



## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • September 27, 2018

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### A. In Attendance

It was noted that (a) parents and other “persons in a parental relation” as defined by the regulations of the New York City Chancellor and designated persons having a relationship to a child or children currently attending Q300 (the “**Parents**”) and (b) eligible Q300 teachers and instructional staff members who are currently employed on a full-time basis (the “**Staff**”) at Q300 were present. The total number of Parents and Staff (together, the “**Members**”) present was 37.

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### B. Call to Order

Co-Presidents Julissa McHugh and Paula Marisi called the the General Membership of the Q300 PTA Association to order at 6:30 pm in the auditorium at the lower division campus at 28-37 29th Street, Astoria, NY 11102.

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### C. Board Introduction

Co-Presidents Julissa McHugh and Paula Marisi introduced the 2018-2019 Board. The members are as follows:

Co-Presidents: Paula Marisi and Julissa McHugh, Co-Presidents  
Co-Treasurers: Pamela Yi and Margo Karasek  
Co-Secretaries: David Wang and M. Daniel Bach  
Co-VP of Membership: Sue Sekar and Maria Carrasco  
Co-VP-Fundraising: Claire Lui  
Co-VP-Community Affairs: Lynn Kennedy and Gina Reis  
Co-VP-Communications: Amy Ho and Matt Schaeffer  
VP-Lower Division: Barbara Monroe  
VP-Upper Division: Codou Ndiour

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### D. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the General Meeting held on June 21, 2018 were presented. A motion was made to approve such minutes. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the minutes.

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### E. Co-Presidents’ Report

Co-Presidents Julissa McHugh and Paula Marisi gave the President’s report. The following are the highlights:

1. **Mission Statement.** The mission of the Q300 PTA is to enrich and improve the educational, emotional, and social lives of Q300’s students by providing the following: (a) Supporting activities that foster the core values of Q300: Inclusion, Inquiry and Responsibility; (b) Providing support and resources to Q300 for the benefit and educational growth of its students; (c) Developing parent and staff leadership, fostering and encouraging participation at all levels of the Association, and providing opportunities to participate in school governance and decision making; (d) Promoting a cooperative working relationship among the Q300 parents, families, staff, and administration; and (e) Providing a forum where parents and staff members discuss innovations and implementations of curricular and extra-curricular activities that afford each student an opportunity to acquire the core values of Q300.
2. PTA Funding.

- a. **Lower Division Teaching Assistants.** The PTA is funding a teaching assistant for each of the kindergarten and first grade classes and one shared TA per grade for each of the second, third, and fourth grades.
- b. **Enrichment Programs.** The following are PTA-funded enrichment programs:
  - (i) Art House Astoria starts their year-long program the week of September 24;
  - (ii) Art House Astoria will begin its 10 session program the week of September 24 for Classes 2-4. K-1 will get their cycle in the spring;
  - (iii) Art House Astoria will provide a 10 week program for the Kindergarten and 1st grade starting on the week of September 24;
  - (iv) Learning By Design will begin a 10-session architecture course for the second grade starting in mid-March;
  - (v) The Alvin Ailey Dance program will provide a 10 week cycle for Grades 3 and 4 starting mid-March;
  - (vi) Art House Astoria will provide a two 14-week Music elective programs for upper division students.
  - (vii) chipAway Productions will provided a 14-week animation elective for upper division students;
  - (viii) Art House will provide a 14-week musical theater elective for upper division students;
  - (ix) Supplemental funding for the many upper division clubs including Debate Club, Math Team, Robotics, Geography Bee, Moth Storytelling, Memory Making, and others; and
  - (x) Equipment including a class set of Chromebooks for the upper division.
- c. **Meeting with Superintendent Dr. Philip Composto.** PTA Co-President Paula Marisi and former PTA Co-President Margarita Soto met School District 30 Superintendent Dr. Philip Composto prior to the start of the school year. At the meeting, Dr. Composto expressed hope that this year will be better for Q300. Paula and Margarita expressed the PTA's commitment to supporting Q300's teachers and students.
- d. **Upcoming Events.**
  - (i) **Read-a-Thon.** The PTA's third annual Summer Read-a-thon will end on October 5, 2018. Please send in your pledges.
  - (ii) **The Tea Collection School Days fundraiser.** Check out [TeaSchoolDays.com](http://TeaSchoolDays.com) (not the regular website), select 6-10 day shipping, and enter promo code SDF18Q300 to benefit Q300. You get 15% off, and the PTA earns 15% of your total purchase!
  - (iii) **Costume Party. Sunday, October 28th from 3-5pm.** The PTA's annual costume party is a fun-filled event for the whole family including music, magic, activities, pizza, and raffle prizes.
  - (iv) **Picture Day, November 17, 2018.** Picture Day will be held in both campuses.
  - (v) **Gallery Night. Friday, November 16th.** This evening fundraising event is a chance for parents and other adults in the Q300 community to socialize over wine and light food at an art gallery in the Lower East Side.
- e. **Appreciations.**
  - (i) **Back-to-School Picnic.** Thanks to all those who helped make the Q300 Informal Gathering on August 26th a success. Over 70 families attended as well as Principal Bill, and many of the teachers, staff, and community partners.
  - (ii) **Private Bus.** Thanks to all who helped coordinate the private bus to and from school.
  - (iii) **Mulee Delivery.** Thanks to those who helped deliver the Mulee school supplies to both campuses.
  - (iv) **New Victory Theater.** Many thanks to Monica Mohan for securing a partnership with the New Victory Theater. More details from the school coming soon.
  - (v) **Office of Public Transportation ("OPT") Bus Service.** Thanks to Noah Fessenden, Meghan Cirrito and others for raising the issue of untimely, unreliable OPT bus service to New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio and other elected and government officials. NYC Department of Education "Bus Czar" Kevin Moran met with Q300 parents earlier this month. Thanks also to Q300 administrators, including Jenny Lando, for working late to help resolve some of the bus issues over the last several weeks.

