



**Primary Participation Council  
2024-2025 Annual Report**

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# 1. Introduction

In this annual report for the academic year 2024–2025, the UWC Maastricht Participation Council provides accountability for its activities and outcomes during the school year. This report is public and is therefore published on the UWC Maastricht website.

The Participation Council is a mandatory body established under the Dutch legal framework for public schools ('Wet medezeggenschap op scholen' – WMS) and is composed of democratically elected representatives of staff, parents, and students (Secondary PC only). The PC has rights of information, advice, and consent regarding school policies and may also initiate policy discussions based on stakeholder needs.

PC representatives regularly meet with the school leadership team — including the Head of College, Director of Primary, and Director of Secondary — to discuss policy decisions and seek clarification before providing formal feedback or consent. Meetings are public, and stakeholders are invited to attend as silent observers. During the academic year 2024–2025, the Participation Council met nine times with the School Leadership Team and twice with the Board

## a. Participation at UWC Maastricht

The PC at UWC Maastricht consists of a Primary Participation Council, and a Secondary Participation Council. Delegates include Primary and Secondary parents, Primary and Secondary staff, and Secondary Students who are consulted on UWC Maastricht policies. The PC discusses all matters concerning the school with the management (the so-called competent authority). Management must request consent or advice from the PC on certain subjects before making a policy (change) decision. It is important to emphasise that:

- A. The PC does monitor procedures and 'the broad outline'.
- B. The PC does not assess individual bottlenecks and disputes.

## b. Composition PC at UWC Maastricht

The Participation in Schools Act prescribes the representative ratio for the different constituencies in a school. It is up to schools to determine how many members they want on their PCs.

- In primary schools, the ratio between parents and staff is 50%-50%;

- In secondary schools, the ratio is staff (50%), parents (25%) & students (25%).

In the Academic Year 2024-2025, the Participation Council at UWC Maastricht had the following composition:

**Primary Parents:** Einav Dvorin, Ana Frias, Elaine Friedlander (Chair Primary PC)

**Primary Staff:** Maddy Koekkelkoren (Vice Chair), Lorena [Marin Sanchis](#) ([Secretary](#)), Joyce Janssen

## 2. Abbreviations used within the Annual Report

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Definition</b>
FYI	For your information
PC	Participation Council
PL	Primary Leadership
SLT	School Leadership Team
HOC	Head of College
SEN	Special Education Needs
IB PYP	Primary Years Programme (PYP) International Baccalaureate
NPO	Nationaal Programma Onderwijs
AOB	Algemene Onderwijsbond

### 3. Summary of PC Topics Addressed

	Joint PC	Primary PC	Secondary PC
<b>Topics Carried over from Academic Year 2022-23</b>			
<b>New Topics AY 2023-24</b>	<p>To grant (all) UWCM staff including Cooperative employee's full participation rights</p> <p>School Plan - HoC submits draft school plan to UWCM Board and PC, who requests further development to address key areas; growth, budget</p>	<p>Primary became an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) candidate school in 2023-24. Aiming for full accreditation in 2024-25.</p> <p>Seeking strategic and budgetary clarity from SLT over SEN provision in Primary</p>	
<b>Ongoing Topics, carry to AY 2024-25</b>	<p>School Plan (5 year) PC and UWCM Board agreed (July 2024) to revisit the school plan with the incoming Head of College in Q1 of AY 2024-25.</p> <p>To grant (all) UWCM staff including Cooperative employee's full participation rights – to re-establish a BBMR (Joint PC)</p> <p>To improve communication between all PCs and the UWCM Board and SLT, and between PC &amp; Stakeholders.</p>	<p>Primary aims to be accredited as IB PYP school in 2024-25 AY.</p> <p>To revise Primary MR statute, increase PC representation to 4 parents + 4 staff members.</p>	<p>To revise Secondary MR statute, to include UWCM Coop employees.</p> <p>To move towards having a Secondary School Guide.</p>

# 4. Joint PC Topics & Policies

## a. PC Governance

### i. Training

Training for PC representatives and members of the School Leadership Team was delivered during the academic year 2024–2025.

- On 4 December 2024, representatives attended the 'MR Start Course' organised by Vereniging Openbaar Onderwijs (VOO).
- On 7 April 2025, additional training was provided by Algemene Onderwijsbond (AOB).

These sessions focused on the legal framework of participation councils, roles and responsibilities, and practical tools to support effective participation and governance.”

### ii. Parent & Student Representative Stipend

A volunteer stipend payable to parent and student representatives for attendance at PC meetings was introduced in 2023–2024 and continued during the 2024–2025 academic year. Students may only claim the stipend if they are not simultaneously claiming CAS hours for Participation Council involvement.

