

The power of participation

by the Flemish School Students Union

Jesse Verbeeck

& Frédéric Piccavet





vlaamse
scholieren
koepel



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scholieren
koepel



4 subdivisions



Board



**General
assembly**



**Student
representative**



Volunteer

The board

- decides how the organization operates on a daily basis
- hires the staff
- prepares the GA and
- controls the budget



Student Representatives



VLOR • vlaamse
• onderwijsraad
STRATEGISCHE ADVIESRAAD ONDERWIJS EN VORMING



“Why do you guys exist?”



School students want to have a **say**

“Why do you guys exist?”

Benefits

- Practicing skills and competences
- Increases motivation and well-being
- Better learning performance
- Schools become more supported, qualitative and efficient

What is good participation policy?



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SHARING KNOWLEDGE

'er komt een nieuwe speelplaats'

**TO
THINK**

*"wat zou jij veranderen aan
de nieuwe speelplaats?"*

**TO
DECIDE**

*een maguette kiezen
op de schoolraad*

**TO
ACT**

*de bomen komen
aanplanten*



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From, for and by school students

From



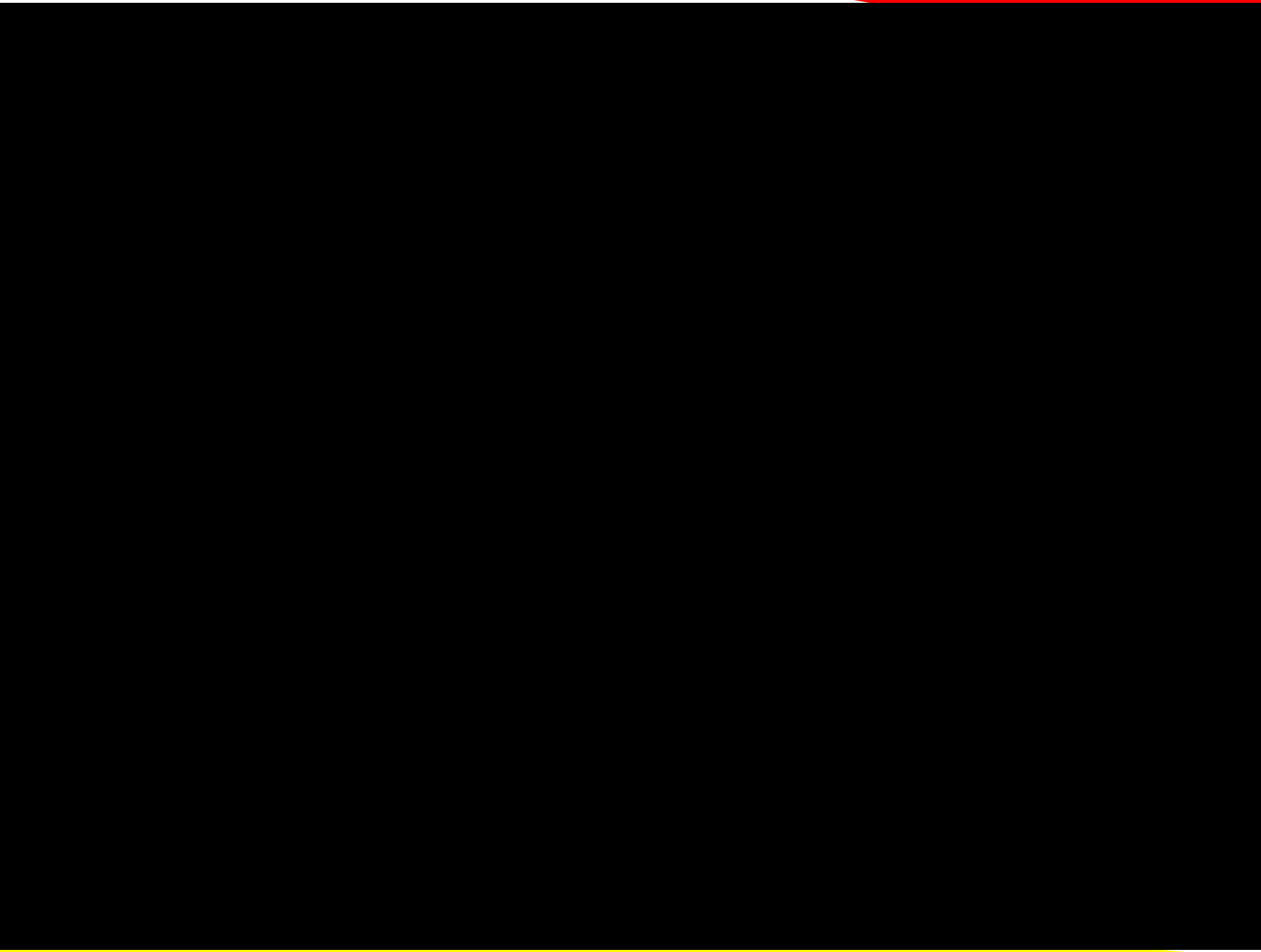
For



By







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1. Period poverty

LEERLINGENRADEN TEGEN MENSTRUATIE ARMOEDE

WIE?
WAT?
WAAROM?



