

**Annual report
2019-2020
Participation council
Wolfert van Borselen school group**



Dear Reader,

It gives me pleasure to present the annual report of the Wolfert van Borselen school group's participation council for the 2019-2020 school year. In publishing this report our chief intention is to give an impression of the participation council's activities in this period.

This foreword would not be complete without a reference to the coronavirus outbreak and the ensuing crisis. Like many other sectors in society, the education sector experienced at first hand the impact of the crisis and the measures needed to contain the virus. You will no doubt have followed the reports in the various media, or have experienced the impact of these measures yourself. In this foreword, I would like to compliment everyone working for the Wolfert van Borselen school group for their boundless energy and flexibility – qualities rarely used to describe the education sector – in trying, and in most cases succeeding, sometimes through trial and error, in making the best of a very difficult situation. The participation council was closely involved, in consultation and coordination with the Wolfert van Borselen's central management team. I want to thank the team for this.

You will understand that the coronavirus crisis also had an impact on the work of the participation council itself. This unprecedented situation made many demands on the time and energy of the council members. Of course, we tried to focus our attention on all the necessary issues, but the stress and strain caused by the crisis took their toll. This is one of the main reasons why the various working groups managed to carry out fewer activities than normal. But I welcome the challenge of dealing with the backlog in the new school year.

Apart from the coronavirus crisis, this foreword would not be complete without mentioning the participation council's concerns at the situation at Wolfert Dalton in Rotterdam Schiebroek. This school is struggling. The participation council sincerely hopes that everyone involved will make a fresh effort in the new school year. We will monitor developments, and support the school wherever possible.

The participation council is pleased to see that Wolfert Lansing has succeeded in turning the corner. We want to congratulate everyone who has played a part in bringing this about.

And now to the report itself. First you will find some general information on what the participation council is and does. You will then be introduced to the members of the Wolfert van Borselen school group's council and the delegations they represent. Finally, we will show how links between the various schools have taken shape.

We hope you enjoy reading this report as much as we enjoyed carrying out the participation council's work. We have included our contact details at the end of the report. Please do not hesitate to contact us. Communication with you is our rationale.

Hoping to see you all again soon,

On behalf of the participation council,

Maarten van Gulik
Chair

You can contact the participation
council at:
mrvoorzitterwvb@wolfert.nl
mrsecretariswvb@wolfert.nl

Introducing the Wolfert van Borselen school group's participation council

What is the participation council?

Under the Participation (Schools) Act every school is required to have a participation council – a consultative body representing the interests of each stakeholder in the school. These stakeholders are as follows:

- students
- students' parents
- teachers
- support staff, e.g. office staff
- caretakers and classroom assistants.

Wolfert's participation council comprises members representing the various stakeholders, with votes distributed as follows: four votes for the students, four for the parents and eight for the staff members of the school group.

Rob Fens and Matthijs Ruitenbergh, representing the central management team and the competent authority, also attend the meetings of the participation council as our guests and discussion partners.

What does the participation council do?

The participation council assesses and responds to the school leadership's policy plans on subjects such as the school plan, the budget, the staff establishment and the school holidays. The council may also initiate policy. In each case, the participation council possesses advisory powers, and in many cases powers of consent, i.e. the school may only introduce certain measures if the participation council has given its consent. The participation council can therefore exert a decisive influence on the school.

N.B. The participation council is responsible for monitoring procedures and general outlines, but not for assessing individual problems or disputes.



Who sits on the participation council?

Students:

Eveline Tan, Sara van der Woude, Nisa Özen and Wing Hee Cheng.

Parents:

Cynthia Christiani, Marc Engels, Perry Nagelkerken and Esther van Oosten

Staff:

Inger de Wit, Freek Groeneweg, René Campo, Maarten van Gulik, Jurrien Cremers, Philip Westra, Marthe Poot and Jelle Meens

An overview of the members and their term on the council is included in the annexe to this report. This was the last year on the participation council for Wing Hee and René Campo. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their work, their commitment and their contribution.