### iii. Evaluation

No formal end-of-year evaluation survey was conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year. However, internal reflections among Primary PC members highlighted several important themes.

Primary Participation Council members noted the need for greater clarity regarding the legal structure and functioning of joint participation arrangements, particularly following ongoing discussions surrounding the representation of UWCM Cooperative staff.

Following internal review and evaluation of the 2024–2025 academic year, Primary Participation Council members agreed that, since the Joint Participation Council is not a formal legal entity within the Dutch educational framework, Primary and Secondary Participation Councils would continue operating as separate councils while collaborating on whole-school matters such as the calendar, school plan, and budget.

In June 2025, the Primary Participation Council proposed a working agreement outlining collaboration procedures with the Secondary Participation Council. The proposal was not formally accepted by the Secondary Participation Council and may therefore continue as a discussion topic in the 2025–2026 academic year.

### iii. **Changes to WMS 2023-24**

During recent updates to the Dutch Law on Participation (WMS), two important clarifications were introduced:

1. Any information submitted by the School Leadership Team to the Participation Council must clearly state whether the matter is being shared for information, advice, or consent.
2. School leadership is required to proactively provide a number of annual information documents to the Participation Council, including:
  - staff employment policy;
  - management statutes;
  - organisational chart;
  - overview of teaching hours delivered in the previous academic year.

### b. **UWCM Board members 2024-2025**

Angelique Paulussen (chair)

Frederique Six

Paul Wehrens

Arne Gast

Joost van den Akker

Deidre Jakobs

### c. **Appointment of new Head of College**

Viki Stiebert was selected as Head of College with a starting date of August of 2024

### f. **Finance Committee & budget meetings**

Based on the Article 11.1b of Wet Medezeggenschap op Scholen (“WMS”), the joint PC offered the following advice to the Board and Head of College:

#### **Prioritization of Essential Investment**

PC urges the Board and Head of College to focus investments on areas of critical importance that directly support the school’s mission of providing high-quality education to our diverse and international student body. For example, ensuring sufficient qualified teaching and specialist staff should take precedence over non-essential or material expenses.

#### 1. **Back-Office Cost Reduction**

PC has not received a detailed breakdown of back-office expenses, hence, we are unable to offer fully informed advice on this cost centre. We therefore request an assessment of potential areas to reduce back-office costs.

#### 2. **Establishing a Staffing Cost Ratio**

The PC reiterates the recommendation from our 2023 budgetary advice to establish a

sustainable ratio between back-office and teaching staff costs. This measure would support long-term financial stability and resource allocation.

With relation to the proposed increase in School fees, WMS states that change in the income received from the parents on the basis of the agreement between school and parents requires consent of the Parent/Student Division of Participation Council, based on the Art 13.1c for Primary Education and Art 14.2c for Secondary Education. PC appealed for a reasonable time frame to be offered to the relevant representatives to provide consent on school fees and will share the feedback on the matter subsequently. SLT sought legal advice with the outcome that PC that the right to advice on budget, as the fees were part of the private agreement between school and parents, and not a voluntary contribution. PC gathered conflicted information regarding its rights, and the topic to be followed up in AY 2025-2026 to gather additional support on the topic.

### **g. School Plan 2023-2028**

At the end of the academic year 2023, the HoC submitted to the PC their initial thoughts on the next School plan. The HoC requested the PC to dedicate one full meeting to discuss the next School Plan, which it did; the first PC meeting of the academic Year 2023-24, on 11th September 2023.

A draft School Plan was subsequently submitted to the PC for consent on 4 October 2023. The PC did not grant consent and gave the following reasons for withholding consent:

1. The legal requirements for a School Plan, as specified by Art 12 of Law on Primary Education (WPO) and Art 24 of Law on Secondary Education (WVO), Art 15 of WPO-BES and Art 50 WVO-BES have not been met.
2. The UWC mission “education as a force for peace and a sustainable future” is not substantially reflected in all priority areas of the school plan: Academics, UWC, Maastricht.
3. The school plan assumes prospective growth without demonstrating clear reasons and benefits to all stakeholders. The projected rate of growth is based on data provided by the Analysis Institute Decision in 2018, which PC finds outdated.
4. The framework of the school plan is lacking the specifics related to: measurable targets and milestones, methodology and risk assessment.

