

Q300

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K-8 Citywide Gifted and Talented School

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

School Leadership Team Meeting (Virtual Platform: Google Meet)

May 4, 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)

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:34 p.m.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes from February 10, 2020

Committee Reports to be added at the end of the document after all other business.

Motion: *Ali* motioned to approve minutes from February. *Laura* seconded the motion.

III. Committee Summaries

Principal's Summary

Remote Learning

Feedback from parents has been that they would like more “live” instruction taking place. The Chancellor has announced that “live” teaching is not mandated.

Administration has been continuing to promote to staff the use of more videos, pre-recorded videos, any you-tube videos, anything to engage students on a different level until teachers feel comfortable conducting that “live” teaching component- this is up to teacher discretion.

Our teachers have been working really, really hard, from week 1 to week 7 to make sure they are trying something new, trying to develop a new practice and engage students in a different way.

10 students have been accepted into the 6th grade for Q300, so we are looking at the budget to make one ICT class. This may change as of September, but as of now this is what we know. As of right now, there will be one 6th grade general ed class and one 6th grade ICT class for the upcoming school year, 2020-2021.

- There will be two 6th grade classes, three 7th grade classes and two eighth grade classes.

PTA Summary

First PTA meeting on Thursday, May 7th 2020 (a bulletin prior to this date was sent out to update parents as to what has been going on)

- All fundraisers and direct appeal have been put to a halt. The Spring Auction, which is one of our bigger events, had been canceled.
- We are being more conservative for next year since we don't know what will happen. There are many unknowns still and unsure how long remote learning will go on for and what supplies and supports the school may need for next year.
- Teacher Assistants (TA): grant for TA's has been halted as of May 14th. Hopes for next year. PTA gives money to the DOE and they manage the payment to the TA's. They are not paid through the DOE.
- Holding elections- haven't heard back from FACE. Meeting this Thursday, 5-7-20. Voting on a budget and then vote again in the Fall if needed. PTA will continue to work with administration on the needs of the school.

UFT Summary

As far as teachers' expectation on remote learning and "live" teaching, there are a lot of teachers that are already doing this and are happy to be doing it. Some are really uncomfortable with it. The message from the union is that to our extent possible we conduct "live" teaching, but it is not mandated. As far as emails- staff is receiving a high volume right now, so please allow staff 24 to 48 hrs to reply back and please understand that they are trying their best.

IV. New Business

CEP Goals

Staff has been focusing on student engagement.

Feedback from SLT Parents:

- It was very helpful to receive the email from Sonita and hear Ali express that synchronous learning and being transparent that this is a union issue. The children are craving that social/emotional interaction. Any more of that interaction amongst teachers that could happen would be beneficial for the students. Live goes further than giving resources for the children to work on.
- Some children are not comfortable going "live" with any teachers. The teachers have been really responsive to suggestions from parents and made adjustments for example, children working at their own pace and due dates. Grades and due dates could be very stressful for children, especially the elementary students.
- Another parent adds that they feel very comfortable in the direction things are heading. Assignments are posted in the morning or the night before. Children have become more autonomous and self-aware.
- The learning curve has been very swift and responsive and very grateful for that. There is always more learning and change that can make this an even better process. A lot of responsiveness from staff which has been comforting for parents.

Feedback from SLT Staff:

- Staff is trying to increase that social/emotional interaction.
- Staff at the LD spent time figuring out how google classroom works and still is. It is a learning curve.
- Enjoys “live” book clubs, “live” office hours.
- Comparison between posting lessons on google classroom as opposed to teaching a lesson in school. Remote teaching is more time consuming- looking for resources, conducting “live” lessons and posting work to make it accessible for the children and for them to easily understand it to the best of their ability.
- Teachers are becoming more comfortable with it.
- Many glitches with technology.
- Staff was devastated once the decision was made to close schools, not being able to see our students anymore or able to say goodbye. We did not sign up for this and it is not an ideal situation for anyone.
- Having to work from home with having your own children on top of that can be very stressful. We are doing the best we can.

Remote Learning

- What is the next step for the fall and the future? What can we do to support the school? How can we make this an easier process for the future?
 - Staff has been discussing the future and programs to be used (coming up with a more cohesive list to make things smoother). Administration and staff will reflect on the process, what worked well and didn't work well and then share that.
 - Parent: Important for staff to not replicate what happens during the regular school day in person as opposed to online learning. One concern is that there's a difference between providing instruction and assigning work. Being able to figure out the instructional piece doesn't always have to be the teacher assigned to that homeroom. So thinking about who can do some instructional videos for example, math across grades so that students and families can tap into. And who can support small groups related to specific tasks. This can also be transferred into the regular school day and provide students with this extra support instructionally.
 - Administration has been thinking about this for next year and assigning instructional leads to take on these tasks.

Helpful for being transparent with synchronous learning. An email from Sonita was sent out to families and staff and Ali followed with clarification.

Lower Division

- Google Classroom is new for the lower division, teachers and students, this is the first time they are using it. The first few weeks were geared towards getting everyone used to google classroom.
- Parents thoughts: Going live would go further for the children. Social emotional interaction is being missed.
- Posting assignments and the due dates are difficult to manage and could be stressful for families.