The participation council in the 2019-2020 school year

As in previous years, the participation council again worked with an annual agenda (see annexe), so that certain subjects were discussed at set times in the year. These included the school prospectus, school plans, the management statutes and BOOR, the job mix, staff promotion norms, the staff establishment plans, the school holidays, the annual financial report, the budget and the parental contributions. As usual, we received feedback from the joint participation council, which represents all public-authority secondary schools in Rotterdam.

Main points

This year, the participation council focused on the following schools and issues:

- Wolfert Dalton, given changes to the management team, falling student numbers and concerns expressed by the staff;
- Wolfert Lansing and the appointment of an interim head;
- the future of the Wolfert van Borselen school group and
- connecting the participation council and the various schools.

Government decisions led to the following interesting issues:

- scrapping of the national examinations in the wake of the coronavirus crisis;
- provision of distance learning, and the reopening of the schools;
- capital injection by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Other issues addressed by the participation council were as follows:

- evaluation of the professional development days after the 2018-2019 pilot project;
- strike money in the 2019-2020 school year.

Each school is discussed in more detail further on in this report.

Participation council membership

In the 2018-2019 school year, the participation council worked with an independent, outsourced chair. However, this year's chair, Maarten van Gullik, was elected from among the members of the council. Marthe Poot was the council's secretary. This year too, saw several interim changes to the membership. Eveline Tan took over from Youssef Benabou (students' delegation), while Marc Engels took over from Paul Aertsen (parents' delegation).

Activities of the various delegations and working groups

The staff, the students and the parents each have advisory powers or rights of consent on various issues. To ensure recommendations were thoroughly prepared, we again worked with various delegations and mixed working groups. These working groups dealt with various subjects, fleshing them out and discussing them in the participation council.

Students' delegation

The students were represented in the participation council by four delegates. Sara from Wolfert Bilingual joined us after last year's elections. One of the students decided to step down from the participation council in the course of the year, making way for Eveline.

Our aim is to represent the interests of every student attending a Wolfert school, and we thus take part individually in the various working groups. Subjects we have addressed this year include the norms for moving up a class, Programmes of Testing and Completion, school holidays and student safety at school.

This year we will be taking our leave of Wing Hee. He has passed his VWO leaving examinations, so that a seat is now free for a new student representative to join our delegation on the participation council next year.

Contacts: Eveline Tan (Wolfert Bilingual), Nisa Özen (Wolfert Dalton), Sara van der Woude (Wolfert Bilingual) and Wing Hee Cheng (Wolfert Lyceum)

Parents' delegation

We started out in September 2019 with four enthusiastic parents, one of whom had to step down, but who could be replaced very quickly. We met at several locations for discussions on various subjects.

Our focus soon shifted to the future and quality of teaching. Not that the quality is poor, but we would like to see the schools push the envelope. Cancellation of lessons is a recurrent issue. In general, the students do not regard it as a problem, but parents take a different view. Since we represent the parents, we raised this issue with both the leadership and the staff.

In early 2020, the world was hit by the coronavirus. For the school group, this meant a shift to online teaching. The parents' delegation focused on vulnerable students.

In the next school year we will continue to take a critical look at quality and care, together with the students' and staff delegations and the central management team.

Contacts: Perry Nagelkerken (Wolfert Lyceum), Esther van Oosten (Wolfert Lyceum), Cynthia Christiani (Wolfert College) and Marc Engels (Wolfert Bilingual)

Staff delegation

The staff delegation spent much of the past year addressing the changes to the management teams at various schools. These changes led to a degree of unrest and in some cases dissatisfaction among the staff at the schools in question. The participation council will continue to focus on ensuring stability and continuity at the various schools in the coming year.

The interview cycle at each of the schools in the school group proved to be an issue for the staff delegation. However, since the coronavirus crisis prevented us from discussing this subject at more length, we plan to put it on next year's agenda. In the 2020-2021 school year, BOOR will pursue a general policy on the interview cycle. We feel that the professional development of members of staff will benefit from this.

In the wake of the coronavirus crisis, the participation council examined the various schools' Programme of Testing and Completion, and advised on granting resits at each school.

