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**INTERMEDIATE REPORT OF THE PEDAGOGICAL REFORM WORKING GROUP – TASK FORCE**

**Board of Governors**

Meeting on 4-6 April 2017, Berlin

1. Background

In the context of the organisation of courses and the structure of studies in the European Schools and following receipt of the final report of the Institute of Education (University College London) entitled ‘External evaluation of a proposal for reorganisation of secondary studies in the European School system’, at its December 2015 meeting, the Board of Governors decided to give a mandate to a ‘Pedagogical Reform’ Working Group, called “Task Force”, on the advice of the Joint Board of Inspectors, the Joint Teaching Committee and the Budgetary Committee and on the recommendation of the ‘Organisation of studies’ Working Group.

Following the IoE’s final report and its recommendations, the ‘Organisation of studies’ Working Group convened on 9 September 2015. It formulated two proposals for submission to the Board of Governors at its December 2015 meeting:

The first proposal involved the setting up of a ‘Pedagogical Reform’ Working Group, tasked with translating the IoE’s recommendations into actions: *“The Board of Governors endorsed the proposal to set up a ‘Pedagogical Reform’ Working Group, whose composition and mandate are described below:*

*A task force composed of:*

*- Chair of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary)*

*- Head of the Pedagogical Development Unit*

*- Head of the Baccalaureate Unit.*

*The task force will incorporate one or more external experts,*

*• a language learning expert;*

*• a curriculum revision expert;*

*• an expert from DG Education and Culture from the European Commission, familiar with definition of the eight key competences;*

*and one or more internal experts (in particular the Chair of the Board of Inspectors (Nursery and Primary)), as needs require and according to the questions discussed at the different meetings.*

*The task force will also meet at least twice per school year with the Representatives of the different stakeholders in the ES decision-making process and will report regularly to the Board of Inspectors and to the Joint Teaching Committee of the European Schools at their meetings. This is designed to guarantee good communication about the progress of the work and to assess regularly the different proposals arising. The task force has undertaken to ensure continuity with the following presidency”* (Document 2015-12-D-8-en-3 *‘Decisions of the meeting of the Board of Governors of the European Schools’*, meeting of 1-3 December 2015, pages 9 and 10).

The second proposal involved inclusion of the Host Country Language in the list of Languages 2. The Board of Governors decided that that question would be incorporated into the work of the ‘Pedagogical Reform’ Working Group.

The WG’s work would need to be organised taking account of two main limits/constraints:

1. Content of Article 4 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools: this article clearly set the principles and elements which must be part of the European School Curriculum.
2. The eight key competences: the external evaluators applauded the fact that the European School system was the only one which clearly referred to the eight key competences, albeit incoherently and inconsistently. The eight key competences would be used as a basis for the development of curriculum standards, which would subsequently allow work to be started on revision of the subjects syllabuses. NB: the Curriculum determined all the subjects and associated competences which students were expected to acquire throughout their schooling in the European Schools.

The WG would take as its basis the recommendations made by the external evaluators, whilst also taking account of the organisational implications those recommendations involve. The WG would adopt a rationale that would not be completely separate from the current reality of the European Schools, even though the present structure of studies should not act as an obstacle for necessary changes.

The WG would also have to define a more coherent Language Policy.

The reflection should not be limited to the secondary cycle, some adaptations might be needed also in the Early Education Cycle and Primary Cycle levels.

Separately, the involvement of a change management expert might also be envisaged. The aim would be to ease the communication inside and outside the system, as for the progress of the work of the WG.

1. Meetings of the Working Group’s Task-Force and of the enlarged group with all the stakeholders’ representatives

The *Task-Force* is composed of the Head of the Pedagogical Development Unit, the Head of the European Baccalaureate Unit and the President of the Board of Inspectors – Secondary. In addition, internal and external experts are incorporated into the work of the *Task-Force* according to the needs and questions raised during the various meetings. In its meeting in October 2015 the Board of Inspectors has also expressed the wish that the Troika would be involved in order to guarantee continuity within the process, therefore the German presidency was invited to meetings during the school year 2015/16, the Danish and the Estonian presidency have been participating in the current school year 2016/17.

