



The 30th Avenue School (Q300)

Elementary Campus

28-37 29th Street, 4th Floor, Astoria, NY 11102

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Middle School Campus

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www.Q300.org

Vasilios Biniaris, Principal

School Leadership Team Meeting

June 4, 2018

Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Vasilios Biniaris, Principal

Elijah Cho, Teacher

Alex Lunz, Teacher

Ali Lisberger, UFT Rep

Mara Cusker Gonzalez, Parent

Maria Hantzopoulos, PTA Co-President

Monica Mohan, Parent

Elizabeth Yarmy, Parent

Members Absent:

Sarah Duer, Teacher

Jennifer Choi, Parent

Observers:

LaShawwna Harris (incoming 2018-19 SLT parent member)

Rajendra Jimenez-Jailall (incoming 2018-19 SLT parent member)

Laura Marks (incoming 2018-19 SLT parent member)

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

Review, amendment, and approval of minutes for May 7, 2018 meeting.

Parent Report:

- **PTA Elections and Budget:** The PTA has elected a new PTA Executive Board, but several positions, including President and Vice-President, remain open and will be up for election during the final PTA meeting of the year, on June 21. The meeting will also include a vote on the budget for next year.
- **Welcome Events:** Elementary School (ES) registration will take place this week and parents have volunteered to attend to welcome new families. The PTA will host a welcome breakfast for ES and Middle School (MS) families on June 9.



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- **Current Fundraising:** The PTA has launched the third annual Summer Read-a-Thon, which will run through September and will include an online book sale as part of the fundraising effort. The gift card fundraiser is underway.
- **Recent Fundraising:** The Stepping Into Summer event and auction raised over \$20,000, and the Square1 arts fundraiser raised \$500 and included the artwork of 175 students.
- **Recent School Events:** The parent-organized Teacher Appreciation Day, MS open house/orientation, and MS high-school admissions workshop all went well. Thanks to the many parent volunteers.
- **End-of-Year PTA Funding:** The PTA will purchase additional Chromebooks or iPads for the MS and will fund additional professional development (PD) for teachers and staff over the Summer (Responsive Classroom).
- **Discussion About Behavioral Charts:** There has been some concern and discussion among 1st grade parents about the use of behavioral charts in the second grade classes (from the Parent Engagement Night) and whether this aligns with the school's approach to social and emotional learning (SEL). This issue ties into the broader SEL and school vision discussions and the work of the SLT's Supportive Environment group.

Principal's Report:

- **2018-19 Staffing:** Bill has a tentative organizational and staffing chart for the upcoming school year. The vacancies include the following positions: parent coordinator; ES Spanish teacher; social worker; and one to two MS special education teachers.
- **Enrichment:** The tentative enrichment program for next year includes year-long music for the ES once a week, to be provided by Art House Astoria instead of Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. For MS students, the long-term goal is for a twice-a-week music program. The school is working on the schedule for enrichment classes.
- **Professional Development and SEL:** Ali and Maria have been working to schedule Responsive Classroom (RC) training for teachers and staff this Summer. The objective is to have as many of the teachers and staff, including all new hires,



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attend a four-day RC training, and to have a consistent SEL approach schoolwide. Bill and Anna are planning to attend. In addition to summer training, existing teachers with training and expertise in RC can help provide ongoing in-house training and support. The RC organization also provides the option for regular check-ins with coaches after training is completed.

- **Planning for Special Education:** The current plan is to have three special education teachers in the MS for the 2018-19 school year. The school will retain at least one and possibly two of the current special education teachers and will hire another. Bill met with parents of special education students to discuss the plan for next year and is scheduling a follow-up meeting. There will be a training session on June 18, and the plan includes additional PD next year as well as parent workshops.
- **Hiring:** The school and Maria have posted job openings in a number of places, including teaching colleges and universities. Hunter College is a good source because it has a program in gifted and studies and education.
- **Announcing New Staff/Teachers:** A parent member suggested that the school should announce new staff members, such as the new secretary in the ES, to parents. Bill agreed to do so.
- **September SLT Meeting:** Bill proposes September 17, 2018, for the date of the first meeting of the 2018-19 SLT.

