



## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • September 19, 2019

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### A. In Attendance

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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 (**Parents**) and (b) eligible Q300 teachers and instructional staff members who are currently employed on a full-time basis (**Staff**) at Q300 were present. The total number of Parents and Staff (together, **Members**) present was 56. Quorum was reached.

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### B. Call to Order

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President Milko Mikov called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm in the auditorium at the lower division.

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### C. Approval of the Minutes.

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The minutes of the General Meeting held on April 11, 2019 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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### D. Co-Presidents’ Report

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Milko gave the President’s report. The following are the highlights:

1. The PTA has allocated funds to pay for 8 teaching assistant (TA) positions. Q300 has hired 4 TAs and 2 TAs are being processed by the Department of Education (DOE).
  2. The PTA is seeking nominations for Co-President as well as other positions. The elections will occur during the October membership meeting.
  3. Many thanks to the parents who volunteered at the “Back to School” picnic held at Rainey Park on August 25, 2019, those parents who helped move students school supplies from the ground floor to the fourth floor in the lower division and the fifth floor in the upper division in August. Thanks also to the parents who organize the fee-for-service private buses that transport students to and from Brooklyn and Central Queens.
  4. Thank you to Q300 parent coordinator Jenny Lando and social worker Rachel Weiss for helping to lead the Q300 Parent Volunteer Training held in late August 2019.
  5. Thanks to parent Lynn Kennedy for helping to form a Wellness Council for our school. The Council would instrumental in strengthening physical and health education programs within the school, as well as other health and wellness initiatives (e.g., Physical Activity, Food, School Environment, Community Wellness, etc.).
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### E. Treasurers’ Reports

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Former Treasurer Karen Van Wart delivered the Co-Treasurer’s Report. Attached is a copy of summary of the PTA’s finances for July and August 2019. During this period, the PTA raised over \$13,000, which included

\$3,655 from the Direct Appeal and \$3,400 from the Summer Read-a-thon. Outflows were nearly \$7,000, which included expenses related to enrichment programs, school supplies, and the Kindergarten Stepping Up ceremony.

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#### F. School Leadership Team (“SLT”) Report

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The SLT will meet on September 23, 2019 at 5:30 pm at the lower division campus.

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#### G. Committee Reports

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1. **Membership.** Co-VP Maria Hanztopoulos announced that the Costume Party is scheduled for Sunday, October 27, 2019 . The date may change, because October 27, 2019 is also the same date as Divali Festival of Lights. Thanks to those parents who filled out the online volunteer survey. Committee chairpersons will be contacting volunteers. If you have not yet filled out the survey and are interested in volunteering, please contact [membership@q300pta.org](mailto:membership@q300pta.org).
  2. **Fundraising.** Fundraising VP Claire Lui noted that the last day of the annual summer read-a-thon is tomorrow. She announced that the PTA has an online book fair at Children's Bookstore: <https://www.childrensbookstore.com/welcome/q300-book-fair/>. 30% of your purchase price will be donated to the PTA. Other upcoming fundraisers include Gallery. Night and Thanksgiving Pie sales. Box Tops for Education, which donates funds to schools based on the number of coupons on certain consumer products that are collected, has a new process. Participants will use a Box Top mobile app to scan your store receipt. The app will find participating products and adds Box Tops credit to Q300’s online funds. Direct Appeal chair David Wang gave an overview of the Direct Appeal. The Direct Appeal encourages Q300 families to give or raise funds to pay for crucial enrichment programs and services that deepen your child’s learning experience at Q300.
  3. **Communication.** Communications Co-VP Diana Wang noted that the communications committee sends monthly bulletins, updates the PTA website, and publishes a quarterly-online newsletter, among other things. She encouraged parents to write for the newsletter.
  4. **Community Affairs.** Communication Co-VP Soumaly King and Marissa Nagono gave the Community Affairs report, including the following. At the September District 30 Community Education Council Meeting, Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) representatives said that they are working on resolving public bus issues including buses that do not show up at bus stops, buses that arrive late, and the poor communications between the bus companies and parents. They stated that the school, not OPT is responsible for creating the school bus route. The school verifies the home address of students who are interested in joining the bus route through an OPT online portal. In response, Principal Vasilios Biniaris noted that Q300 has indeed been inputting the home addresses to the OPT portal website; but for some reason, the inputs have been rejected. Q300 is working with OPT to resolve the matter. For more information about OPT buses, please contact Pupil Accounting Secretary Joanne Daddio.
  5. **Lower and Upper Division.** VP-Lower Division Barbara Monroe and VP-Upper Division Sae Makino-Siller are seeking volunteers to serve as class parents. Class parents help facilitate communications between teachers and parents of a class. If you are interested in serving as a class parent, please fill out the online form.
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#### H. Principal’s Report