The February 2016 JBI, as well as the March 2016 Budgetary Committee and the April 2016 Board of Governors were orally informed of the avenues explored, the JBI and JTC of October 2016 and February 2017 as well as the BoG of December 2016 were also informed orally of the state of art of the work of the WG.

1. **State of work**

The first topic on which the Task Force focused its work was indeed this definition of a coherent language learning policy in the European Schools. Under Danish Presidency, the Task Force met five times from January to May 2016. In this process there was a strong involvement with 2 experts for language acquisition, Prof. Alexis HOUSEN and Prof. Hugo BAETENS BEARDSMORE. Both have been contributing to the process extensively and confirmed that the outlined direction to which a coherent language policy would be developed can be strongly supported from the research point of view.

A report was made to the Working Group, widened to include all the stakeholders, in May 2016 (see the approved minutes of that meeting in the Annex, 2016-05-D-24-en-2).

The remarks and questions of all stakeholders have been taken into account for further consideration. A final concept for a coherent language policy for the European Schools have still to be finalized, it was first foreseen to include this in a final proposal of the WG, to be discussed and adopted in the consultation process with the enlarged WG/Stakeholders´ meeting. Therefore the Task Force was only during one meeting in the current school year 2016/17 (on Jan 12th 2017) dealing explicitly with language policy. In that meeting especially the future role of L3 being taught already on the level of Primary (P3 or P4) had been explored. A sub-working group of the Task Force depended this aspect in a separate meeting in February 2017. The outcome of this meeting and other aspects will be incorporated into a draft proposal which will be presented to the next stakeholders´ meeting, scheduled for the end of May.

Under the auspices of the German Presidency, the Task Force went on to address the question of definition of the curriculum and of integration of the eight key competences for lifelong learning. As in schoolyear 2016-17, external experts were invited and got involved in the process: Ms. Janet Looney and Ms. Majella O’Shea, who were both proposed by the Directorate General for Education and Culture. In respect to the continuity of the work of the WG the involvement of the inspectors of the Troika have been raising the number of participants, which the tables below show.

The WG chose an approach, which follows the mandate, to “adopt a rationale that would not be completely separate from the current reality of the European Schools, even though the present structure of studies should not act as an obstacle for necessary changes”. Therefore the WG took the implementation of the eight key competences for lifelong learning as a starting point as well as the general goal for its further process.

It became clear, that in some regards the eight key competences are already respected in the curriculum, e.g. “Communication in the mother tongue” and “Communication in foreign languages” are strong pillars of the European Schools. On the other hand, “basic competences in science and technology”, “Digital competence”, “Learning to learn”, “Cultural awareness and expression”, but especially “Social and civic competences” and “Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” are clearly areas with room and a need for improvement.

It is likely that some key competences are better to be encountered through full subjects, for example “*Communication in the mother tongue”* and “*Communication in foreign languages”*. Others are best encountered across all subject areas, for example, “*Learning to learn”* and “*Digital competence”*. And others may benefit from being achieved through cross-curricular projects or a new subject area. These include “*Social and civic competences”* and “*Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship”*. New subject areas that might be considered, to support the development of the competences, include Wellbeing or Philosophy.

Taking into consideration the results and recommendations of the final report of the IoE, the work of the Pedagogical Reform WG is developing in the following two directions, which are obviously closely connected:

1. Implementation of cross-curricular elements (e.g. projects), changes in the structure of studies and development of syllabuses, especially for Mathematics and Sciences, where soon new syllabuses will start to be developed;
2. Involvement of the subject inspectors in order to enhance embedding of the eight key competences within the existing subject structure, but also considering necessary changes, e.g. in the area of Social and Civic competences.
3. **Future perspectives**

