

Report of Operations for the Swedish School Association in Seattle

Period 2017 – 2018



Operations

The school has provided complementary education in the Swedish language and about Sweden in accordance with guidelines from the Swedish National Agency for Education to Swedish speaking children and youth in the Seattle area. The Swedish School Association is a non profit organization registered in the state of Washington, USA. The education has been provided utilizing The Swedish Club's facilities approximately three Sundays per month.

Board

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| Chair | Gunilla Beard |
| Treasurer | Maria Siwek |
| Secretary | Åsa Davis |
| Events | Anna Haglöf-McCallum and Britt Fletcher |
| Communication | Amanda Jones |
| Webmaster | Carl Mannheim |
| Alternate | Malin Rapp |

Board Responsibilities

During the school year the school association's board has met once per month. The board has worked with the school's finances, various policy questions, communication with parents, arranged family events, coordinated volunteer work, purchased schoolbags, and acted as support for the principal in daily operations. Thanks to registration and tuition payment being integrated on our website we handle significantly less late payment notices. The board has also promoted a good relationship with our landlord The Swedish Club.

Other Positions

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| Principal | Catharina Lundin |
| Nominating committee | Anna-Karin Salander and Jennie Mildes |
| Auditor | Julia Bacharach |

and 2 librarians, 6 teachers, 3 assistants and 3 youth assistants (of which some positions were shared)

Everyone who has helped throughout the year

We have had many families help out baking saffron buns for the Christmas party and strawberry cakes for the summer break celebration. One parent even helped Santa pay us a visit! We also have many parents who have worked as substitutes, volunteered on field day and on the excursion to the zoo, provided Sunday coffee and helped sort donations

to the library. Many parents helped us install the new book cabinets. A big thank you to everyone who has helped in different ways.

Education

The school had 97 students registered, of which 63 were eligible for a subsidy from the Swedish National Agency for Education. The students were divided into six groups (Red ages 3-4, Purple ages 4-5, Light Blue ages 6-7, Dark Blue ages 7-8, Yellow ages 8-10, Orange ages 10-14). We had approximately 15 students per group.

All children, regardless of nationality, race, ethnic origin, or religion have the right to participate in the school's education. The single requirement the school association has is that students have Swedish as main language of communication with one or both parents. When the children join the school they must thus be able to speak and understand Swedish.

The school groups have been based on age and the students have advanced together with their age group. The older the students are, the greater will be the demands that they can converse, read, and write in Swedish. During the year the students have been tested to determine that they meet the requirements for their groups. At the start of the Spring semester several students were moved to the next group up and new students were admitted from the school's waitlist. All groups have worked with reading and writing: letters, concepts, vocabulary, sentence structure, reading comprehension as well as observed traditions occurring during the year. Since the variations are great within the groups we have adapted the education based on each individual's level within the group.

The principal, Catharina Lundin, has together with the teachers managed the education. The teachers have met several times during the year for staff meetings to plan and coordinate activities. Assistants support the groups during class time. A number of youth assistant positions, paid and unpaid, have been offered to teenagers with high competence in Swedish.

Library

The school library has expanded with new book cabinets, which can house all donated books, movies, and magazines. Students in all groups can borrow. The library applied for a grant from the Scholarship Foundation for Swedish Youth Abroad and it was granted in the amount of SEK 10,000. The grant will be used for a Kamratposten subscription and new books.

Activities during the year (other than regular education)

- Start of school and outdoor class in Farrel McWhirter park, Redmond
- New family orientation
- Annual meeting
- Seminar on children's language development by speech therapist Anna Wetterberg
- Movie nights (2), in collaboration with The Swedish Club
- Social gathering in collaboration with Fjällräven
- Parent coffee every Sunday
- New book cabinets for the library
- Christmas party
- Parent meetings
- Feedback on survey results
- Theatre play by the Orange group
- Easter feathers and lenten buns in collaboration with The Swedish Club
- Pilot project with a Black group
- Field trip to Woodland Park Zoo with guided tours in Swedish by Marie Jensen
- Seminar on multilingualism by linguist Monica Bravo Granström
- Field day
- Field trip to the Nordic Museum with guided tour in Swedish by Stina Cowan
- School book in printed edition

Summer break celebration with observation of the school's 20th anniversary
Pool event at Peter Kirk Pool, Kirkland, sponsored by Parent coffee every Sunday

Start of School and Outdoor Class

We started school in September with an outdoor school day in Farrel McWhirter park in Redmond. All students and parents gathered for some information from the board chair and the principal's roll call. The teachers met with their new groups and had activities together. All children, parents, and teachers had coffee, juice and pastries together and then we played in the park. The board, the principal, and the teachers have a joint responsibility for this day in nature. As a response to the survey conducted the previous semester, board members wore blue t-shirts and teachers wore yellow t-shirts and everyone had name tags for easier recognition.

