

**BASAC Minutes**  
**17 May 2012**

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the May 17, 2012 BASAC/IAC Meeting

- 1) The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM and welcomed those in attendance.
- 2) Members attending: Three teacher representatives, the student representative and three parent representatives. Also attending were the School Principal and Assistant Principal, the USAG Brussels Commander, the incoming USAG Brussels Deputy Garrison Manager the Community Commander's Representative (FMWR Director) and additional parents/faculty.
- 3) Minutes from the 29 March 2012 meeting were discussed. BASAC reviewed the proposed modifications. agreed to review last meeting's draft minutes with proposed modifications in writing via e-mail after this meeting.
- 4) Old Business:
  - 4.a) Attendance Policy:

Chairman read-out written input for Attendance Policy from the community.

Principal contributed based on recent meetings he attended with other DODDS-Europe Principals.

- There is a drive to tighten-up enforcement next year.
- There is a sense that there should be consequences of any absence.
- Vacations/Family Trips are not seen as excused absences across DODDS-E.
- The current Superintendent is trusting, "power-down".
- He is ambivalent; there are good arguments on both sides of this issue.
- We have good kids at BAS. Truancy is not a problem.
- Our concerns stem from the specific conditions of BAS. Other DODDS-E schools are not having these discussions. One key condition may be the difference between the school schedule and the NATO & Brussels holiday schedules.
- Requested BASAC's continued active involvement in addressing this issue. Principal should not have too much flexibility. Having no guidelines would be too unclear and unstructured for all.

Chairman proposes we publish a summary of the policy so as to assist families to adapt to the new reality.

The discussions centered on the fundamental question of how to preserve the ability to educate children (both those having the absence and others affected by it) and yet respect the specific conditions of assignment to Brussels. Several questions were answered, considerations were raised and solutions were proposed. Parents/students will retain the right to appeal decisions. Key issues raised included the question of make-up work, flexibility of the policy to ensure broad applicability and consistency in application of the policy in the school. The student representative highlighted that the policy can penalize students for decisions (family trips) which they cannot control.

The BASAC decided to enact three main proposals:

1. Clearly communicate to parents with a letter from BASAC (a) the consequences of unexcused absences and (b) that the new policy would be enforced.
2. Propose elaboration in the Attendance policy with a letter from BASAC.
3. Keep the issue open so as to preserve the ability to act further on this issue as required.

5) Principal's Report:

5.a) Situation with Apace Availability PfP students still unresolved. Budget cuts are still pending and expected. It remains a very sensitive and difficult issue which impacts both families and school in the confines of a very small community. The two recent letters to PfP parents caused confusion because they carried slightly different messages. Clear communication with PfP parents will be essential. However, within the school, information flow is difficult to control. The Principal's goal is to have as many back as possible, but this will not be all the students. Priority remains on the High School students.

5.b) The Terra Nova scores are in. BAS remains the highest-scoring school in DODDS. Scores were delayed this year and so would be published later than usual.

6) Garrison Commander's (GC's) Report:

6.a) LTC Ziemba introduced the incoming Deputy Garrison Manager, Mr Patrick Rothbauer. The transition of command takes place at 10:00 AM on 12 June and is followed by a reception.

6.b) New Youth Center – The Youth Center Playground is under construction. There is still no specific date for completion and opening, but the target is end of summer 2012. Only after signing for the building can resourcing of several interior requirements begin.

6.c) The snack trailer project was successfully completed, a noticeable addition to the Sterrebeek Annex sports field. The field bathrooms still need work and the Command will address that.

6.d) Due to a severe cut in funding to holiday events, the 4th of July celebrations will only include a Barbecue at the 3-Star lounge on 30 June and Fireworks at 2300 on July 4th. These will take place at the Sterrebeek Annex which will open at 2100.

7) Student Representative's Report: Ms. Rudy covered upcoming events and reported that students had many questions about the Attendance Policy and the situation regarding PfP students.

8) New Business:

8.a.) Holiday Schedule.

A parent had submitted an issue form raising this issue to better align planned holidays between BAS and NATO.

A Faculty Representative pointed-out that the school has come pretty far in the last 5 years. A parent Representative reported that there are currently 26 days / year of mismatch between the schedules, where one is off and the other is not.

A member of the USAG highlighted that changing the schedule at BAS would probably require a change to services schedules at the USAG. This could increase costs to the USAG in overtime, during a period when funds are being cut. Several other factors were identified such as: the amount of time available for Advanced Placement students to cover their challenging workload in time for National exams, the potential for non-matching schedules to provide an enduring rationale for tolerant application of the DODDS attendance policy at BAS. Student Representative reported that several students found the increased flexibility appealing. Once off the DoDDS schedule, the school would have more flexibility on scheduling holidays.

The BASAC concluded that the issue was a complicated one with several factors bearing on any decision. The necessary relevant facts were not all available and it was in any event too late to affect the schedule for SY 12-13.

The BASAC decided therefore to research the issue and relevant factors in order to revisit the question in the fall. Several participants agreed that it would be necessary to gather additional information in their areas and the experience of other DODDS schools as a part of this effort.

9) Open Session: No issues were raised, no Issue Forms were submitted.

10) The Chairman announced the next meeting would be held in the Fall after the start of SY 12-13 unless something required a meeting sooner. If so, such a meeting could be held on 14 June 12.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Secretary