In June 2024 the PC was presented a revised version of the School Plan by the UWCM Board. The Joint, Primary and Secondary Participation Councils jointly gave consent to the UWCM Board to work towards finalising the School Plan (Latest Version: 20 March 2024), with the incoming Head of College, Viki Stiebert, and to re-submit it for consent to the Participation Council by March 1st 2025 at the latest. The PC will seek a timeframe from the board early in the AY 2024-25 for the plan’s completion.

## **h. Formation - Staffing Structure**

The formation plan for the academic year 2025–2026 was shared with the staff representatives of the Participation Council for review and consent. Following discussion and clarification on staffing allocations, consent was granted.

## **i. Teaching and Learning Policy:**

The whole-school Teaching and Learning Policy continued its transition into the 'Educator Standards for UWCM'. The Joint Participation Council granted consent for the implementation of Educator Standard 1 during the academic year 2024–2025.

The Participation Council also recommended that the remaining Educator Standards (2–5) continue to be developed with supporting rubrics and implementation guidance for future review and consultation.”

## 5. Primary PC Annual Report

### a. New appointments this year

Lorena Marin Sanchis and Joyce Janssen joined the Primary Participation Council as staff representatives.

Elaine Friedlander continued in her role as Chair of the Primary Participation Council.

No further staffing changes occurred during the 2024–2025 academic year.

### b. IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) Candidacy

UWCM Primary continued its IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) candidacy during the academic year 2024–2025.

Primary staff continued professional development and curriculum implementation work in preparation for the IB verification visit. The Participation Council remained informed regarding the development and review of required PYP policies.

Communication with the parent community continued through newsletters and parent information sessions related to the IB learner profile and curriculum development.

The school continued working toward full IB PYP authorisation.

### c. Primary Curriculum Guide

The updated Primary Curriculum Guide was shared with staff and parent representatives for consultation and feedback. The document aimed to improve clarity regarding curriculum expectations, assessment approaches, and the ongoing implementation of the PYP framework

### d. Primary Task Sheet / Allocation Policy

Primary staff voted on an adapted version of the original Task Sheet (WTF) which was consented by PLT as a Pilot trial for the academic schoolyear 2024- 2025 after which it is up for review.

### e. Primary Parent Student Handbook (Annual update)

The Primary Parent Student Handbook was shared with Participation Council representatives and Primary staff members for review and feedback. An updated version of the handbook was granted consent by the Participation Council in July 2025.

### f. Catering feasibility study

*Can catering be provided in primary?* This question was brought by an individual parent to Primary Leadership in 2022. In response leadership issued a parent survey in November

2022 to gauge interest amongst primary parents for a paid catering service. The (anonymous) results of the survey were; 94% of parents said yes, they would be interested in a paid catering service, the majority were interested in a full week of catering, slightly less for 3-5 days catering, and the majority were willing to pay 5 euros per meal. Facilities Management took this forward and contacted local caterers to request quotes for services. No quotes were forthcoming. Parent Reps similarly contacted 3 catering companies in Nov 2023 to request pricing quotes, however, two companies did not reply, and one declined.

The Primary Parent Reps visited the primary school in November 2023, during a lunch break, to observe and talk to staff from kindergarten, lower and upper primary. The parent reps talked to duty staff (teachers) about current practice, their views on bringing in catering, and their suggestions for improving current lunch practice.

### **Conclusions & Questions Raised**

The opportunity of supplying catering is not currently financially attractive enough for external caterers to tender. *Is there any information that the school, or Parents Association, can share in terms of how/where to source convenient healthy meals for primary aged students? Can the school provide free daily fruit bowls etc?*

A dedicated space, staffed by catering staff or volunteers, is highly desirable by teachers, and likely by students and parents; however, the current facilities do not currently allow for this arrangement. *Can this request be considered when conducting future building capacity planning?*

### **g. Supporting students transitioning from primary to secondary**

Throughout the academic year, the Participation Council discussed the transition from Primary to Secondary school, particularly regarding socio-emotional development, homework expectations, assessment procedures, and differences in digital platforms and technology use.

The aim of these discussions was to highlight stakeholder concerns and support a smoother transition process for students and families.

### **h. Behavior Protocol**

During the academic year, the Participation Council was informed of the Director of Primary's intention to further develop a behaviour protocol to support staff in responding to student behaviour.

The proposed approach focused on restorative practices and guidance-based responses rather than punitive measures.

## **i. Digital Literacy**

At the beginning of the academic year, discussions were held regarding the development of digital literacy within the Primary School.

The possibility of establishing a dedicated Digital Literacy Co-Lab was explored in order to support students' digital competencies and responsible technology use. Due to the school's focus on PYP implementation and authorisation requirements, it was agreed that the topic would be revisited following further progress in the PYP process.