



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • October 25, 2018

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 24.

B. Call to Order

Co-Presidents Julissa McHugh and Paula Marisi called the the General Membership of the Q300 PTA Association to order at 6:40 pm in the auditorium at the upper division campus.

C. Co-Presidents’ Report

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

1. **Costume Party. Sunday, October 28, 2018 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. The PTA is seeking volunteers.
 2. **Q300 Volunteer Training.** Q300 will be holding an hour-and-half training for in-school volunteers on November 2, 2018 at 9:00 am at the upper division campus.
 3. **Picture Day, November 13, 2018.** The Parent Coordinator is seeking volunteers for Picture Day for both campuses.
 4. **Service Projects.** The PTA is seeking to organize long-term service projects for each grade.
 5. **Holiday Drives.** The PTA is sponsoring coat, sock, pajama, and book drives.
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F. Co-Treasurers’ Report

Sue Sekar delivered the Co-Treasurer’s Report. Attached is a copy of summary of the PTA’s finances for September 2018. The following are highlights:

1. The Read-a-thou raised almost \$8,000. Expenditures included \$10,560.51 to Art House Astoria for enrichment programs and \$2,051.00 for professional development and school supplies.
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G. School Leadership Team (“SLT”) Report

Julissa McHugh presented the SLT Report. The following are highlights:

1. At its October 22, 2018 meeting, the SLT continues to work on the school’s Comprehensive Education Policy (“**CEP**”) for the 2018-19 school year. The focus is on making the CEP goals more student-centered. The SLT also discussed School District 30’s diversity initiative. It will be circulating a survey to the community. Students will be part of the discussion as well.

H. Principal's Report

Due to a scheduling conflict, Principal Biniaris was unable to attend the PTA meeting. Interim Assistant Principal Sonita Ramkishun gave the Principal's Report. The following are highlights:

1. Q300 has made baseline assessments for all students. Those assessments will be compared with the results at the end of the school year for all the students in order to gauge how much they learned during the school year.
2. Various teachers have attended professional teacher training programs, including a Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training and Integrated Co-Teaching training.
3. The majority of classrooms have Promethean boards, which are interactive whiteboards that allows the teacher to project an image from a laptop or a computer, as well as interact with the board through touch or specialized pens.
4. Upcoming field trips include the kindergarten trip to the New York Hall of Science, 7th grade trip to Storm King Art Center, 8th grade trip to the New York City Spy Museum.
5. The 4th grade writing celebrations will occur on October 29 and October 30, 2018. The 2nd grade writing celebrations are scheduled for November 9, 2018. The 3rd grade writing celebrations will be held on November 8 and 9, 2018.
6. In connection with the Department of Education's (DOE) diversity initiative, Q300 held a focus group of parents who were asked to describe what diversity means to them, Q300 submitted its report to the School District. A parent expressed appreciation about the thoughtful conversation that that occurred during the focus group.
7. The CHAMPS Middle School Sports and Fitness Program has begun for upper division students. It will take place from 7:10 am to 8:10 am each morning and will end on December 15, 2018.
8. Q300 has been given permission to recruit potential social worker candidates who are not currently a DOE employee. The DOE currently has a hiring freeze for social workers in which schools may not recruit candidates who are not current DOE employees. Q300 has been granted an exemption to the hiring freeze. Q300 will continue to interview potential. Representatives of SLT and the PTA will be involved in the final selection.
9. A parent asked whether class size for 1st through 4th grade have been increased to 32 students per class. She expressed concern that Principal Biniaris had previously stated that the class size would be capped at 30 students per class. A parent mentioned that a lower division student had commented that new students have been added to his or her class.
10. Parent Coordinator Jenny Lando indicated that the class size increase was needed to avoid the excessing of a teacher. A parent expressed confusion over this budget issue. She noted that the School Leadership Team had discussed the school budget and the staffing budget was aligned with having 30 students per class. Further, given that the social worker, which was included in the staffing budget, has not yet been hired – so there should be some cushion in the staffing budget. Assistant AP Ramkishun agreed to look into the matter.
11. A parent expressed concern that given the “massive turnover” of staff over the last several years, an increasing in class size could further discourage teachers from staying at the school.
12. A parent expressed frustration that Principal Biniaris has not communicated any such increase in class size to the parent community.
13. A parent noted that because DOE school funding is determined, in part, by student headcount, an increase in the number of students in the school would result in an increase in such funding.

14. Another noted that there has been student attrition in the upper division, as a result, there has been a decrease in school funding. The increase in lower division students would help make up for a loss in school funding from the upper division.
 15. Q300's website has been launched; however, there has not been a formal announcement from Principal Biniaris.
 16. A parent expressed concern that there is only one open house scheduled for prospective upper division students. Parent Coordinator ("PC") Jenny Lando explained that it is common to have only one open house and that the date of the open house had been cleared with School District 30 staff in order to prevent conflicts with other schools. PC Lando also noted that Q300 has a relatively small number of available seats.
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D. Committee Reports

