-D-33-en-9 will be updated accordingly, once the proposal is approved by the Board of Governors.

11. Opinion of the Budgetary Committee

The proposal will involve the amendment of certain official documents. The Budgetary Committee expressed a favourable opinion.

12. Proposal for the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is invited to endorse the proposal as set out in point 10 of this document with entry into force as from 1 September 2015.
