



## Minutes of the School Board - Wednesday May 27, 2020

### Present members:

Mr. David Ballieu (principal)  
Ms. Karine Sako (director)  
Ms. Delphine Castre (Supervisor and Assistant Principal)  
Ms. Elise Blaizot (French and Francophonie Task Officer)  
Miss Adelaide Van Der Auwera (student representative)  
Mr. Yasser Awarki (student representative)  
Ms. Maëlle Longueville (representative of secondary school teaching staff)  
Mr. Rémi Salomon (representative of the primary school teaching staff)  
Ms. Cécile Juhel (representative of the primary school teaching staff)  
Ms. Chrystel Delaigue (representative of secondary school teaching staff)  
Ms. Astrid Dessi (parents' representative)  
Ms. Nathalie Ocran-Edmund (parents' representative)  
Ms. Nana Akosua Owusu (parents' representative)  
Mr. Krishan Kappor and Ms. Julie Hellemann (members of the School Management Board)

### Absent

Mr. Maurice Abolo-Oppong, representative of administrative and service staff

The objective of this SB meeting is to provide answers to the questions parents' representatives may have regarding the current distance learning system set up at the LFA and its continuation until the reopening of the school.

### 1- Assessment of pedagogical continuity and new learning method

*Reminder by the Parents' Representatives of the importance of this item on the agenda:*

*First of all, we would like to thank the administration and the teaching staff for having quickly set up the system and for having mastered the tools to ensure continuation efficiency.*

*The objective is to have a better understanding of the principle of educational continuity following AEFE standards, of its implementation by the LFA, based on the protocol of educational continuity devised by the AEFE.*

*A better understanding of the administrative framework for this continuity by all would eventually make it possible for parents to review their expectations and enable better communication within the school community. We believe that this protocol, unless distribution is restricted, could be shared with the members of the School Board. Otherwise, a presentation of the outline of this protocol could certainly suffice.*

*In addition, a presentation of the results of the administration's survey of parents will complete this point.*

*The members will take note of the information that could be communicated to us on this very first point of the agenda.*

The Principal, M. BALLIEU:

The school has been closed since March 16 by decision of Madam Ambassador of France following the declaration of 2 cases of COVID 19 in the country and the fears of many parents. We were then the only school to have closed without any case being declared.

On March 16th, the President of Ghana announced the closing of schools across the country.

On March 16, the principal asked for the organization of primary and secondary school meetings to set up remote work.

On Tuesday, March 17th, the teams were up and running, showing very good anticipation and efficiency skills.

The AEFÉ sent a VADEMECUM to all school principals around the world for the setting up of educational continuity, to allow the rapid and optimal organization of the network.

The LFA then chose and ensured that:

- the pupils' usual timetables were not changed
- the workload was not increased compared to what was done in class
- videoconferences were set up (importance of alternating synchronous and asynchronous moments)

The principal made sure that:

- students' daily working time was respected
- enough computers were made available for parents: some computers were lent to families

#### Elementary school

- a common and unique tool: a class drive
- videoconferences set up from the second week of lockdown
- congratulation messages or regular reminders sent to students
- watch-keeping device to keep in touch with all children; 2 reminders to parents; then copy of message sent to management; then if no response, direct call to families
- additional FLESCO teachers to help English-speaking pupils facing difficulties with the work

Ms. DESSI:

- How many synchronous and asynchronous moments does the AEFÉ recommend?
- How many computers has the school lent to families?

Principal:

- No recommendation in the VADEMECUM on the synchronous and asynchronous teaching hours but the National Education Inspector recommends less than an hour in front of the screens per day for children under 8 years of age and 3 hours for other pupils
- 15 laptops have been lent to secondary school pupils and 9 to primary school pupils.

Training courses were set up to help teachers understand the required IT tools to implement the system - not all teachers had the same technical skills mid-March when the program started. Mr. BALLIEU thanks Mr. CADIC, expatriate professor of mathematics, for having trained and supported the teachers in this new teaching method (face-to-face training and distance training thanks to many tutorials).

The management team (the Principal, the Director, the Assistant Principal and the IT Manager) support the teachers every day by moderating hundreds of communications to parents and students.

Each week, the Principal participates in videoconferences with all the principals of the region and the Head of the Africa region to work and discuss practices. Every two weeks, the Director, the National Education Inspector of the region and all the directors hold their own videoconferences.

