



## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • JUNE 21, 2018

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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 (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 42.

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### B. Call to Order

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Co-PTA Presidents Maria Hantzopoulos and Margarita Soto called the meeting of 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. Co-Presidents’ Report

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Co-Presidents Maria Hantzopoulos and Margarita Soto gave the President’s report. The following are the highlights:

1. **Mulee Orders.** Parents will have the opportunity to order grade-specific school supplies at a one-stop shop at the Mulee website ([www.themulee.com](http://www.themulee.com)). Mulee will box and deliver the supplies to the school.
2. **Read-a-Thon.** The PTA will launch its third annual Summer Read-a-thon in mid-June. Last year, the Read-a-thon raised over \$10,000 through this initiative.
3. **Summer Picnic.** The PTA will hold its annual Back-to-School Picnic on Sunday, August 26 at 3 pm at Rainey Park in Astoria.
4. **PTA Funded Enrichments.**
  - a. **Chrome Books.** The PTA has purchased an additional eight (8) chromebooks for the upper division. In total, the PTA has funded about USD \$10,000 of chromebooks for the upper division.
  - b. **Professional Development.** The PTA will fund summer professional development for (a) three teachers for Teachers College differentiated instruction workshop (b) two or three teachers including a four-day intensive responsive classroom training and (c) environment-based differentiated teaching program (Confratute) at the Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut. The PTA just funded the one-day team building staff development day for all teachers and staff by the Cornerstone for Teachers.
  - c. **2018-2019 PTA-funded Programs.** For 2018-2019 school, the Administration has suggested the following PTA funded teaching assistants and enrichment programs:
    - (i) In the lower division, the current teaching assistant assignments would remain in place: one teaching assistant assigned to each class in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade and one teaching assistant shared by both classes in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grades.
    - (ii) In the lower division, the current enrichment programs would remain largely the same: year-long music for kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grades; 10-week visual arts for kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grades; 10-week architecture in 2nd grade; 10-week dance in 3rd and 4th grade. (In addition, chess, which is not funded by the PTA, will continue). The school has added a 10-week movement cycle for K-1 grades. Art House Astoria will provide both visual arts and music. Alvin Ailey Dance Theater will continue to provide 3rd and 4th grade dance.

- (iii) In the upper division, the Administration is still finalizing the enrichment electives and which ones will be funded by PTA.

d. **Appreciations.**

- (i) **Lower Division Registration.** Thanks to the following parents who met with new families in the lower division registration process: Paula Marisi, Neel Dhruv, Lynn Kennedy, Hillit Zwick, Tulsi Raipatriwar, Barbara Monroe, Micki Spiller, Kim Schaeffer, Marsha Annon, Nick Mazing, Colin Petch, Francis Englert, Patricia Martinez, Annie Chang, Stephanie Luxenberg, Karamkit Gupta, Maria Hantzopoulos, and others.
- (ii) **Welcome Breakfast.** Thanks to the following parents who volunteered during the June 9, 2018 Welcome Breakfast: Sergey Shchulkin, Lynn Kennedy, Pam Yi, Agnes Luo, Youjia Fang, Alvin Yoo, Wei Tian, Maggie Sampson, Nailing Xia, Shamin Saha, Pam Yi, Maria Hantzopoulos, Margarita Soto, Sarah Chang, Ellie Rabinovich, Julia Yam, Fanli Zhou, Jana Yagudayev, David Wang, Maura McDermott, Juan and Mandy Jaramillo, and Agnes Lishka, and others. Special thanks to Sarah Willett Chang and Ellie Rabinovich for organizing.
- (iii) **Gift Card Purchase Fundraiser.** Thank to parent Kevin Gallagher for organizing.
- (iv) **Read-a-thon.** Thanks to parent Blain Kennedy for launching the Read-a-thon. Thanks to Hong van Tieu, Meghan Cirrito and Maria Hantzopoulos for assisting with the book lists associated with the Read-a-thon.
- (v) **Book Fair.** Thanks to parent Hong van Tieu for launching the online book fair.
- (vi) **Stepping into Summer Dance Party and Auction.** With over 280 attendees, our fourth annual event was a huge success - including the subsequent online auction. We raised over \$20,000 in profit this year! Big thanks to Joanna Holzman and Maria Hantzopoulos for chairing, Siobhan and Jason for creating the journal, and of course the committee for all their work: Hong van Tieu, Randi Marshall, Gina Reis, Barbara Monroe, Sue Sekar, Kevin Gallagher, Blain Kennedy, Hillit Zwick, Ellie Rabinovich, Paula Marisi, Janet Perez, Ravi Kaushal, and others.
- (vii) **8th Grade Graduation and Reception.** Thanks to the graduation committee for helping with end of year festivities for the 8th graders: Special thanks to Randi Marshall, Anne van der Veer, Jenn Choi, Jennie Kwok, and others as well as 7th grade parent Evie Hantzopoulos for organizing the post-graduation reception with other 7th grade parents (launching a new tradition).