In the document “Set up of a “Pedagogical Reform” Working Group” there was no clear timeframe suggested by the Boards involved. However, in Annex I (Financial Statement and Planning) “the successful drawing up of a finalized proposal” was foreseen “for the February 2017 round of pedagogical meetings”. This timeframe turned out to be unrealistic. The number of issues connected to the Pedagogical Reform, especially embedding the eight key competences and possible changes in the structure of studies does require more, especially more intensive time being spend. **Therefore the BoG is asked to prolong the mandate of the Pedagogical Reform WG for another school year with another intermediate report being presented to the Ped. Boards in February 2018 and to the BoG in April 2018. A finalized proposal shall be presented to the Boards in autumn/winter 2018 in order to implement further changes in schoolyear 2019/20.**

**A. Initial Planning**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | ***Task-Force*** | **WG** | **Meeting Number** |
| January 2016 | X |  | 2 meetings |
| February to April 2016 | X |  | 6 meetings |
| May 2016 |  | X | 1 meeting |
| June to September 2016 | X |  | 4 meetings |
| December 2016 |  | X | 1 meeting |
| January 2017 | X |  | 2 meetings |
| **TOTAL Meetings** | **14** | **2** | **16** |

**B. Number of meetings held**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | ***Task-Force*** | **WG** | **Number of meetings held** |
| January 2016 | X |  | 2 meetings |
| February to April 2016 | X |  | 3 meetings |
| May 2016 |  | X | 1 meeting |
| May to December 2016 | X |  | 4 meetings |
| December 2016 | - | - | - |
| January 2017 | X |  | 2 meetings |
| March 2017 | X |  | 1 meeting |
| **TOTAL Meetings** | **12** | **1** | **13** |

Using the services of external experts to provide input for this *Task-Force* is estimated to mean the involvement of a maximum of 21 experts, which would correspond to the involvement of one external expert at each of the *Task-Force*’s 14 meetings and of two external experts at half of the *Task-Force*’s meetings.

Furthermore, the *Task-Force* may also call upon internal experts (belonging to the European School system, such as teachers, inspectors, etc.) to provide input. Their number is estimated at the involvement of one internal expert at each of the *Task-Force*’s meetings.

**C. Estimated number and effective number of days of meeting of the Task-Force**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Estimated number of the Task-Force meeting days** |  | **Effective number of the Task-Force meeting days** |
| 14 | President of the BIS | 12 |
| 21 | External experts | 10 |
| 14 | Internal experts | 25 |

**D. Number of participants to the meetings held**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | **Date** | **Number of participants** | **Task Force** | **Stakeholders** |
|  |  | **Participants** | **Experts** | **TOT** |  |  |
| **January 2016** | 13/01 | 3 | - | **3** | X |  |
|  | 27/01 | 3  | 1 Expert | **4** | X |  |
| **February to April 2016** | 08/03 | 3  | 2 Experts | **5** | X |  |
|  | 18/03 | 6  | 2 Experts | **8** | X |  |
|  | 20/04 | 3 | - | **3** | X |  |
| ***May2016[[1]](#footnote-1)*** | *19/05* | *27*  | *2 Experts* | ***29*** |  | *X* |
| **May to December 2016** | 31/05 | 3 | - | **3** | X |  |
|  | 05/10 | 5 | - | **5** | X |  |
|  | 28/11 | 7 | 2 Experts | **9** | X |  |
|  | 14/12 | 7 | - | **7** | X |  |
| **January 2017** | 12/01 | 7 | - | **7** | X |  |
|  | 23/01 | 7 | 2 Experts | **9** | X |  |
| **March 2017** | 13/03 | 7 | 1 Expert | **8** | X |  |
| **TOTAL Meetings** | **13** |  |  |  | **12** | **1** |

**E. ‘Task-Froce – L3’ Sub-working group**

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| **Period** | **Date** | **Participants** | **Experts** | **TOT** | **Sub-WG – Task Force** |
| January 2017 | 26/01 | 4 | - | **4** | **1** |

1. **The number of participants to the « Stakeholders’ » meeting is not included in the effective number of days of meeting shown at table 3.** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)