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

1. Q300 has hired several new teachers as well as an upper division guidance counselor Khary Chang. Khary will temporarily replace upper division guidance counselor Christine Katartzis, who is on a study sabbatical.

2. 5th grader families should sign-up to the website <https://www.myschools.nyc/en/> in order to explore middle school options and to apply to middle school. The application deadline is December 2, 2019.
  - a. If Q300 is the family's only preference. For middle school, then only list Q300 on your child's application. However, if you are considering other schools or programs above Q300, you must rank them higher on your application. You should still list Q300 on your application after those other programs.
  - b. If you receive an offer to another school that you listed above Q300, your seat at Q300 can be filled by a student applying from another elementary school. If you receive an offer to another school and then decide you want to switch back to Q300, you will no longer have a guaranteed seat.
  - c. If you don't receive any offers to the schools listed above Q300, your child you will default to Q300.
3. The Q300 middle school open house will be held on November 19, 2019.
4. Eighth grade families should sign-up to the website <https://www.myschools.nyc/en/> in order to explore high school options, find choices for their student's application, register to test or audition for the specialized high schools, and apply to high school. Eighth graders should attend the upcoming high school admissions fairs. The application deadline is December 2, 2019.
5. The specialized high school admissions test will be held on October 26 and 27, 2019. The test dates for English Language Learners, students with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs or approved 504 plans, and make-up test requests are on November 2 and November 17, 2019.
6. Upper division students who are participating in the Climate Strike on September 20, 2019 needs to notify their teachers. Thus far, 10 upper division students will be attending the Strike with afterschool program Global Kids. Lower division students will not be allowed to leave the school without their parents. Students who skip school and attend the Climate Strike will be marked "excused absent" (similar to excused absences for religious or medical reasons). Those who are applying to high school may want to consider informing their high school that the absence is an unexcused absence. If, however, students attend an instructional period that day, they will be marked present for the day.
7. Families must use the new online dismissal manager, in which they provide all dismissal information (including the names of who is picking up the student) for each school day, late arrival information, absences, and early dismissal information. All changes need to be in the system by 1:00pm. After 1:00 pm every school day, each teacher will receive a list of students and their dismissal plans. Parents who need to make any last minute changes should email their child's teacher and the appropriate attendance secretary (Lower Division: [joanne@q300.org](mailto:joanne@q300.org), [alexandra@q300.org](mailto:alexandra@q300.org) or Upper Division: [irene@q300.org](mailto:irene@q300.org)). Parent coordinator Jenny Lando can help families register for the online dismissal manager and answer any questions.
8. Students who do not have the required vaccination requirements will be excluded from school.
9. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders are eligible to participate in the Cultural Afterschool Adventures program coordinated by The CUNY Creative Arts Team. The afterschool program will feature play, Improvisation, physical teacher and opportunities to devise theatre based on themes of interest to the students. The program will be held on Thursdays for 12 weeks and is limited to 24 students for each cycle. There will be a total of 2 cycles. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade cycle will begin on October 10, 2019.
10. 6th-8th grade students are eligible to participate in the **CHAMPS Sports and Fitness Program** in which students participate in safe and supervised sports and fitness activities before school at the upper division campus.
11. Representatives from the School Construction Authority and the general contractor have given the school notice of their intent to begin the renovation of the science lab, which will include a hydroponic lab, at the

upper division campus. Queens Borough President Melinda and Katz and Council Member Cons Costa Constantinides funded the renovation. The renovation should be completed by May 2020.