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**D. Committee Reports**

- 1. **Fundraising Committee.** The PTA has raised about \$38,000 more this year than last year. The student body increased about 11%; the Direct Appeal contributions increased about 15%.
- 2. **Community Affairs.** The committee has helped garner funding for the school, including an upper division lab, smart boards and other technology. The One School Committee is looking for potential sites for the construction of a Queens-based building that would house both the lower and upper divisions.
- 3. **Membership.** The Committee is updating the PTA's membership lists based on the arrival of new families.
- 4. **Communications.** The Committee will shortly publish its final issue of the newsletter.

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**F. Co-Treasurers' Report**

Co-President Maria Hantzopoulos delivered the Co-Treasurer's Report. Attached is a copy of summary of the PTA's finances for May and June 2018 (the "**Period**"). The following are highlights:

- 1. The PTA raised \$36,000 for the Period, including \$18,000 from the Stepping into Summer Party and Auction (the "**Party & Auction**"), \$10,000 from the Direct Appeal, and \$4,000 from gift card fundraising proceeds.
- 2. The PTA spent \$32,000 for the Period, including \$8,000 for the lower division music program, \$7,000 for teacher professional development, \$5,000 for the Party & Auction expenses; \$4,000 for the lower division visual arts program, and \$2,000 for classroom printers.

3. For the 2017-2018 school year, the PTA raised a total of \$308,000. The breakdown of the amount raised is \$207,000 from the Direct Appeal and about \$101,000 from other fundraising efforts.
4. For the 2017-2018 school year, the PTA spent a total of \$270,000. The breakdown of the expenses included \$104,000 for lower division teaching assistants, \$88,000 for enrichments programs, \$48,000 fundraising expenses (including \$28,000 in gift card purchases by parents), \$24,000 on school supplies and professional development.
5. Overall for 2017-2018 school year, the PTA netted \$38,000 in income, which raised the PTA's end of year balance to \$222,000.

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## G. Resolution

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1. Resolution was made to approve the 2018-2019 PTA Budget. The following are highlights of the discussion:
  - a. The PTA distributed the Q300 PTA Budget Pack (the "**Pack**") for 2018-2019, which includes the 2018-2018 Budget. The following is a summary of the Pack:
    - (i) The Pack explains the budget process and compares the current year actuals to the proposed budget.
    - (ii) The 2018-2019 PTA budget is based on current and prior year events and results. The PTA membership will need to approve any new fundraising programs.
    - (iii) The PTA budget priority items are based on discussions with the Administration as to what are the school priorities for which there are DOE budgetary constraints. As noted above, next year's enrichments are generally the same as the ones for this year. The PTA is adding a movement or art program for kindergarteners and first graders and paying for more electives and clubs in the upper division.
  - b. The PTA noted that the Administration has transferred the music program from Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, which as provided such programming for the last four years, to Art House Astoria, which currently provides visual arts programs to the school. Principal Bill Biniaris noted that Art House Astoria has expressed interest in fostering the teaching of musical instruments, including guitar. Assistant Principal Anna Milonakis noted that teachers had expressed a desire to change the music program.
  - c. Some lower division parents expressed concern that the current visual arts program taught by Art House Astoria was too formulaic – requiring students to copy pictures. Principal Biniaris agreed to convey these concerns to Art House Astoria. Another parent noted that her child has taken classes at Art House Astoria and found them to be instructive, creative, and fun.
  - d. A parent suggested that the PTA consider adding a line item for a reserve fund, in the event of an unexpected occurrence that requires additional PTA funding. A parent noted that the PTA already has a healthy reserve.
  - e. A motion was made to pass the resolution. The motion was seconded. A majority of the Members present approved the resolution.

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## H. School Leadership Team ("SLT") Report

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Monica Mohan gave the SLT Report. The following are highlights:

1. On June 4, 2018, the SLT reviewed and evaluated parent community feedback to the Principal's Action Plan (the "**Plan**") concerning issues raised in the April general membership meeting using a discussion protocol for analyzing data. The feedback was extensive and allowed the PTA to identify a number of glows and grows on the Plan for Principal Biniaris to consider as he revises the Plan. In general, the comments support further efforts by Principal Biniaris and the Administration to provide clear statements about and actions supporting the school's philosophy and mission and to engage

in transparent, consensus-based decision-making about the school's direction for the next school year and beyond. The SLT also worked 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.