For security reasons, the link to videoconferences was given only a few minutes before the meeting. However, since the messages must be moderated before the pupils or the parents receive them, there may have been some delays because of this. So the Principal requests anticipating the sending of the videoconference links. If there is an emergency, teachers get in touch directly with one of the moderators by phone.

Ms. DELAIGUE:

She confirms that she had this concern regarding an assignment given to the students, the moderation did not take place in the minutes that followed.

She says she gave her personal number, given the exceptional circumstances of DL (Distance Learning) but the students send homework up to 11 p.m. We must be careful and she will communicate on this with her students who may not be aware that beyond 6 p.m., teachers no longer have to make themselves available.

The principal organized information and regulation meetings in educational counseling for secondary school teachers:

- April 9th: reminder of the rules, discussions on conditions for implementation and feedback from parents
- May 12: 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester assessments and examinations

The director organized regulatory meetings:

- per cycle (1, 2 and 3)
- with the English team
- with the FLESCO team

On the following subjects: rules, videoconferences, 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester reports, feedback from parents, priority concepts, pupils with difficulties, assessment, "picture messages and street interview" projects, International Section, CM2-6<sup>ème</sup> liaison.

## **2- Feedback from teachers and parents**

*Parents' representatives: this involves sharing the experience of the various players in the school community.*

**Reminder:** *we are presenting the feedback and needs expressed by the parents, who by the nature of things, assist the teachers in their educational mission, as the ATSEM do in the smallest classes.*

*In the higher classes where students are requested to be more autonomous, both children and parents found it difficult to follow this recommendation.*

*Children are often reluctant to do their own work and parents, out of concern for doing the right thing and afraid of letting the child struggle with his/her learning, have instinctively taken on a more educational role than they were asked to and they are not able to do so flawlessly.*

*Above all, these concerns should not be seen as a right to dictate to teachers, experts in pedagogy, what they have to do. Rather, far from any pretension, we underline the constraints and difficulties of these "new assistants", devoid of the qualities that a teacher must have, in the new support mission which has imposed itself upon them.*

*In addition, we are not providing feedback from personal and specific experiences and blowing it into a general fact for all classes. It is simply a matter of having a common vision of what certain classes could experience. It is up to us, with full knowledge of the facts, to make a constructive and beneficial use of it for everyone.*

*As a reminder and according to the AEFÉ: "The sharing of experience, solidarity, understanding and complicity between the members of the school community contribute to the success of distance learning".*

*We therefore ask you to read them, to listen to them, to hear them objectively. An incorrect interpretation of our approach would affect the successful outcome of this challenge of educational continuity. We all know what the context is and so far, the challenge has been taken up quite well overall.*

*It is important to recognize that the children in the higher classes work independently and both the students and the parents understand that no pressure is placed upon them to perform in a hurry. Some perform well, others do what they can, and others seem to have given up.*

*The members will be invited to take note of each experience, to discuss them and to decide on the follow-up to be given to the requests and needs expressed.*

Feedback on the experience of teachers in primary school:

- preparation of explicit work plans for students
- availability within an extremely wide range of hours (sometimes 10 hours a day)
- study of each photo of the work done then correction, comment (considerable time compared to a correction of daily notebooks)
- the flexibility granted to students to hand in the work adds working time (return grid made up and filled in by the teachers to monitor everyone's work)
- time spent on videoconferences, emails, phone conversations, WhatsApp exchanges with students and parents
- individual help offered

Ms. DESSI:

What means are implemented to ensure that students keep on learning?

Teachers send reminders on a regular basis. The Assistant Principal and the Director relay them if necessary. More time (flexibility) is granted to hand in assignments.

Ms. JUHEL:

Problems due to time difference - depending on the country in which teachers or students are - must be taken into account. No message nor work requires an immediate response, even if it is always better to provide regular feedback when possible.

The Principal surveyed the parents for their feedback. The conclusions to the 5 questions were overwhelmingly positive, 1 or 2 parents per class shared some difficulties:

- large family
- working parents having little or no time
- English-speaking parents monitoring their children

DL will not replace classroom teaching, obviously. Follow-up is different depending on the method used. Not all the curricula will have been covered, but the essential points will have been studied. We hear the parents' anxiety.

Institutional information was shared as soon as it was officially communicated to the principal (grades, exams, end-of-year reports, orientation follow-up).

The distance learning system (DLS) set up at the LFA is based on:

- adaptation
- regulation (based on parents' feedback)
- listening
- benevolence
- action over time

It should be noted that the future of students is not at stake at this particular moment of their schooling.