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## F. Co-Treasurers' Report

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Sue Sekar delivered the Co-Treasurer's Report. Attached is a copy of summary of the PTA's finances for July and August 2018 (the "Period"). The following are highlights:

1. The PTA raised \$15,933.75 during the Period. Much of the funds came from Direct Appeal installment payments from last year and registration fees for the private bus service that is used as a reserve in the event of a shortfall in the private bus service budget. The PTA spent \$45,000 for the Period, including \$37,894.00 for teaching assistants and \$5,751.43 for enrichment programs.
2. Sue encouraged parents to volunteer for the treasurer role.
3. Sue provided an overview of the PTA budget process. The 2018-2019 PTA budget was approved at the June general membership meeting. Throughout the school year, the PTA may vote to amend the budget to meet any new school needs. She noted that the major source of fundraising is the Direct Appeal.

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#### **G. School Leadership Team ("SLT") Report**

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The SLT Report was presented. The following are highlights:

1. At its September 24, 2018 meeting, the SLT is working on the school's Comprehensive Education Policy ("CEP") for the 2018-19 school year. The SLT is currently reviewing a full draft and will be revising and refining our goals and action plans over the next week. Further, the website committee is finalizing the website.
2. On June 11, 2018, the SLT held a special meeting primarily to review the budget and staffing plan for next school year. The SLT discussed ongoing interviews for the position of a social worker. Due to a hiring freeze for the social work position, the school is required to interview and hire from current Department of Education employees. It continues to interview potential candidates.

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#### **H. Principal's Report**

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Principal Bill Biniaris gave the Principal's Report. The following are highlights:

1. In last Spring's NY State assessment cycle, 98% of Q300 students, grades 3 through 8, met or exceeded the standards in both ELA and Mathematics. These grades experienced a 6% point gain in ELA and a 2% point gain in Mathematics. Principal Biniaris congratulated all of Q300 students and their teachers for a job well done.
2. Baseline assessments have already begun for the 2018-2019 school year. Students' reading levels are being assessed in grades K-5 and Q300's beginning of year (BOY) Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments will be administered over the next few weeks.
3. All students, K-8, have been scheduled for Spanish language instruction, technology, and physical education. All students in grades K-4 have also been scheduled for chess and PTA-funded art and music. The kindergarten and first grade students have also been scheduled for a cycle of PTA-funded movement, the second graders will continue to receive a cycle of PTA-funded architecture, while third and fourth grade students will continue with their cycle of PTA-funded Alvin Ailey dance.
4. As of this week, Q300 has increased the number of periods in the Explorations room for kindergarten and first grade students, to twice per week. Principal Biniaris acknowledged that Q300 used to provide Explorations four times a week; he noted that the kindergarten and first grade curriculum provides for more reading time and other subjects, which necessitated a decrease in Explorations.
5. The 5th grade students have embarked on their journey towards forming Q300's first band. Some of the musical instruments have been slow to arrive which resulted in some students not receiving an instrument during the very first lessons. Q300 has been assured that those will arrive before next week's music classes take place.
6. At the Upper Division, grades 6 through 8 are scheduled for art and have access to a weekly elective class.