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May 2022



caritas
Vlaanderen

How bad is it?

- **1 out of 8** in girls the flemish community already had gone through period poverty.
- **1 out of 20** girls already skipped school because of a lack of products



DE
WARMSTE
WEEK

Our goal

- to **inspire school** to give free products to the girls that need it
-> 60 period boxes
- to **put the topic** on the political agenda

Challenge accepted







Period boxes made by a school







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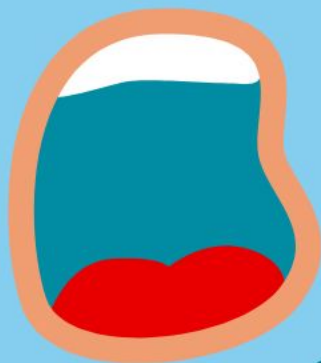
de bomen komen
aanplanten

2. Manifesto 2024-2029

WERD

**JOUW MENING
OVER SCHOOL**

OOIT AL BEVRAAGD?



LAAT VAN JE
HOREN IN DE

**GROOTSTE 8
SCHOLIERENBEVRAGING 11**

IK DOE MEE!



Vlaamse Scholierenkoepel
van, voor en door scholieren.

Manifesto 2024-2029

The field

- General elections in **June 2024**
 - European elections
 - Vote At 16! First time!
 - Federal elections (Belgium)
 - Regional elections (Flemish community)
- First time voters: almost 1 million voters
 - Population Belgium: 11 million citizens - 9 million voters
- Seven political parties, from extreme right to extreme left

Manifesto 2024-2029

Our goals

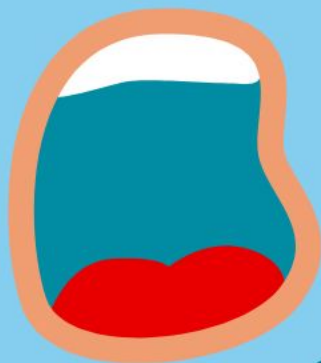
To **shift** both the **election campaign** and the **political candidates** towards our mission and vision.

= To make election campaign and political candidates more school student friendly

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Manifesto 2024-2029

Our goals

To **shift** both the **election campaign** and the **political candidates** towards our mission and vision.

1. We recognize the content of our manifesto in **political programmes** (Winter 2023).
2. We identify **school student friendly candidates** and bind them to our organisation (Spring 2024)
3. We recognize the content of our manifesto in the political address **of the new Minister of Education** and have an excellent and **content-based relationship** with the new minister (Autumn 2024)
4. Newly elected MPs know the content of our political manifesto and want to **apply it in their political mandate** (Summer-Autumn 2024)
5. We have formed **strategic alliances and structural cooperation with newly elected MEPs**, they identify our organisation as an expert in school student policy and participation (Autumn 2024)

Manifesto 2024-2029

Our timeline

0. The **preparation / brain storm** (Autumn 2022)
1. **Quantitative** part: give voice to +10.000 school students (Winter 2022 / Spring 2023)
2. **Qualitative** part: give voice to the 'voiceless' and underrepresented school students (Spring 2023)
3. Drafting + Structuring + **Adopting the manifesto** "*The voice of school students*" (Summer 2023)
 - a. Report of the survey
 - b. Quotes from the focus groups (enrichening the report)
 - c. Policy recommendations
4. Political **lobbying**: visiting ... presidents of political parties with one pagers, technical team of the political parties, presidents (Summer 2023 / Autumn 2023)
5. **Inspire**: give a voice to the manifesto (vox pop's / share good practices), both online and during an event at the Flemish Parliament (Autumn 2023)
6. Political **follow-up** (Winter 2023 / Autumn 2024)
7. **Evaluation** (Winter 2024)

Manifesto 2024-2029

Our team

- Three school students
 - The president
 - One board member
 - One school student
- Three team members
 - Secretary General
 - Policy officer
 - Communication officer





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Our survey

Compose questions:

- Seven theme lines → based on input steering group + with input by our volunteers
- What do we want to know?
- Which questions do we want to ask?
- Are the questions “school student friendly”?