New Family Orientation

On one of the first Sundays of the Fall semester the board offered parents a tour of the school's facilities and some information about activities. This was in response to the survey conducted the previous semester. All new families received a welcome letter in their student's school bag with information in Swedish and English about calendar, communication, and more.

Seminar on Children's Language Development

One of our teachers, Anna Wetterberg, is a speech therapist and she offered a seminar in English about children's language development. She emphasized suggestions on how you can support your child in a multilingual family. To offer the seminar in English was a response to the survey conducted the previous semester, where the non-Swedish speaking parents asked for information on how they can better support their Swedish-speaking children. This seminar was held in conjunction with the annual meeting to make it easy to attend.

Movie nights

In conjunction with the Swedish Club we showed children's movies 2 Friday nights. When the movie's age rating was 7+ years we invited students in the Dark Blue group and up. When the movie had general audience rating we invited students in the Light Blue group and up. The children must be able to remain in the movie room without immediate adult supervision and not walk around in the building according to our agreement with The Swedish Club. Youth assistants helped us keep an eye on the movie room. Many parents took the opportunity to socialize in the restaurant where The Swedish Club serve dinner Friday nights. The movie nights had less attendees than previous school years.

Social Gathering in Collaboration with Fjällräven

Fjällräven in Seattle invited the school's families to a social gathering in their store.

Parent Coffee every Sunday

We had a sign-up list for parents to make coffee in the lobby every Sunday during school hours. We introduced CashApp to reduce handling of cash. Income from this activity is used for a special activity for the students. This school year we were able to invite all families to an outdoor pool in Kirkland.

New Book Cabinets for the Library

The library cabinets were broken and did not have room for all new donations in spite of significant withdrawals. We decided on a one time expense to purchase new cabinets from IKEA, which were installed by parent volunteers and the board members. We have since been able to add all new donations to material available for students to borrow. The cabinets also have space for the board's materials.

Christmas Party

Just before Christmas the school had a Christmas party with a Lucia pageant, a large raffle, glögg, coffee, gingerbread cookies, and saffron buns. We danced around the Christmas tree and long danced around the entire basement floor. During the celebration there was a craft table for children to make holiday crafts. Toward the end Santa arrived with goodie bags for all the children. The board planned and executed the event and were helped by volunteer parents. The teachers decided on the Lucia pageant program and rehearsed during class time. The board's event team made sure Lucia costumes and other materials were in place and in good shape.

Parent Meetings

Every group had a parent meeting with their teacher during the Fall semester. During the Spring semester we held a parent meeting for the entire school during class hours. This parent meeting was mandatory, so each student was represented by a parent or guardian. The parent meeting was held in English to reflect that a majority of our families have at least one non-Swedish speaking parent.

Feedback on Survey Results

In the end of the Spring semester 2017 a survey was conducted. During the Summer and Fall 2017 the board, the principal and the teachers discussed and decided on potential changes based on the survey results. In the Spring of 2018 we were able to present all the results. We posted everything as a wall exhibit and presented it during the parent meeting. The result is also available in folders in the library and was emailed to all parents.

Theatre Play by the Orange Group

The Orange group rehearsed roles and gathered props for a theatre play based on the book *Lassemajas Detektivbyrå Kärleksmysteriet*. Two shows were offered; one for the parents to the Orange group's students, the other for the students in all the other groups. It was a great success!

Easter Feathers with Lenten Buns and Hot Dogs

In collaboration with The Swedish Club a Sunday afternoon craft session was arranged where you could make Easter feathers and eat Lenten buns. The board provided hot dogs to all students in the lunch break between classes and the afternoon craft session.

Pilot Project with a Black Group

During the last part of the Spring semester we launched a pilot project to create a new group geared toward teenagers who want to prepare for the ALTA test for world language credits in American high school or the TISUS test for admittance to college or university in Sweden. We offered a Black group after regular class hours, since several of the interested teenagers worked as youth assistants. The class time was short (1 hour) and required no preparation or home work to avoid time conflict with American school or other activities and maintain high motivation. 5 students participated and gave us overall positive comments. The cost of this pilot project was low.