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7. Q300 has been selected for a CHAMPS Middle School Sports and Fitness Program. The fall portion of the program will focus on a Fitness Club and will begin on October 9th and end December 15th. The program will take place from 7:10 am to 8:10 am each morning.
8. In Q300 collaboration with NY Chess Kids, students will have the opportunity to enroll in an afternoon sports program that focuses on soccer during the first session of such program. Further students can also choose to participate in afternoon robotics, mathematics, or debate teams.
9. Today marked the very first Tea with the Parent Coordinator (PC). Q300 parent coordinator Jenny Lando will meet with parents, by grade level, each week throughout the school year. These meetings are a supplement to the monthly morning meetings with Principal Biniaris that will begin on October 5th at 8:30 am.
10. Parents should register for their family's **Pupil Path account**. By doing so, parents will have access to ongoing assessment results and school messages as well as brief text messages to parents' cell phones when necessary. These messages are automatically translated into the home language of record.
11. Jenny Lando has created a **Facebook page** that will be used strictly to record various school communications. Q300 will be publishing its new website shortly.
12. Upper Division students received an award for their participation in last year's **Kindness Challenge**. Soon, Q300 will receive a plaque commemorating a variety of kindness activities Q300 students participated in as their teachers assisted in increasing their awareness of the importance of kindness.
13. Teacher Edwin Mora will serve as the social emotional coordinator at the lower division. He will be attending a therapeutic crisis training. He will not assess individual education plans (IEPs) for students at the lower division; the co-located P.S. 17 social worker and psychologist will do so.
14. In response to a Member's question, Principal Biniaris noted that the school is not using Explorations as an award for students or withholding the class as punishment. The class is part of the schedule. Principal Biniaris noted that he is considering adding certain equipment to the Explorations room, such as a conveyor belt and vacuum tubes, similar to the ones at the New York Hall of Science.
15. Principal Biniaris noted that new staffers will be trained in social emotional learning. He also noted that twenty staffers attended the PTA-organized end of summer picnic in August.
16. Q300 is developing a teacher professional development calendar.
17. A parent suggested that given Mr. Edwin's responsibilities as a teacher of English language learner, Q300 should consider having an assistant principal serve as the primary responder to various conflict issues among students.
18. Q300 has a plan to work toward having its teachers earn a gifted and talented license.
19. Q300 is considering organizing a "Breakfast on the Go" program in which students can grab breakfast at the beginning of the school day.
20. A parent noted the school year has begun well. His children at Q300 are enjoying their classes. He expressed appreciation that Principal Biniaris had addressed many of the issues raised in the PTA's May 3, 2018 resolution. For example, Q300 has already made assessments of IEPs for students. Last year's eighth graders received enough lab hours to sit for the environmental science Regents exam. The lower division technology teacher, who was transferred to the upper division last year to cover for the shortage of integrated co-teaching teachers there, has returned to the lower division. The parent expressed grave concern about staff retention at Q300. He noted the following:
  - a. Only 5 out of the 17 staffers who were hired during the first 2 years of the school are working at Q300. In other words, 70% of those staffers present at the end of second year of the school have left Q300.

- b. Only 12 out of 30 staffers who were at Q300 during the 2016-2017 school year are still working at Q300. In other words, 60% of those staffers present during that 2016-2017 school year have left Q300.
- c. 26 out of 36 staffers who were at Q300 during the 2017-2018 school year are still working at Q300. In other words, 28% of those staffers present during the 2017-2018 school year have left Q300.

In response, Principal Biniaris noted that he is working on receiving regular feedback from staffers about any issues of concern, including teacher morale. He also noted that teachers have participated in a team building professional development training and have responded to a short survey. He noted that Q300 is making the class observation and evaluation process more transparent to teachers. He noted that teachers will receive notice about upcoming class observations.

- 21. Due to attrition in the upper division, Q300 has increased class size to 30-32 at the lower division in order to receive the needed NYC Board of Education funding (which is based on student head count). Principal Biniaris acknowledged that 13 students have left the upper division this year. He also noted that it is difficult to recruit new students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
- 22. Q300 is considering adding a third class to the sixth grade for next year.

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### E. Committee Reports

- 1. **Fundraising.** Vice President of Fundraising Claire Lui reported that the Read-a-thon will continue until October 5, 2018. She requested that a member serve as co-vice president of fundraising with her. She encouraged members to check the PTA website for info on how to donate to the PTA through online purchases on websites such as Amazon.com.
- 2. **Community Affairs.** Co-Vice President of Community Affairs Lynn Kennedy reported that the committee has been working with the local elected officials to obtain funding for the school. She noted that through the efforts of the PTA and others, Council Member Costa Constantinides provided a \$50,000 tech grant and a \$100,000 for a hydroponic lab. Assemblymember Aravella Simotas provided \$225,000 for renovation of the girls' bathroom at the upper division. Lynn encouraged parents to join the Council Member Constantinides' participatory budget process to help ensure that government funds go to Q300 projects.
- 3. **Membership.** Q300 PTA's master parent contact list is being updated.

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### F. Resolutions

- 1. A resolution was passed establishing a Nominating Committee chaired by parent Luke Lukose. Veronica Velez and Noah Fessenden shall also serve on the committee. The committee will canvass for candidates for the position of Executive Vice President, Treasurer (which can be shared by 2 individuals); Co- Vice Presidents of Fundraising; Co-Vice President of Lower Division; and Co- Vice President Upper Division and administer the election of such positions at the October 25, 2018 general meeting.

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### J. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.

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M. Daniel Bach and David William Wang, Co-Secretaries