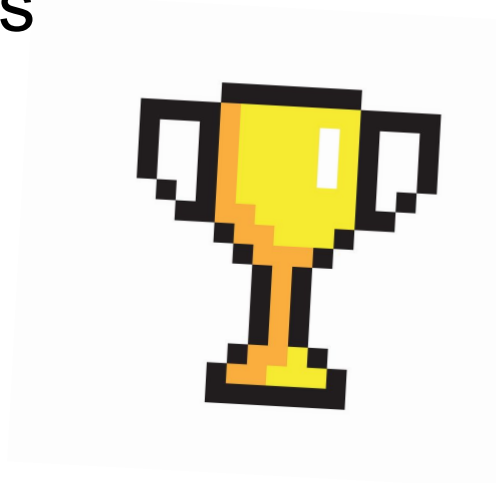
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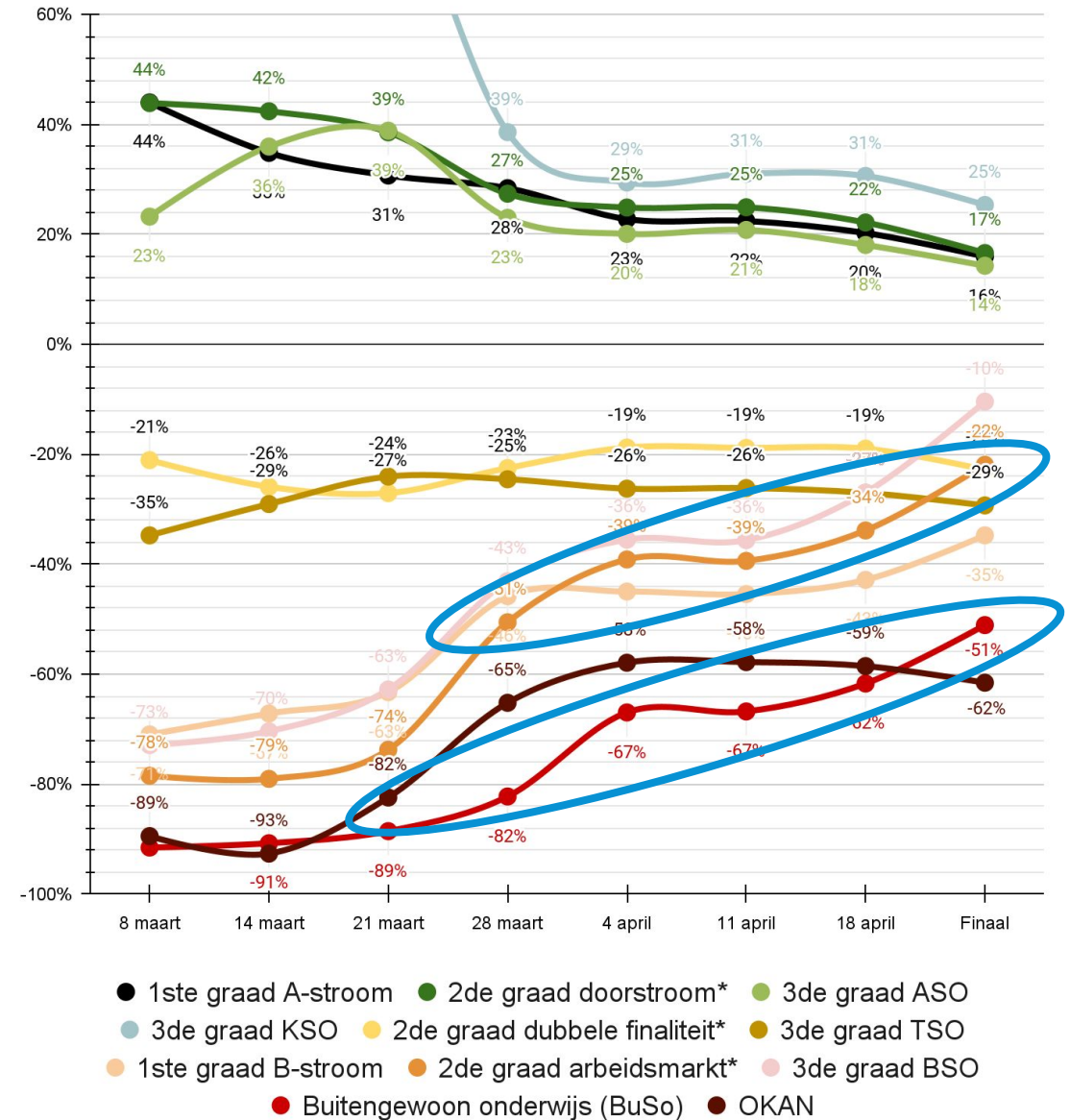
Our survey

- 8 March - 20 April
- 100.000 clicks
- 22.858 started
- 20.130 responses

- Prizes



Onder- of oververtegenwoordiging van onderwijsvormen in de bevraging





**TO
ACT**

de bomen komen
aanplanten

5 golden rules

For tailor-made consultations with students

1. Increase the accessibility to join the consultation process

Organize the meeting at a **convenient time** for students and **limit the duration**.

e.g. meetings during exams

e.g. late meetings

Invite school students through **channels** that **students use** or speak to them personally

→ You can be sure that they will receive the invitation and the necessary information properly.

