APEEE
Schola Europæa – Bruxelles 1

Uccle/Berkendael

Brussels, 14 May 2021

To:

Mr Giancarlo Marcheggiano, Secretary-General of the European Schools

SUBJECT: Proposed Half Days of School in June 2021

Dear Mr Marcheggiano,

The EEBI APEEE has been informed that the four Brussels European Schools are intending to teach half days only for Nursery to S3 students during the last two weeks of the school year from 22 June to 1 July and not at all on 2 July 2021, while S4 to S6 students will finish school between 23 and 28 June depending on the year level. We note that in the official annual school calendar, these days are foreseen to be full school days. The reason given by the management for the decision to cancel teaching hours during the last two weeks of school is that after a long and complicated school year, class council meetings normally held after teaching hours will this year be held during teaching hours in order to reduce the burden on teachers.

The EEBI APEEE regrets the decision taken and the impact this will have on students and their parents. This has been a tough year for the entire school community and parents appreciate the significant efforts by hardworking teachers in difficult circumstances and understand that this has taken a toll. Nevertheless despite the best efforts of teachers, students and parents, in many cases the pandemic has made it difficult for classes to master the full curriculum foreseen for the school year. We have already asked the Director of EEBI to reconsider this decision.

The EEBI APEEE underlines that the decision is in contradiction of applicable regulations which stipulate that:

- the school year must comprise of a minimum of 180 working days for pupils;[1]
- class councils must take place outside school hours.[2]

The school therefore has no legal basis for holding class councils during what should be regular school hours, nor for curtailing the school year. The EEBI APEEE objects to any shortening of the school year against the spirit or text of the applicable rules.[3] We believe that the present decision is

1 General Rules of the European Schools, Annex 1, Rules Concerning the Schools Year. Please note that no Baccalaureate orals are taking place this year, and thus there is no reason to cancel regular class for S4-S6 students or to prevent exams being held later in the month.

2 General Rules of the European Schools Article 17, Convening and Chairing of Councils

3 http://www.uccleparents.org/apeee/prises-de-position/180-jours-de-cours/?lang=en. The APEEE has previously raised concerns about cancelled school days and a failure to adhere to the 180-days rule at

particularly problematic given the considerable teaching time already lost this year as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to a significant disruption in students' education and social development. Primary and early Secondary parents in particular are concerned that they are again being asked to look after their children during their working hours, with detriment to their availability to their employers. Secondary parents wonder why B tests cannot be shifted to the last part of June to give our students ample time to master the material in the syllabus after months of rotation learning.

It is against this background that we ask that you in your role as the Secretary-General of the European Schools to intervene and ensure compliance with the applicable regulations governing the European Schools.

We thank you for your continued work and look forward to a timely response.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
President EEBI APEEE

Copy:
Mr [redacted], Deputy Secretary-General of the European Schools
Mr [redacted], Director of the European School Brussels I

EEBI Admin Boards in January 2019, September 2019, and January 2020.