The Principal acknowledges the teachers' roles in the DL framework and thanks them for the work done.

Ms. DESSI:

Parents are also to be congratulated for having adapted to this situation and carrying out a mission that they did not choose.

Principal:

The parents' request for synchronous teaching moments must be taken into account. Sometimes, some messages sent by parents were not very constructive, even though they denoted increased stress. Writing to a teacher "I tell you to..." is not the best way to make contact. It is necessary to take a step back and be careful not to offend the recipients.

The teacher is the first point of contact for a parent before copying the direction.

Ms. DELAIGUE:

There may have been some concerns in the organization of meetings in videoconferences and inappropriate comments from some parents but generally, the feedback is good, courteous and encouraging.

Ms. JUHEL:

When the teacher is not informed about possible problems and all of a sudden a message is sent to the direction about the malfunctions, it is quite brutal. The teachers make themselves available enough, you have to communicate with them. It is critically important.

Ms. OWUSU:

- current teaching and assessments?
- grade promotion?
- help for English-speaking parents?
- resources for the holidays?

The teachers have listed the priorities. Teachers will communicate on the progress made over the year on the targeted skills and those that will not have been studied to colleagues in the subsequent class. At the beginning of next year, teachers will set up diagnostic assessments of the skills covered and adapt the first lessons of the school year accordingly.

The teachers assess daily productions and make ad hoc evaluations (they take all aid materials into account: parents, books, copybooks, etc.). They will comment on the studied skills only.

The transition to the upper class is not decided in June, it is a long process which requires several rounds of communication between the teacher, the family and the school direction starting at the end of the first quarter.

Teachers will communicate to the upper class the skills they have studied and those that have not been covered in order to adapt the diagnostic assessments and adapt the first lessons. Spiral education makes it possible to review a large number of skills each year.

We resort to different means to try to help English-speaking parents who are challenged:

- FLESCO teachers help students understand the work given
- translations are provided but not all classes are able to do so
- videoconferences are offered on an individual basis
- telephone interviews are set up

Educational resources have been given to parents for the Easter holidays.

Mr. SALOMON

The teachers note that everything is going well with almost 90% of work done. That is excellent. Very few students have dropped out. Parents are not to send a perfect assignment, we ask for activity feedback, "imperfect" as it may be, just as when done in class. The errors made allow us to see what the student did not understand and the teacher will help him/her to get there. Sending a corrected assignment does not serve the students who might need help. At school, we build knowledge and skills.

Remediation (helping a student who made a mistake) makes up 50% of the learning process. There should be no fear of resending a job with errors.

Ms. OCRAN-EDMUND:

- Lack of communication from the onset to clarify expectations vis-à-vis parents, which may have generated parents' stress and frustrations.
- The parents' representatives on the School Board want constructive communication between teachers and parents to find the energy for a second wind.
- What is the role of parents assisting their children? *They are carers for their children (watch over daily work, read an instruction if there is any difficulty, rephrase an instruction in the event of misunderstanding, encourage...)*
- What is autonomy in your view? *To be autonomous implies letting the student find solutions by him/herself in his/her work and assisting him/her when necessary.*
- In these exceptional circumstances, it is important to maintain a link and interactions between teachers and parents for children's sake and to ensure the success of this DL strategy. Some families' expectations have not yet been met. And it is essential to hear that some are unsatisfied with DL. These families and children who need more in-depth support should not be overlooked.

- We must also take into account students with special educational needs, who are assisted in face-to-face teaching time. This situation makes their workload more important, both for them and their families.

Ms. CASTRE:

No high school student has dropped out, some students have been struggling with autonomy in 6<sup>eme</sup>, 5<sup>eme</sup> and 4<sup>eme</sup>, the teachers are helping and so is the Assistant Principal.

Ms. DELAIGUE:

- concern over the coming months

Monotony

- consider the same students with the same teachers next year

- need for holidays and a real break for both students and teachers

M. BALLIEU:

The competence of the SB in educational and pedagogical matters is to discuss the framework and the main principles implemented by the school. This is what is presented today to the members of the SB. This does not mean that what we have put in place is perfect, but most teachers have done a very good job. The situation was unprecedented and we built everything as we went along. We are aware of the difficulties that may be encountered; the necessary and very important support for pupils with special needs in particular.