“If Mohammed won't come to the mountain then bring the mountain to Mohammed”

2. Don't limit (the subject)

You can talk to students about **anything**. Don't limit your subjects under the guise of 'that's too difficult' or 'that interests them not', because 'difficult' can be explained and interests differ from student to student.

It will backfire.

3. Ensure a relaxed and safe environment (the subject)

→ Psychology 101. Yes, at meetings, people want to have their say. And learn. But if you don't connect on a human level. It just won't work.

→ Think about the energy in the room.

Start the meeting with a **short icebreaker or check-in**

e.g. ask what school students expect from the meeting.

Avoid to appoint students yourself. **Pop-up / Share and dump**

Keep your **questions simple** and your **explanation short**. Language can be a big barrier.

Avoid difficult terms or sentences (or explain them). Ensure that students can participate.

End the meeting with a **check-out**

e.g. ask what they are going to tell their friends or what could be done better next time.

4. Chair / Guide with an open mind

→ You facilitate. **You give space.** However, you don't own the room. They have the **ownership.**

= Common mistake

→ Supervision is done **without prejudice.** Give a chance to all possible answers and ideas. This can stimulate the debate in different ways.

e.g. Do not always respond to student input or questions yourself. **Let young people talk to each other,** make sure that different proposals are put on the table and let them weigh up those proposals themselves. Give them room to correct each other.

→ Respond to the group by varying the way you meet, so that the **quieter students** can also have their say.

e.g. Let everyone think in silence for 2 minutes before you start the conversation.

e.g. Encourage students who didn't speak up yet to speak up.

5. Stimulate further involvement and reporting after the meeting

Some school students become very interested after a consultation. Give them the **choice to remain involved** after the consultation in various ways

e.g. helping, co-decide, co-execute, co-decide

Inform the students about what will happen with their input at the end of the meeting.

Pupils only feel really involved and recognized if something is actually done with their input.

Keep the students informed of further decisions, progress and further plans. Not sure how to approach reporting? Let the students think about this for themselves at the end of the discussion.

School student participation

Nobody said it was going to be easy

It's about the vision

Follow us*



***pretty please**



Questions?

Het doel van een politiek memorandum is om zowel het beleid als de verkozen politici voor de komende regeerperiode (2024-2029) te laten opschuiven richting de missie en visie van een organisatie. **Het doel van het VSK-memorandum is om die politici en hun beleid meer scholier-vriendelijk te maken.** We willen daarbij het belang en de waarde van de scholierenstem onderstrepen en demonstreren. Dit is breder dan enkel naar de minister, en behoort ook te gebeuren naar de publieke opinie.

De strategische doelen die we op het eind van dit proces verwezenlijkt willen zien zijn de volgende:

1. VSK herkent de inhoud van het VSK-memorandum in de partijprogramma's van verschillende **politieke partijen** (winter 2023-2024).
2. VSK krijgt toezeggingen van **politieke partijen** (en eventueel van **individuele kandidaten**) om een "scholier-vriendelijke kandidaat" te zijn (lente 2024).
3. VSK herkent de inhoud van het VSK-memorandum in de beleidsnota van de **nieuwe minister** van onderwijs (herfst 2024).
4. VSK heeft ervoor gezorgd dat de nieuw **verkozen parlementsleden** in de Commissie Onderwijs de inhoud van het VSK-memorandum kennen en willen toepassen tijdens hun parlementair mandaat (herfst 2024).
5. VSK heeft strategische allianties gevormd en een structurele samenwerking opgezet met de **verkozen parlementsleden** die graag samenwerken aan een scholier-vriendelijk onderwijs (herfst 2024).

1. BECAUSE IT'S OBLIGATED (BY LAW)
2. TO TEACH YOUNG PEOPLE CERTAIN COMPETENCIES
3. TO INCREASE THE WELL-BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE
4. TO PREPARE YOUTH FOR LATER - CITIZENSHIP
5. BECAUSE THROUGH YOUTH INPUT, DECISIONS ARE BETTER
6. BECAUSE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE IN DEMAND





Instruction

You are creating an avatar for yourself, a pupil. Think about the average student in your class or organization. It can also be a particular student, maybe even someone that is not really motivated. Fill in the forms. Present yourself, as your avatar, to your neighbor.

If you need any help, ask Lawrence and Catalina!

Why should you invest in participation?

6 reasons:

‘To what extent would this be the reason for you to invest in participation?’

Make a ranking:

- 6: least important
- 1: most important