This year and last, we also addressed the matter of strike money, and how the freed-up funds should be spent at each location.

Contacts: Jelle Meens (Wolfert College), Inger de Wit (Wolfert Dalton), Maarten van Gulik (Wolfert Lyceum), Freek Groeneweg (Wolfert Lyceum), René Campo (Wolfert Lyceum), Philip Westra (Wolfert RISS), Jurrien Cremers (Wolfert Bilingual) and Marthe Poot (Wolfert Bilingual)

Participation council working groups

Working group on the collective labour agreement and reducing pressure of work

Last year, the staff working group actively contributed to applying the provisions of article 8.2 of the 2018-2019 collective labour agreement for secondary education. Under a pilot project, five days were timetabled for professional development at Wolfert College, Wolfert Dalton, Wolfert Lansing, Wolfert Lyceum and Wolfert Bilingual. Since timetabled teaching time at Wolfert RISS is less than the statutory maximum, the school was not eligible for participation in this scheme. Each school's experience was subsequently evaluated.

With the help of the staff working group, the central management team compiled a questionnaire. In response, a large majority (79.7%) of staff members indicated that they would welcome the inclusion of professional development days in next year's timetable. And 62.6% of the respondents said that the professional development days had contributed to reducing pressure of work.

However, experience of and approaches to the professional development days differed from school to school. At some schools, for example, the professional development days were often planned on the same day of the week, despite the fact that in his memorandum, Rob Fens had urged the schools to rotate, so that each staff member would benefit equally. A proposal for next year is to organise Wolfert-wide professional development days, creating the opportunity for staff members to work with colleagues from other schools.

The participation council, more specifically the staff working group, is aware of these differences and recommendations, and will devote attention to them.

For the reference of the readers of this report, the relevant article of the Collective Labour Agreement is cited below.

Article 8.2 of the 2018-2019 Collective Labour Agreement (CAO) for Secondary Education addresses pressure of work /time for educational development. The basic gist of this article is as follows:

- ✓ At schools where the maximum timetabled teaching time amounts to 750 or more clock hours a year, this will be reduced by 30 clock hours a year as of 1 August 2019. Time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) activities will be added, so that a total of 50 clock hours will be freed up.
- ✓ Time for educational development is intended for educational innovation and for broadening and strengthening teaching.
- ✓ The teaching staff will hold talks on use of the freed up hours. These talks will be held within teams, departments or other groups to be decided by the school.
- ✓ The reduction to the maximum timetabled teaching time referred to in article 8.2 of the CAO will be effected by adjusting the curriculum and thus the timetable, using the scope provided for this in the Teaching Hours Act.
- ✓ The talks referred to above need to have been held by 1 March 2019 at the latest, followed by agreement with the Participation Council (MR) on adjustment of the curriculum. The MR staff representative will ensure that this plan has the support of the teaching staff.
- ✓ Every teacher eligible for a reduction in teaching time should draw up a plan showing how they will use the freed up time for educational development. At the end of the year they will report on the results they have achieved.
- ✓ This measure does not mean less work, but a change in work. Teaching time will be exchanged for time for educational development, if a teacher's standard working year includes the maximum timetabled teaching time.

Contacts: Jelle Meens (Wolfert College), Marthe Poot (Wolfert Bilingual) and Inger de Wit (Wolfert Dalton)

Working group on finance

The working group on finance works on the budget with Matthijs Ruitenbergh, the school group's financial director, and serves as a sounding board for decisions on financial issues. The working group focused on the following issues in the 2019-2020 school year:

- Budget and financial planning;
- 2017 financial report.

Contacts: Perry Nagelkerken (parent, Wolfert Lyceum), Philip Westra (staff, Wolfert RISS) and Freek Groeneweg (staff Wolfert Lyceum)

Election committee

This year, a member of the students' delegation and a member of the parents' delegation stepped down from the participation council before completing their term. They were replaced by new members who had taken part in the previous elections but had not received enough votes for a seat on the council. As a result, the council did not need to hold an extra election.