Ms. DESSI:

Representatives at the SB are working on a project. A number of them have been involved in this voluntary service for a year, even two for some. They are in touch with the parents. Parents are delighted that most parents and students are doing well with DL but a minority has appealed to them and they must also report their problems and difficulties. Parents have no teaching skills, they assist and support their children.

Ms. JUHEL:

When work is not handed in, it becomes difficult to send reminders. The teacher then asks these 2 questions:

- Is it mere oversight? So I send the reminder.

- Is there any possible difficulty? Then sending a reminder may be perceived as a form of pressure.

### 3- Opportunity to adopt internal rules for the virtual LFA

*Here again, we are dealing with a matter of communication and of understanding of what our school life is like outside of the Lycée, especially if this experience were to continue over the long term or were to repeat itself in the near future. This calls for answering the questions below (non-exhaustive list) and to note the answers in an official document which would be communicated to all.*

*These questions relate in particular to:*

- *Last quarter's assessments: answer page 4, Mrs. OWUSU*
- *Upgrading to upper class: answer page 4, Mrs. OWUSU*
- *Communication methods with teachers: intervention page 4, Principal*
- *Intellectual property rights and protection of personal data: from Zoom to Google Meet (data protection), Pronote, Drive and Google Classroom = secure devices adopted by the LFA*
- *Support for English-speaking families: answer on page 4, before Mr. SALOMON's intervention*
- *Reminder of authorized digital tools: computers, tablets, phones*
- *Conditions for reopening: answer on page 6, other matters*

*Decisions:*

The school's internal regulations remain in force during this time of lockdown.

The events scheduled for the end of the year:

-class councils and orientation sessions over zoom for certain classes (3<sup>eme</sup>, 2<sup>nde</sup> and Terminale)

- Tests given during lockdown will not be taken into account for the exam classes

-School reports will take into account the work provided during lockdown with feedback from the teachers.

#### 4- Other matters

*Here we present the various questions*

##### *1. Reopening this year? Opening conditions for next year?*

To consider reopening, it would be necessary:

- for Ghana to reopen its schools
- for the school's authority boards to hold consultations
- for a meeting of the CHSCT (Health, Safety and Working Conditions Committee) to be held
- for a meeting of the primary school teachers' council, and the secondary school teachers' pedagogical council to be organized to collect the teachers' opinion
- for the School Board to meet to inform parents on the conditions of this reopening
- for a positive endorsement of the French Embassy and the AEFÉ to be made

We have no clear vision of how things will evolve in the country so this poses some challenges. We know COVID cases are increasing: 7,100 known cases and 37 deaths

Ms. EBLAIZOT:

Parents' associations and teachers' unions were consulted.

Most are against reopening the school, and would then oppose the reopening of the school, were the government to request it.

##### *2. Possible access to the BCD or CDI (school libraries) for families who request it?*

By appointment only, in compliance with the security rules of the school.

IMPORTANT:

With regards to tuition fees, the Board has no plan to reduce them. Why?

The dispute settlement (with the Coinvent company) in December 2018 has strongly impacted the financial provisions of the school. The increase in tuition fees (that has been passed by vote) covers the country's known rate of inflation. Yet, we need to invest if we want to be competitive. The LFA thus cannot afford such reduction today.

In case of difficulty, parents should contact the LFA financial affairs department.

Ms. HELLEMANN: we are attentive to parents' needs, but the school's survival may be at risk. We have no clear and certain prospects on new registrations and registration renewals. The AEFÉ does not recommend reducing school fees either.

Ms. BOURGET (DAF): we have received requests from parents and we are open to payment facilities and schedules.

Ms. OCRAN-EDMUND:

In the event of forced and sudden repatriation, would the 500 euros prepayment be reimbursed? The Management Board would have to be consulted.

Miss Adélaïde VAN DER ARUWERA: Could secondary school teachers explain to the students that it would be more acceptable for everyone to turn their cameras on, as we do here during this meeting?

It should be mandatory, to verify everyone's identity during each videoconference.

Ms. DESSI:


Note on communication methods: a formal introduction for families, contextual setting, was lacking in the primary school charter of good conduct during videoconferences.

What about the investment projects presented to parents during the last General Assembly (GA)? Parents ask us about the promise that was made to them during this GA to keep them informed, or even to consult them on the investments that would be decided.

Principal's Response: The question will be discussed during the CA.

End of meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Secretariat - Ms. Sako Karine - Ms. Ocran-Edmund Nathalie

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left is larger and more stylized, while the one on the right is smaller and more compact.