

Q300

Lower Division: 28-37 29th Street, Astoria 11102: 4th Floor
(718) 626-8502 Fax: (718) 626-8508

Upper Division: 31-51 21st Street, LIC 11106: 5th Floor
(718) 726-0501 Fax: (718) 726-0949



K-8 Citywide Gifted and Talented School

Principal, I.A. | Sonita Ramkishun
Assistant Principal | Anna Milonakis

School Leadership Team Meeting
February 10, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Sonita Ramkishun (IA Principal), LaShawonna Harris, *Chair* (Parent), Lynn Kennedy (PTA Co-President), Ali Lisberger (UFT), Chidi Amasiani (Teacher), Maria Panagiotakis (Teacher), Kiera Sullivan (Teacher), Sara Clough (Parent), Laura Marks (Parent), Raj Jimenez-Jailall (Parent)

Observers: Anna Milonakis (Assistant Principal), Milko Milkov (PTA Co-President)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:22 p.m.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes from January 13, 2019

Motion: *Laura* motioned to approve minutes from January with amendments. Maria seconded the motion. All were in favor; none abstained.

III. New Business

Diversity Report

Sonita reiterated that Daniel Hildreth advised us to broaden our scope to prioritize 40% of incoming kindergarten seats to students who are free and reduced lunch eligible and/or students in NYCHAA District 30 and/or Students in temporary housing. Because the proposal is due by February 24 (?) and we have not fully discussed changes with the school community, Sonita suggested it was better to aim to submit the application in June, allowing time to work on the proposal with input from the community.

Motion to Vote: *Sonita* motioned to vote to approve changing the date for the Diversity Report to be submitted in June 2020. Ali and Maria seconded the motion. 8 were in favor and 2 opposed.

School wide concerns

8th grade graduation: PTA gives \$20/student. There is also a hardship fund for those families in need of financial aid to pay for graduation activities. The remaining money needed for graduation and the trip is raised by the 8th graders through direct requests and fundraisers like bake sales and the Harry Potter event. If any 1 fundraising activity were to exceed the budget (\$10,000) by 70%, 30% would go back to the PTA.

There seemed to be confusion about whether PTA funds were needed for 4th grade graduation. Teacher suggests a point person who speaks to PTA about graduation.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Some parents in the community expressed concern that having all grade parent-teacher conferences on one day made it difficult for families with students on both campuses. The reason why we chose the date: March 3, 2020, is because Upper Division and Lower Division teachers voted for the same day, per a school based option (SBO). We can't change the date for this, but this concern will be taken into consideration going forward.

Q300 Celebration and Food Policies

Sonita reported that the school has an increased number of students with severe allergies. She proposed instituting a no food policy for K-8 for all in-class events. If families want to send in a treat for the class event or celebration, it will need to be a non-food item.

Motion to Vote: ? Sonita motioned to approve creating a no-food policy for the school. Maria seconded. All approved; none abstained.

CEP Goals 2019-2020

[CEP Goals 2019-2020.docx](#)

- Math goal- Is the wording correct for the entire k-8? Yes, algebraic thinking and operations is seen amongst k-8 standards.
- Social emotional committee- how do we build the gaps. We have data on this from the OARS reports. (enhance mindfulness, even though we are currently working on that)
- Wellness committee goal- uses scorecard, phys.ed and health goal. Improve overall health-fitnessgram, peer to peer training, teacher training. Very broad to cover all.
- The Instructional Focus goal that is listed up on the wall by the office... Why is that not the actual instructional focus? This was the old one.

Motion: Ali motioned to approve CEP goals and Instructional Focus. Sonita seconded. All were in favor; none abstained.

Decision Making

LaShawanna Harris, Chair, facilitates the SLT. Although we have PTA co-presidents, both of whom sometimes attend SLT meetings, only one of them is officially a voting member. Lynn has replaced Milko as the voting member.

IV. Committee Reports

Principal Report

Sonita will be holding two "Socialize with Sonita" morning meetings. Please RSVP for whichever one you can, it does not matter which grade your child is in.

Lower Division February 26th 8:30 am - 9:30 am room 300 RSVP:

<https://forms.gle/spi1nFbTgU5875Ki7>

Upper Division February 27th, 9:00am - 10:00am room 509 RSVP:

<https://forms.gle/XnsASgsLsBuM3Ajo9>

Important Announcements

STEAM + FAIR: This year grades K-8 are working towards developing STEAM + Fair topics using the Science Scope and Sequence and/or student research topics. In addition, the Upper Division teachers have renamed STEAM to STEAM Plus, to include the other subject areas. Families will be able to view this work during the fair that will take place at each campus. The fair will take place on the morning of May 14th. If you are interested in being a guest speaker or sharing ideas to make our STEAM FAIR amazing, please email jennylando@q300.org. We are looking for parents who are experts in the engineering design process, research design, and/ or scientific method and how to apply that to authentic research topics.