The election committee was asked to draw up a schedule of resignations, with due regard for article 12 of the Wolfert van Borselen internal regulations on participation, i.e.

Half of the seats become available every two years, when, under the regulations, the members in question are required to resign. An election is therefore held every two years, ensuring both continuation and replenishment of knowledge and experience

This means that an election must be held every two years. The schedule of resignations will be introduced in stages, starting in the 2021-2022 school year.

Contacts: Jurrien Cremers (staff, Wolfert Bilingual), Wing Hee Cheng (student, Wolfert Lyceum) and Sara van der Woude (student, Wolfert Bilingual)

Links between the participation council and the various Wolfert schools

Apart from maintaining contact through the members from the various schools, the participation council experienced the feel of the individual schools by holding plenary meetings at each school in rotation. Below you will find the main issues affecting each school in the 2019-2020 school year. During several of the meetings, we discussed whether the participation council in its current form still met the needs of the school group, given its particular nature. One option we considered was the addition of an extra layer of sub-councils. This subject needs more attention.

Wolfert Dalton (WD)

Wolfert Dalton is represented in the participation council by both staff and students. The council continued to monitor progress with the new building plans, which have now reached a new stage. A plan has now been drafted for a new school building, and temporary accommodation has been arranged.

Wolfert Dalton experienced some disruption in relation to its management team. After the head of school resigned in October 2019, circumstances led to the appointment of a series of interim heads. As a result both staff and students at the Wolfert Dalton had to rediscover their relationship with a succession of temporary heads of school.

Several members of the participation council were actively involved in recruiting a new head of school for Wolfert Dalton, and the procedure was successful. Wolfert Dalton will start the new school year with a completely new management team.

Contacts: Inger de Wit (teacher) and Nisa Özen (student)

Wolfert Bilingual (WT)

Wolfert Bilingual is represented in the participation council by staff, parents and students. Issues affecting Wolfert Bilingual that were discussed in the participation council included abolition of the required average score of 7 as the norm for moving up to the next year, and the introduction of new norms. The participation council also monitored the introduction of 90 minute lessons for some subjects and the new timetable, with a later start.

Use of the professional development days at Wolfert Bilingual was also evaluated. Staff members at this school greatly appreciated the fact that they could work either at home or at school.

The participation council also held talks on the possible launch of an international campus, and the consequences for the future of Wolfert Bilingual.

During the coronavirus crisis, we also devoted attention to communication and conclusions on distance learning.

Contacts: Jurrien Cremers, Marthe Poot, (teachers), Marc Engels (parent), Sara van der Woude and Eveline Tan (students)

Wolfert Lansing (WLa)

Wolfert Lansing has no official representative in the participation council. However, Jan den Boer represents the school in his capacity as observer. A member of Wolfert Lansing's staff will join the council in the next school year.

The participation council addressed situations relevant to the school. These included the new building plans, extended lessons and information to parents on Wolfert-wide developments such as parental contributions.

Contact: Jan den Boer (staff)

Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS)

The transformation set in motion by the new school principal is still underway. The outlines of the transformation process are now becoming clearer and are having a generally positive effect on the school. The senior campus is now nearing completion, and will give RISS more growth opportunities. A number of major policy documents have been approved by the participation council. They include the assessment policy document and the academic integrity policy document, both of which were required for NEASC accreditation.

The plans for a new international campus have reached a new stage, and the Rotterdam municipal authorities are now devoting more time and energy to them. The participation council will need to be very closely involved in these plans in the next few years. Scenarios including RISS merging with Blijberg or carrying on as an independent school, possibly no longer within the Wolfert van Borselen school group. The participation council will need to monitor developments very closely. Another issue for the next school year is time for professional development, which is organised differently at the RISS than at the other Wolfert schools.

Contact: Philip Westra (staff)

Wolfert College (WC)

Wolfert College is represented in the participation council by both staff and parents. Apart from the subjects like finance, the annual plan and the staff establishment plan that recur each year, we again discussed article 8.2. of the collective labour agreement on reducing pressure of work. The five professional development days were evaluated, and will again be timetabled next year.