Principal's Action Plan and Parent Feedback:

- Using a Data Analysis protocol, the group reviewed and discussed parent feedback on the Principal's Action Plan that the SLT collected through a Google form sent by the parent coordinator. Each responding parent was able to provide up to three one-paragraph comments, and the collected feedback filled 24 pages.
- First, members of the group took turns objectively describing the feedback results, with no analysis or interpretation. Members noted the following:
 - The feedback includes concerns about:
 - the school's vision and culture
 - teacher retention
 - the hiring process



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- long-term planning
 - transparency
 - communication
 - trust
 - consistency
 - collaboration
 - identification and handling of individualized education programs (IEPs)
 - diversity
- The feedback includes comments about a sense of loss in the school, including the loss of the social worker and loss of emphasis on inquiry and inclusion.
- Second, members of the group shared interpretations of the data to try to make sense of the data. Members noted that the feedback suggests that:
 - There is a clear love and support for teachers in the school.
 - There is a need for better alignment of school decisions with the school's vision and better articulation of the vision.
 - Some view the retention issues as a symptom of broader problems with school direction.
 - Parents have questions and concerns about a loss of the progressive mission and vision of the school.
 - A number of parents believe that the fractures and issues the school is facing can be mended.
 - There is a need for better communications around and support for teachers.
- Third, members identified implications the data has for the Action Plan and the issues it seeks to address. Members noted the following implications:
 - School leadership needs to do more to address concerns about transparency and school culture, including by visibly demonstrating a collaborative approach and by providing clear statements about, and taking actions to support, the school's philosophy and vision.
 - The school needs to take steps to ensure that it is moving forward through consensus-based decision-making, including by engaging more with



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teachers and staff and providing more transparency in decision-making; teachers are ready to move forward with Bill to make these changes.

- Fourth, Bill provided reflections on the discussion and identified certain next steps, including the following:
 - Bill is working to follow through on teacher feedback obtained through discussions with UFT members, including by improving systems for consensus-based and collaborative decision-making.
 - There is a need to better inform parents about the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and use the CEP to communicate the school's vision and action plan. Curriculum night in September is one opportunity to update parents about the CEP goals and activities.

Budget for 2018-2019:

- Bill has a budget meeting this week. He will present the proposed staffing plan and budget and should obtain additional information about planned allocations.
- The SLT will meet again on June 11, 2018, to discuss the budget and staffing plan and the alignment of the budget with the CEP.

Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP):

- Each CEP goal subgroup met to review and reflect on its respective 2017-18 CEP and prepare goals and action plans for 2018-19. Then each subgroup briefly presented.
 - Supportive Environment: The proposed goals include (1) ensuring that 100% of administration, teachers, and staff engage in 4-day Responsive Classroom training and (2) communicating a clear SEL program to students, teachers, and parents. The action plan includes setting aside planning time before the school year starts to review the SEL program and engage in Responsive Classroom training. There was a discussion of how best to measure progress and impact in this area. In addition to survey results, a potential measure relates to how often children are resolving issues together, under teacher/parent guidance but without the need for



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intervention. The results of the Supportive Environment subgroup's recent school survey will be circulated to the school community.

- Collaborative Teachers: The proposed goal is that 85% of teachers will be given four (4) hours of collaborative planning time during regular school hours per month. The action plan includes calendaring collaborative planning dates for the school year before the year starts.
- Rigorous Instruction: The proposed goals are that: by February 2019, 50% of teachers will have evidenced consistent use of effective formative assessments, yielding data that leads to adjusted curricula and instruction; and by June 2019, 50% of teachers will have evidenced consistent use of differentiated tasks and multiple entry points as part of their instructional practices.
- There is a June 30 deadline for submitting the draft CEP. Each subgroup will circulate updated draft goals and action plans using the CEP template.

School Website Update:

- Members of the website subcommittee have been generating, revising, and circulating content for review and posting this month.

The UFT Report will be provided during next week's meeting.

Remuneration logs were completed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM. Next meeting will be June 11, 2018.