Field Trip to the Zoo

In April the school made a field trip to Woodland Park Zoo. Each group walked around with their teacher, assistant, and the number of parents required as chaperones. Each group was given a guided tour in Swedish by Marie Jensen, who worked at the zoo. SWEA Seattle donated funds which covered admission and a thank you card to Marie, who met us during her time off. We gave Marie a school bag as a memory.

Seminar on Multilingualism

In May we were visited by the linguist Monica Bravo Granström, who has studied multilingualism at a university in Germany and authored a book on how to support multilingual children abroad with Swedish. Our principal and teachers received continuous education by attending the seminar, which was also open for all parents. The school library purchased Monica's book *I Love Svenska* and it is available for parents to read during class hours. The book includes many pieces of practical advice. During the seminar the assistants took responsibility for the students' activities including reading, crafts, and watching a movie.

Field Day

In June we held the school's annual field day. We met at Green Lake in Seattle and the groups rotated between stations with various track and field events for instance running and long jump plus a few fun activities like throwing balls at cans and dress-up relay. When everyone was done exercising we had picnic together and free play time

Field Trip to the Nordic Museum

In June we got the opportunity to visit the recently inaugurated Nordic Museum in Ballard in Seattle. We received a guided tour in Swedish by Stina Cowan and each group could walk around the exhibit with their teacher and assistant. Afterward parents and students met in the park at Ballard Locks for picnic and free play time.

School Book in Printed Edition

The school book, which is usually issued electronically once or twice per school year was turned into a printed edition this year with class pictures and other photos from the groups' activities with some text to read in Swedish. The students received the school book at the summer break celebration. The board's communication member edited the school book.

Summer Break Celebration with Observation of the School's 20th Anniversary

The final activity before the end of the school year was as usual our summer break celebration. We took the opportunity to observe the school's 20th anniversary, 1998-2018. The students performed songs they had practiced, everyone sang Den blomstertid nu kommer and the special school song for the Swedish School in Seattle. Speeches and gifts were given to staff and other individuals who had worked during the school year. One of the founders, Stina Cowan, told us how it started out twenty years ago. One of the first students, Kevin Powell, was interviewed by our principal and told us how he grew up with a Swedish mother, American father, went to the Swedish School for many years and still benefits from his bilingualism since he is now playing in the Swedish national lacrosse team. We ended with coffee and lots of homemade strawberry cakes including a special anniversary cake. To commemorate the day all students received a Swedish flag temporary tattoo. The board handled planning, finding volunteer bakers and other practical preparations, The principal and the teachers arranged the students' participation.

Pool

Thanks to families donating cookies and parents paying for coffee every Sunday we had funds to reserve an outdoor pool. We held this event in August to say welcome the new school year and invited everyone who had registered for the new school year, including completely new families. Students, their siblings and other family members were welcome and everyone brought their own picnic.

Finances

Our largest expense is payroll, which increased this school year since we raised the assistants' wages to comply with a new minimum wage law in Seattle.

Our second largest expense is rent of facilities from The Swedish Club, which remained unchanged from prior school year.

This school year's net operating income gave a positive result of about \$2,854.

The school's income decreased compared to the prior school year (\$1,300). This decrease was mainly due to reduced income from tuition, donations, raffle and bake sales. The subsidy from the Swedish National Agency for Education remained about the same.

The school's expenses this school year was about \$7,000 lower than the previous school year. The main reason was that we had one teacher less and one principal less. Teacher wages and payroll tax is the main expense, representing 63% of the school's total expenses (70% prior school year).

At the end of the school year the school association had net assets (liquid) of \$56,859.

Communication (email, website, school book, Facebook)

The Swedish School is using various formats to communicate with our members. Email is generally sent from our domain skolforenigen.org, so all members are encouraged to ensure it is not blocked as spam.

In addition to email, our website (www.skolforenigen.org) is our most important portal for information about events and activities in the school. This is where you register students, pay tuition, and find a calendar of classes and other events. This is also where snow day closures are published when we must close the school on short notice.

The school book, Skolbladet, was published once this school year. It was a printed publication with content created by the board members and the staff including photos from the school's operations.

The school also has a social media presence. On Facebook the group name is Svenska Skolan I Seattle and everyone with a connection to the school, now or in the past, can become a member and post. The school is also represented on LinkedIn, in case for instance staff members want to link their work experience.