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, the school is currently required to interview and hire from current Department of Education employees. The school is also interviewing for two special education teachers in the MS and a Spanish teacher in the ES. The school is also considering creating an Individual Education Plan ("IEP") coordinator position. SLT has also been assisting with organizing and scheduling Responsive Classroom training for administrators, teachers, and staff before the start of the next school year. At a minimum, there will be training conducted in August by existing teachers who have completed the 4-day Responsive Classroom training.
3. During the June 11 meeting, teachers have raised questions about the informal parent Google group. Parent members confirmed that (a) the Google group is not run by the PTA; and (b) the Google Group has ground rules that are enforced.

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## I. Principal's Report

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

1. Principal Biniaris noted that he is reinstating the practice in which students call teachers by the teachers' first names. That practice was in place during the first two years of the school.
2. Principal Biniaris noted a number of personnel changes including the following: (a) teacher Brooke Goldfeder Barnard was offered and accepted a new teaching position at another school. Q300 had offered her the position of IEP coordinator; however, teacher Brooke declined and took the new teaching position; (b) parent coordinator Eileen Yim is leaving her position at the end of the school year; (c) Bonita Onunka will return as a secretary; (d) Gilda Cheregi will return to the upper division as an integrated co-teaching ("ICT") teacher; (e) Jaimee Ellerbrock has been hired to teach English language arts and Social Studies; (f) a lower division teacher has been hired with a gifted and talented ("G&T") extension certificate; (g) a Spanish language teacher has been hired for the lower division; (h) the Administration is interviewing candidates for a social worker position from a pool of DOE candidates; (i) Taylor Krug has been hired to teach fifth grade with Erika Ball; and (j) teacher Sonita Ramkishum is working toward her G&T extension certificate.
3. Principal Biniaris analyzed student data by grade concerning how proficient students were in meeting grade standards in the areas of English language arts and math over the course of the year. At the beginning of the school year, students were assessed on whether they were proficient in that grade's standards. At the end of that school year, the students were assessed again. Principal Biniaris noted that Q300 students acquired high proficiency in each of these areas. In one grade, the percent of students who were proficiency in English language arts standard for that grade was 14%; at the end of the year, the percent of students who were proficient had increased to 98%. Principal Biniaris will email the analysis of your students' grade.
4. Principal Biniaris noted that he is analyzing the average reading growth of the students based on grade.
5. Principal Biniaris noted that in the lower division campus, students are placed in differentiated reading groups within the class, rather than across grade level in previous years. He asserted that the current arrangement saves time as students do not have to switch to other classes for reading. In the upper division campus, the school encourages reading through book clubs and by providing students the opportunity to write.
6. A parent expressed concern about the difficulty that a teacher faces in managing five different reading groups in one class. In the previous arrangement, where students were grouped across grades in accordance to reading level, each differentiated group had a teacher, which enabled that teacher to prepare to teach in the reading group for that particular level. In the current arrangement, a teacher has to prepare for five different lessons within the class, based on the particular reading group.
7. Principal Biniaris noted that the school is focused on improving both reading and writing skills for its students. Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are using the Teachers College reading and writing program. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades are using

Expeditionary Learning reading and Teachers College writing program. For the 2018-2019 school year, the school will use Teachers College reading and writing program for the lower division campus. He noted that while 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders have done well in reading, they need to improve their writing.

8. Principal Biniaris noted that the SLT is revising the CEP.
9. Principal Biniaris noted that Anna Milonakis will likely be on leave in October 2018; he is expected to appoint an interim acting assistant principal to act in her stead.

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## J. Expedited Elections

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Pursuant to Section 5.8.2 of the PTA Bylaws, as amended on June 23, 2016, the PTA held an expedited election for the following board positions: President, Treasurer and Vice President of Fundraising. At least 10 calendar days prior to the Meeting, written notice, as specified in the PTA bylaws, of the election was sent to the Membership.

1. **Co-Presidents.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Julissa McHugh and Paula Marisi. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Julissa McHugh and Paula Marisi. as Co-Vice Presidents. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
2. **Executive Vice President.** A nomination was offered from the floor. But the nomination was declined by the nominee. No other nominations were received from the floor.
3. **Co-Treasurers.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Margo Karasek and Pamela Yi. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Margo Karasek and Pamela Yi. as Co-Treasurers. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
4. **Co-Secretaries.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: M. Daniel Bach and David William Wang. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: M. Daniel Bach and David William Wang. as Co-Secretaries. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
5. **Co-Vice Presidents of Membership.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Maria Carrasco and Sue Sekar. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Maria Carrasco and Sue Sekar. as Co-Secretaries of Membership. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
6. **Co-Vice Presidents of Fundraising.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Claire Lui and Hillit Zwick. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Claire Lui and Hillit Zwick. as Co-Vice Presidents of Fundraising. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
7. **Co-Vice Presidents of Community Affairs.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Lynn Kennedy and Gina Reis. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Lynn Kennedy and Gina Reis. as Co-Vice Presidents of Community Affairs. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.

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## J. Adjournment

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The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 PM.

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Gina Reis and David William Wang, Co-Secretary