Instructional Leadership Team

Conducted a PD (professional development) with all staff on the new G & T programming standards (Standard 3) in regards to Curriculum Planning and Instruction. They engaged in intervisitations on Thursday, February 6, 2020 and visited 10 classrooms in total at both the lower division and upper division. Their instructional focus was to collect low-inference, baseline data. They would like to continue this work with cohorts of teachers. Next PD will include: instructional focus and CEP goals.

Diversity Proposal

Ali, Maria, Chidi, Rachel, Khary, and Jenny worked with Anna and Sonita to come up with ideas for the diversity proposal. Please see the link to our ideas: [Diversity](#)

Our Current Goal: Prioritize 40% of incoming kindergarten seats to District 4 and 5 and NYCHAA District 30. Daniel Hildreth advises to broaden this scope to: Prioritizing 40% of incoming kindergarten seats to 40% students who are free and reduced lunch eligible and/or students in NYCHAA District 30 and/or Students in temporary housing.

Sonita proposes that we define what we would like diversity to look like at Q300 and discuss the criteria that will help achieve this goal. In addition, I would like to vote on the new criteria and submit the diversity draft in June 2020.

Projections

It was confirmed that we will have two 6th grade classes next year (2020-2021). The composition of what those classes will look like will be shared with me in April 2020. This means it can be 1 ICT and 1 general ed or 2 general ed classes. The Director of MS (Middle School) enrollment explained to me that all 5th graders who applied to Q300 will get a seat, then the remainder of the seats will be filled with Students with Disabilities.

Budget Allocations

- Supplies for both Lower and Upper Division Offices
- Supplies for teachers (K-8)
- Books to upgrade teacher book collections in classrooms (K-8)
- Laptops for Lower Division and New Teachers
- Professional Development in PBL and Inquiry teaching

- Respect for All Bus tour
- Spring Enrichment: Alvin Ailey
- Online reading, math, science supplementals such as exemplars/ razkids
- Per-session opportunities to build leadership capacity within the school. (Teams include: Talent show, Test prep, Grant writing, Green team, CEP team, ILT, Enrichment team, STEAM Plus)

Composto Shared with Sonita

Leadership budgetary adjustments:

- When Sonita was removed as an AP in galaxy, \$63,985 was returned to the school
- When Sonita was placed on the IA Principal line in Galaxy, the budget cost was \$70,488
- When the former principal came off of the TO, \$73,311 was returned to the school
- The overall result of these transactions: *\$66,808 was returned to the school*
- If the school needed to create a Principal vacancy effective 5/1/2020, the approximate cost to create the position for two months would be about \$26,692.

Looking Ahead

- February 15 - February 23: MidWinter Break - No School
- February 24: School resumes
- February 24: A series of 4 workshops on Difficult Discussions and Adult Role Models begins. 8:45am @ UD
- February 26: After School test prep begins at LD
- February 27: After School test prep begins at UD
- February 29: Hogwarts at Q300 (Our 8th grade graduation fundraiser)

Sonita gave clarification on the school committees and why they are being established. Teachers have a choice of which committee they would like to join and will be paid per-session.

Parent Report

Diversity Update

At the January PTA meeting, parents shared in reaction to the diversity proposal thus far, that they wanted clarification on whether the proposal included free and reduced lunch as a priority as opposed to by geographic location, because then this would target low income households located citiwide and asked for clarification from the Interim acting Principal. Other parents had concerns for the narrow scope of districts chosen, given that should the school not remain in Astoria, this could pose future transportation issues and geographic constraints, or without the free and reduced lunch parameter, inequities of accessibility to take place. Additionally, there was requested clarification on sibling preference. Some parents suggested by focusing on NYCHA only, people in temporary housing would be excluded. Lastly, a subcommittee, including parents, was suggested by members of the general parent body to the Interim Principal to further discuss diversity initiatives.

Outreach Committee update

The Principal Outreach Committee, formed in December 2019 PTA meeting, has requested that the principal posting (Feb 3) be amended so that Q300 is identified as a school with grades kindergarten

through eighth grade (K-8) and are concerned that excellent candidates who are interested in leading a school that includes grades K-5 or who have relevant K-5 experience may not apply due to the incorrect description. The committee also asked what the impact, if any, of the amendment on the timeline for principal selection. Additionally, at least 17 candidates have expressed interest in the position and more are expected to apply, which is expected to be more than in 2016 when the position was last open, when 10 candidates applied, four of whom were unqualified and one of whom failed to show up to level I Interview.