12. A parent requested that they be notified about any lock-down drills at the school on the day of the drill, so that they can talk to their children about the drills. Principal Biniaris noted that while he cannot announce the lock down drills beforehand, he will send an email to parents after each drill on the day of the drill.
13. School mental health consultant Ashley Kappal will hold a parent workshop on Understanding Bullying on September 23, 2019 at 9:00 am at the upper division campus.
14. Coffee with Bill will occur on October 18, 2019 at 9:00 am at the upper division campus.
15. The following is an overview of the enrichment programs:
  - a. Kindergarten and 1st grade will have a year-long music, 16-week cycle of visual arts and theater and 12-week cycle of chess.
  - b. 2nd grade will have a year-long music. 16-week cycle of visual theater with set and costume design, 16-week cycle of architecture, and 12-week cycle of chess.
  - c. For the 16-week first cycle, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders will choose one of the following electives: digital art; modern dance; journalism; and advance chess. For the second 16-week cycle, students will choose one of the following electives: musical theater, African dance, and teacher led electives.
  - d. 5th graders will have guitar lessons, art classes, and their choice of enrichment electives. 6th-8th graders will have art classes and their choice of enrichment electives.
16. A lower division parent expressed appreciation that her child has been receiving art and music enrichment classes. She expressed concern that 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders who decide not to choose any art or music class will lose out on these enrichment opportunities.
17. A parent expressed concern that a teacher has been asking parents to donate books for the classroom book collection. She noted that the books should have been purchased prior to the beginning of the school year. Principal Biniaris explained that the books had been stored in a supply closet and did not make it to the classroom collections. The books are currently being reviewed in order to determine reading level and given to the teacher. He also stated that teacher have been told that they should convey any book needs to their supervisor, who will then order the books.
18. Principal Biniaris was asked wither Q300 had a position about the August 2019 report, Making the Grade II: New Programs for Better Schools, that was issued by Mayor DeBlasio's School Diversity Advisory Group. The report, among other things, provides recommendations on school screens in school application process and Gifted and Talented (G&T) programs. He stated that Q300 does not have a position on the report. Noting that he has taught G&T programs over the last 15 years, he cares deeply about those programs.
19. Each 1st through 5th grade class will have at least 30 students and a maximum of 32 students. (Each kindergarten class will have a maximum of 25 students.) In the upper division, 6th grade will have 32 students per class. Due to attrition, 7th and 8th grades have smaller classes. Principal Biniaris noted that Q300 is allocated school funding based on the Fair Student Funding (FSF) formula, which is based on the number of students enrolled at each school and the needs of those students. Having more students enables the school to obtain more funding.
20. The SLT continues to discuss how Q300 can have a more diverse student population.
21. A parent expressed appreciation about the teachers that her sixth grader has. However, she noted that the over the years, fantastic teachers have left. She asked what is Q300 doing to retain great teachers. Principal

Biniaris noted that Q300 has assigned a mentor teacher to each new teacher and that the SLT is having a focused discussion on teacher retention.

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**I. Resolution**

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1. A resolution was presented to amend the 2019-2020 PTA budget. Karen Van Wart gave an overview of the budget amendments. The following are highlights:
  - a. The amendment is needed to pay for the increased cost of enrichment programs in the lower and upper divisions. The amendment increases the budget by \$4,812 for lower division and \$7,140 for the upper division to pay for such increased cost. The increase is due, in part, to the increase in the number of weeks for each enrichment cycle (from 12 weeks to 16 weeks).
  - b. The amendment reduces the budget by \$2,000, which was budgeted for Chromebooks, reduces the supplies and teacher professional development budget items by \$9,152, and adds a \$800 credit from Art House Astoria.
  - c. There were programs that the school requested that the PTA was not able to fund because it was beyond our approved budget. The PTA is not able to fund \$2,100 to pay for the 3rd and 4th grade spring chess elective and the upper division chess elective. Q300 has agreed pay for those programs. The PTA is not able to fund \$3,400 for the Astoria film production elective in the upper division. Instead, Q300's art teacher will teach a digital photography elective.
  - d. A motion was made to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the resolution.
2. A resolution was presented to appoint Meghan Cirrito, Kevin Gallagher, Luke Lukose, and Paula Marisi to serve on the nomination committee for the October election for the positions of Co-President, Executive Vice President, Co-VP of Fundraising, Co-VP of the Lower Division, and Co-VP of the Upper Division. A motion was made to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the resolution.

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**J. New Business**

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No new business was introduced.

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**K. Adjournment**

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The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 pm EDT. The next general membership meeting will be held on October 17, 2019 at 6:00 pm in the upper division campus.

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