



**The 30th Avenue School (Q300)
Elementary Campus**

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Sonita Ramkishun, IA Principal

School Leadership Team Meeting

October 29, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Chidi Amasani

Bill Biniaris

Sara Clough

LaShawonna Harris

Raj Jalall

Lynn Kennedy (arrived after PTA President's Report)

Ali Lisberger

Milko Milkov

Maria Panagiotakis

Sonita Ramkishun

Kiera Sullivan

Guest: Daniel Hildreth (DOE Office of Student Enrollment)

SLT Chair LaShawonna Harris called the meeting to order at 5:24 pm.

PTA Report

We discussed the DOE's Diversity Committee report, and a draft letter in response that Q300's PTA had been invited to co-sign. The letter had been raised at the October PTA meeting but had not yet been finalized and shared with SLT or the parent body. Milko explained that the letter had been drafted by other schools planning to sign it

(ultimately TAG, Anderson, NEST and Lab), and that he and Lynn simply provided edits. The objective is to have PTA leadership make a statement defending G&T education in response to the DOE report calling for an eventual abolishment of G&T schools. The group suggested that we try to emphasize the unique qualities of Q300 that set it apart from what the general understanding of G&T education might be. (Following the meeting, Lynn and Milko shared the final letter sent by the above schools to the DOE with SLT and the school community via email.)

Principal Report

Bill shared that the school had been awarded a \$2,500 and thanked Anna Milanokis, Lynn Kennedy, Sara Clough and other teachers and parents for their efforts and participation in the Committee.

Other announcements included:

- Teacher Anna Hauser gave birth to a baby and began her maternity leave the Friday before the SLT meeting. A substitute replacement for Anna had begun to shadow her in class. Bill expected the individual's paperwork to be fully processed by the Friday.
- Bill welcomed 8th-grade ICT teacher Chidi Amasiani to the SLT as a representative from the Upper Division. The group thanked Chidi for serving as well as Ali, UFT representative, for seeking an Upper Division representative for the Committee.

UFT Update

Ali Lisberger said that Upper Division teachers wanted to remind parents to please register for Pupil Path to check their children's grades. They indicated that not a lot of parents have registered and logged in. They can contact Jenny Lando, Parent Coordinator, with questions about how to register.

Discussion Regarding Q300 Admissions

Bill introduced Daniel Daniel Hildreth, a representative from the DOE Office of Student Enrollment, who shared examples of ways that other G&T programs (specifically, TAG, Anderson and Lab) are adapting their admissions policies to expand opportunities for underrepresented groups to enroll at their schools.

We discussed options for Q300 to work to diversify our student body and the collective SLT reaffirmed its commitment to partnering with the DOE to create a plan this year. Building on conversations from last spring, we discussed holding an additional focus group(s) to get thoughts and input from the school community.

Daniel explained that other schools, like Anderson and the Brooklyn School of Inquiry, are exploring options to diversity the student body that include identifying potential geographic priorities as well as percentage priority goals for incoming Kindergarten classes. (We touched on whether or not to also identify diversity percentage goals for incoming sixth-grade students.) Daniel cautioned that we need to consider whether or not prioritizing geographic location and free and reduced lunch would achieve the diversity we are seeking at Q300.

Building on last year's discussions, the group concurred that it makes sense to focus on outreach to the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) in District 30 and housing shelters as well as in districts 4 and 5, which might be feasible for families in terms of commuting. The Committee also agreed that it would like to aim to prioritize 40% of its incoming K seats for underserved students. This would be need to be defined and finalized as part of a formal proposal to the DOE.

Daniel indicated that November 12 was the deadline for signing up to take the gifted and talented test for incoming Kindergarten students. He said, however, that the DOE could conduct some outreach to area NYCHA developments in advance, and that outreach in districts 4 and 5 was already taking place as part of Anderson's efforts. He also indicated that every four-year-old receives a letter home about the test and that signing up to take the test is relatively simple if you have an email account. He said that, in Queens, there are different ways and different teams in place who could work to raise awareness about taking the G&T test with families in shelters, NYCHA, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and Head Start programs. Daniel said that there has been some discussion about creating an additional test date on a weekend in January, so that families who missed the test could have their child take the test with no questions asked.

Lynn Kennedy asked about the potential of opening up additional G&T programs in Queens, especially given that our model is working. Daniel responded that it is not a priority of this administration and that he doesn't see a new citywide program being created, or district programs either.

Bill asked Daniel what the DOE needs from the school to proceed. Daniel responded that he needs a formal proposal (including goals for admissions, the support of families etc.), and that he would send a proposal template outlining what information is needed.

He said that he would need the proposal by March, preferably earlier, in order for it to take effect for the coming school year.

SLT Discussion Regarding Admissions

The SLT continued discussion regarding diversity in admissions following Daniel's departure. The discussion points included:

- Importance of developing messaging for the community, including NYCHA developments, outlining that we are committed to recruiting and providing opportunities to attend Q300 for all students. Bill indicated that he knows the local NYC Council Member very well, so we should start the conversation and how can they help us network with families.
- Milko asked whether changing the student demographic would impact fundraising through the PTA's Direct Appeal. Parents responded by saying that diversifying the school's socioeconomic demographic might benefit the school's ability to attain public resources by potentially enabling the school to become a Title 1 school or to be awarded grants.
- We agreed to form a sub-committee of the SLT on the topic of Admissions to ensure progress and ongoing reporting to the school community.

Unfinished Business

Sara Clough noted that Bill had met recently with the PTA's Library Committee, and asked if he could provide an overview from that meeting. She mentioned the relationship between diversity in the school culture and having books in classrooms that are culturally responsive and reflective of both students and teachers. Bill indicated that the meeting of the Library Committee had gone well, and that teachers and grades need to identify needed books and then communicate their needs to the school administration. He said that PS17 had recently received a grant to refurbish a room downstairs to serve as a library, and that they were exploring the possibility of splitting a librarian between the schools. He said the conversation went well and they would continue discussions to this end. He also said that the school administration and Library Committee would be assessing classroom collections for needs.

There was a question about what PTA Committees exist and whether or not all parents, administrators and teachers are aware of the Committees. Sara responded that parents are invited by email at the start of each year to volunteer to serve on any of the Committees.

Closing

The group agreed that their priorities would be the topics of Diversity and Curriculum Instruction, and that efforts should center around incorporating these topics into the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) going forward.

To that end, Bill said that he had shared the following documents with the SLT and asked that everyone review them for the next meeting:

- SLT calendar and activities
- Chancellors reg for SLT
- Toolkit for principals- SLT and focused on our work
- State assessment data for Math and ELA from last year

The group noted the next meeting of the SLT on November 25 at 5:15 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.