Of course, we also examined how the coronavirus crisis affected the school. Consequences and solutions were discussed in the participation council.

Contacts: Cynthia Christiani (parent) and Jelle Meens (staff)

Wolfert Lyceum (WL)

Wolfert Lyceum is represented in the Wolfert van Borselen school group participation council by three members of staff, two parents and one student.

In the past school year we discussed the staff establishment plan and the results of the satisfaction survey held among staff, parents and students. The participation council and the Staff Advisory Council (PAR) hold regular talks with the head of school on subjects including the budget, financial reporting and progress with other subjects on the participation council agenda.

Contacts: Maarten van Gulik (teacher), Freek Groeneweg (teacher), René Campo (ICT), Perry Nagelkerken (parent), Esther van Oosten (parent) and Wing Hee Cheng (student)

ANNEXE: members of the participation council, 2019-2020

Teaching / support staff	school/subject	Working group	Member from	Term ends	2nd term ends
Inger de Wit	WD/English	Staff, Participation Council 2.0	2015.09	2019	2023
Freek Groeneweg	WL/Geography	Finance	2014.09	2018	2022
René Campo	WL/ICT	ICT	2016.09	2020	
Maarten van Gulik	WL/History	Participation Council 2.0, Quality of teaching	2017.09	2021	
Philip Westra	RISS/Economics	Finance	2018.09	2022	
Marthe Poot	WT/English	Staff	2018.09	2022	
Jelle Meens	WC/PE	Staff, Participation Council 2.0	2018.09	2022	
Jurrien Cremers	WT-WI/History	Elections, Quality of teaching	2018.09	2022	
ouders					
Marc Engels	WT		2019.09	2023	
Cynthia Christiani	WC	Participation Council 2.0, Quality of teaching	2019.09	2023	
Perry van Nagelkerken	WL	Finance	2019.09	2023	
Esther van Oosten	WL	Quality of teaching	2019.09	2023	
leerlingen					
Nisa Özen	WD	Participation Council 2.0	2018.09	2022	
Sara van der Woude	WT	Elections	2019.09	2023	
Wing Hee Cheng	WL	Elections	2018.09	2020	
Eveline Tan	WT	Participation Council 2.0	2018.09	2022	

ANNEXE: 2019-2020 annual plan

	Date	School	Subjects 2019-2020
1	11-09-2019	WT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Norms for moving up a class at all schools except WT ● Programme of Testing and Completion - 5 schools (excluding RISS) ● 2019-2020 school prospectus ● Support plan, school group follow-up plan to the special needs plans ● Decision on use of strike money, in response to a proposal from the participation council ● Participation council meetings (schedule for the year) ● Activity plans (6 schools) ● Participation council aims ● Working groups ● Training for participation council members ● Wolfert in the 21st century (the future of the Wolfert van Borselen school group)
2	16-10-2019	WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2019 budget ● 2018 financial report ● School prospectuses ● Job mix ● Communications with the grassroots ● Interview cycle (factfinding)
3	26-11-2019	WLa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 20-21 annual plan (progress in relation to multiyear school plan) ● 20-21 annual special needs plan ● 20-21 annual training plan ● Participation council annual report ● School holidays
4	13-01-2020	WL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation council evaluation ● Participation council annual plan, new version ● Preparations for elections ● Building projects
5	19-02-2020	RISS Junior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation council budget ● Elections ● Use of 2019-2020 parental contribution and size of parental contribution in 2020-2021
6	24-03-2020	WD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2019 annual report ● Enrolments – current status ● Provisional staff establishment plan
7	21-04-2020	WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrolments – current status/update and consequences for staff establishment ● Interview cycle at each school (prospects for coming year) ● Participation council regulations and school rules updates ● Draft participation council annual report ● Satisfaction surveys

8	27-05-2020	WT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff establishment plan ● Participation council annual report ● Agenda for coming year ● Interview cycle findings
9	24-06-2020	Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approval staff establishment plan ● Election results ● Agenda for next school year ● Rules of conduct ● 20-21 norms for moving up a class (preview)