1. **Fundraising.** Vice President of Fundraising Claire Lui gave the Fundraising report. The following are highlights.
 - a. The Read-a-thon raised almost \$8,000. The 2nd grade had the highest Read-a-thon participation rate in the lower division; the 5th grade had the highest participation rate in the upper division. Both classes will get a pizza party.
 - b. At the Costume Party on October 28, 2018, the PTA will hold a raffle with lots of prizes.
 - c. On Election Day (November 6, 2018), please have a meal at at UNO's Pizzeria & Grill at 37-11 35th Ave, Long Island City, NY 11101. A portion of your check will benefit the PTA.
 - d. On November 16, 2018, the PTA will hold its annual Gallery Night. This evening fundraising event is a chance for parents and other adults in the Q300 community to socialize over wine and light food at the Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery in the Lower East Side. Tickets are \$50.00 per person.
 - e. Direct Appeal chair David Wang reported that since the start of the Direct Appeal campaign two weeks ago, the PTA has raised \$70,000 out of a total of \$212,000 budgeted. Last year, the Direct Appeal raised 83% of the net PTA budget. David noted that the DOE does not pay for teaching assistants, certain enrichment programs and electives, and other priorities and does not provide extra funding for Q300's gifted and talented status. Further, unlike many other public schools, Q300 is not eligible for Federal Title 1 funds, which is based on the number of children from households that are at or below the federal poverty level. A parent suggested that families should check to see if their employer matches donations to PTAs. Another noted that some employers will give donations based on an employee's volunteer hours.
2. **Community Affairs.** The following are highlights from the report given by Julissa McHugh:
 - a. Thanks to the many parents who attended the New York City Chancellor Richard Carranza's Town Hall meeting to learn more about his initiatives. The Chancellor expressed keen interest in increasing diversity in schools, supporting social emotional learning and the cultivating the whole child. He favors increased support of diverse styles and means of learning including fine arts and other modalities to support the whole child.
 - b. NYC Council Member Constantinides' participatory budget process has started and thanks to Q300 parents Marisa Nagano and Lynn Kennedy for serving as the delegates on the education committee for that process.
 - c. The PTA is beginning its coat, sock, pajama, and book drives.
 - d. Parent Kim Alexandrescu has applied for a parent volunteer position at Community Education Council (CEC) for School District 30.
 - e. The CEC will be holding its monthly meeting on November 19, 2018 at I.S. 141.
 - f. Community Affairs is interested in helping to form a Wellness Council for our school. It has begun the search for interested parents who would like to participate in planning for such council. The council can be 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.). The co-located school P.S. 17 has already applied for the program and would like to organize joint activities with Q300.

- g. The Grants committee is interested in interviewing Q300 alumni/ae. If you are interested, please reach out to Lynn.
 - h. There was a call for volunteers to coordinate the Box Tops fundraiser.
 - i. The PTA and P.S. 17's Parent Association will organize a showing of the movie, "Trolls" during the evening of December 7, 2018 at the lower division campus.
 - j. Principal Biniaris wrote a letter to Chancellor expressing the importance of having the school be sited in one building. He noted that there were unnecessary inefficiencies from having two campuses, including redundant administrator and teachers in both campuses.
3. **Membership.** Maria Hantzopoulos urged parents to fill out the parent volunteer survey, which helps the PTA identify parents to work on various PTA activities. She noted that class parents have been selected for all classes, except two 8th grade classes and 7th grade class 702. Parent Sae Makino-Siller then offered to serve as class 702 class parent. Maria noted that parents can purchase blueberry, cherry, pumpkin or apple for Thanksgiving through the PTA. Parents can have the pies delivered to certain neighborhoods. Maria also noted that the next chess tournament at Q300 will be held on Nov 11, 2018. It is a great way for beginners to join in. All levels are welcome.
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E. Resolutions

- 1. A motion was made to approve a resolution to increase by \$1,050 the \$5,000 budget for 2nd grade architecture enrichment program taught by the Center for Architecture. Parent Sue Sekar explained that this is the first increase that the Center has requested since the Center first provided the program some three years ago. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
 - 2. A motion was made to approve a resolution to move the scheduled PTA meetings from the upper division to the lower division until the Broadway subway station re-opens. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
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F. Expedited Elections

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. **Executive Vice President.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Margarita Soto. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Margarita Soto as Executive Vice President. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
- 2. **Co-Treasurers.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Margo Karasek and Karen Van Wart. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Margo Karasek and Karen Van Wart as Co-Treasurers. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
- 3. **Co-Vice Presidents of Membership.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Maria Carrasco and Maria Hantzopoulos. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Maria Carrasco and Maria Hantzopoulos as Co-VPs of Membership. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
- 4. **Co-Vice President of Fundraising.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Amina Kulshmanova and Claire Lui. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Amina Kulshmanova and Claire Lui as Co-Vice Presidents of Fundraising. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.

5. **Co-Vice President of Lower Division.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Sue Sekar. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Sue Sekar as Co-Vice President of Lower Division. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
6. **Co-Vice President of Upper Division.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Sara Clough. No other nominations were made. A Member made a motion to cast one vote to elect: Sara Clough as Co-Vice President of Upper Division. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.

G. New Business

1. A parent requested that Principal Biniaris provide an update on the PTA resolution, dated May 3, 2018, concerning issues such as teacher retention. Parent Coordinator Jenny Lando agreed to ask Principal Biniaris to provide such an update.
2. Q300 has established a twice exceptional kids committee, which advises the administration of children who, have the characteristics of gifted students with the potential for high achievement and give evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria.
3. A parent expressed concern that Q300 was not providing bagged lunch for field trips. Interim AP Ramkishun agreed to speak with Principal Biniaris about the matter.

H. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 PM. The next general meeting will be held on November 29, 2018 at 6:30 pm in the lower division campus.

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