Enrichment update

Several of our PTA-funded enrichment programs have finished their first cycle and these were a smashing success! These included K-1 Music and Visual Arts with ArtsConnection, Grades 2 Music/Percussion with Arts Connection and Architecture with Center for Architecture, Grades 3 and 4 (electives) that included Digital Art and Chorus with ArtsConnection, Modern Dance with Alvin Ailey, Chess with NYChessKids, and Journalism that was in-house. Grades 5-8 have enjoyed Guitar (grade 5 only) and electives like Musical Theater, Chorus, Concert Band with Art House Astoria, as well as other teacher-led electives and activities like Crafts, Robotics, Geography Bee, and more! The following list itemizes both the continued programming for the winter and spring, as well as some new programs and cycles. The PTA enrichment committee is scheduled to meet in February to begin evaluating and planning for next year's budget cycle and enrichments.

Upcoming programs for Spring Cycle at the Lower Division funded by PTA

- K: Puppetry and Percussion (provided by ArtsConnection)
- 1st: Percussion/Chorus and Creative Dramatics (provided by ArtsConnection)
- 2nd: Percussion/Chorus and Musical Theater/Set and Costume Design (provided by Arts Connection)
- 3rd - 4th (Kids choose one): Visual Arts, Musical Theater (provided by Arts Connection), West African Dance (provided by Alvin Ailey), Advanced Chess (provided by NYChessKids), Student Government (teacher led)

Upcoming programs for Spring Cycle at the Upper Division funded by PTA (students choose one)

- Chorus, Band, or Musical Theater (provided by Art House Astoria)
- Guitar (Grade 5 only, provided by Art House Astoria)
- Advanced Chess (provided by NYChessKids)
- Teacher-led electives which include Shakespeare Festival, Memory Makers, Geography Bee, Exploring Cakewalk by Bandlab, Brain Games, Handwork Crafts, Games4change, Digital Photography, Genius Hour.

** Please note that Q300 School picking up payment of Alvin Ailey Dance this term based on revisions in the funding available via school budget. The PTA is grateful for this support.

Current PTA Committees that exist

Membership, Enrichment, Budget, Audit, Communications, Auction, Grant, Library, One school, Fundraising, Community Affair, Bus Advocacy, Nominations, Wellness and 2E.

Report on CEC District 30 Resource

Lynn Kennedy attended the CEC 30 Presidential meeting, Feb 5, 2020. A resource was provided called Dial-a-Teacher, A UFT and DOE initiative, for parents, students and teacher support. It offers free help with homework, helps parents to help their kids; offers Armenian, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Tagalog; Hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 4-7pm and a teacher supports in subjects, reading, math, writing and science. Dial-a-Teacher can come and do presentations as well.

International Potluck

Our annual potluck was another great success! We had a great time eating, chatting, and getting to know each other even more. Thanks for everyone's help in making this an allergy-aware event. Many thanks to ALL of the parents that contributed to the home-cooked meals and those leading amazing activities. We had over 200 people in attendance including our staff and teachers Laura Parris, Chidi Amasiani, Gilda Cheregi, Erin Tornature, Anna Hauser, James Woo, Elijah Cho, Jean Kim, Khary Chan, Rachel Weiss, Afsana Choudary, and Jenny Lando! Thank you to our Alumni that came out as well to represent. We had many 9th and 11th graders representing! Big shout out to Jenny Lando who helped from the beginning to the end!

Upcoming events

- April 3rd: Annual Zumbathon with lower division. 5:30 pm.

UFT Report

Ali Lisberger voiced, Since Bill's departure, things have been smooth and communication has been strong.

Ali shared, Upper division teachers have been having conversations with students about the search for a new principal and the qualities they're looking for. The student council (with Esteban's guidance) created surveys for students to fill out. Chidi will speak about the results at the SLT meeting on Monday.

Ali would like to propose the following changes to our current SLT bylaws which could begin during the 2020-2021 school year:

1. Have a rotating secretary so each member of the committee takes notes one or two times throughout the year.
2. Have an equal number of teachers from the upper and lower division.

During one of last year's SLT meetings we discussed the school surveys which come out this month and are due by March 31st. In an effort to get 100% parent and teacher participation, we should hand them out to parents on March 3rd (during PTC's) and have some sort of incentive for filling it out.

With billions of dollars of federal funding for vital services for our schools and neighborhoods on the line, the 2020 Census will have real consequences for our communities. The UFT would like to encourage all families to fill out their Census this spring. New York State receives \$73 billion every year in federal funding based on Census data. New York lost — and continues to lose — hundreds of millions of federal dollars for schools and other vital services because the city's and the state's residents were undercounted in 2010. Please help spread the word about why it's important we all count and assure

families that personal information collected by the Census Bureau cannot be shared with any government agency or court.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.