- Suggested for teachers to post assignments in the morning or at night beforehand, on google classroom.
- Friday is Enrichment day for catching up on work.

Upper Division

- Children are self-sufficient and are maintaining standards/curriculum.
- Google Classroom is not new to the upper division. Students have been using google classroom for assignments since the beginning of the school year and are already familiar with how it works.
- Administration has spoken to staff about what the right balance is. There is still room for progress.
- Fridays are set for an Advisory period/day where students can check in on work and catch up on assignments.

Entire School

- Shift in making a good balance of assignments and how much time is spent on the computer.
- Office hours may not be the right time for a specific student to attend and is not mandatory.

Q300 Marking Periods/Grading Policy

Our 4th marking period (MP) began the same day as remote learning started which was March 23rd and ends June 8th. This reflects all of remote learning, nothing that was done in school prior to remote learning. The 5th MP will be considered the final grade, a cumulative average of marking periods 1-4, and children will receive a letter grade of MT, N or NX. For this school year, the grading policy is set in place. As far as going forward/future, if this were to happen again and we need to teach remotely, we would have to wait on the Chancellor's guidance and how this will impact students' learning going forward.

V. Old Business

C30 Principal Vacancy

Postponing level 1 interviews- LaShawanna emailed Dr. Composto to find out what the guidelines were in terms of whether or not the C30 had to be conducted or not by a certain time based on any adjustments that may have happened since sheltering in place but have not heard back from Dr. Composto as of yet. As of now, we do not have another date. Waiting on guidance about a due date or what the mandates are rather than the options.

- The level 1 committee voted for not moving forward with the c30 remotely. There is no new date. We need clarification and a date to find out what the regulations are.

Budget

The budget meeting will happen at the end of May/middle of June which comes from the DOE. The administration needs to speak with the budget director letting them know of the staff members that are needed for the upcoming school year. This is not a decision that is made by administration alone. Then this will be shared with SLT.

Hiring Freeze

For this school year there is a hiring freeze and we cannot hire any new teachers or paraprofessionals. For the upcoming school year, they have not given any guidance about who they can or cannot hire. In terms of budget cuts, we do not know what the budget will look for the upcoming year.

Guidance counselor and 2nd grade teacher are coming back from leaves, which means two teachers will be leaving: 1st grade leave replacement and guidance counselor leave replacement.

- ATR's will be used for temporary hires for the time being across the DOE.

VI. Committee Reports

Principal Report

Remote Learning

At Q300, remote learning has progressed from week 1 to now week 8. Our teachers, support staff, paras, and TAs have been consistently trying something new each week and thinking of creative ways to engage our students. According to the chancellor's message, live teaching is not mandatory for teachers at this time. Below you will find a list of things that teachers are incorporating into their Google classroom at Q300:

- Pre-recorded audio
- Pre-recorded video messages
- Screencastify/screen share videos
- Google Meet meetings (1:1, small group, whole group)
- Live office hours
- Student conferences
- Morning meeting
- Book clubs
- Instructional Videos
- Instructional charts

In addition, Rachel, Khary, Jenny Lando, and myself have had check-in meetings with students and parents:

- Rachel's social emotional check-ins
- Tea with the PC
- Kickin' with Chang
- Socialize with Sonita
- Lunch with the Principal

CEP Goals during Remote Learning

- Connecting our instructional focus to Remote Learning

Instructional Focus: If we embed inquiry and PBL across the curriculum then the quality of student engagement will increase leading to improved student outcomes.

For example:

- Incorporating Student Choice
- Assigning activities based on student interest
- Differentiating the product
- Giving the option to choose different topics

****Pending:** Teacher's College is working on an online professional development module for all teachers to share ideas on how to increase student engagement during remote learning.**

Incoming 6th grade students

There are 10 students who have been automatically accepted to Q300. Incoming students have either a classification of ICT or SC. As of right now, one six grade class will be an ICT class next year.

Staffing Update

All teachers have submitted their preference sheets. Everyone has stated that they will be returning to Q300 for the fall.

- The teacher that is currently on maternity leave will be returning for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Our previous guidance counselor has stated that she will be returning next year from her sabbatical.

Diversity Initiative at Q300

Based on previous discussions at SLT, if we submit a proposal in June 2020, we will be working with the enrollment office to make outreach to all communities to help students gain access to the test. Daniel has not gotten back to me about what happens if we submit in September.

Budget

The chancellor has stated that there will be budget cuts for the following school year. There is no official guidance about what this will look like for Q300 for the 2020-2021 schools.

- The Chancellor is allowing schools to purchase graduation related items.

PTA Report

Remote Learning

The PTA is grateful to the remote learning efforts of all staff. The PTA also recognizes the enormous efforts of families as they support home learning. We thank all of our frontline workers within and around our communities to support us all as we persevere through incredible changes in all of our lives.

Fundraising

The PTA fundraising efforts are currently on hold as we continue to evaluate our budget and projections for next year. With so many unknowns, we are cautious and mindful that we may be needing to budget differently next year depending on the school's budget projections, changes and needs, especially as remote learning may become more of a norm.

Teacher Assistants

Due directly to COVID-19, school closures, and DOE changes in ability/capacity to process PTA grants, TAs have been furloughed/laid off. The PTA only provides the funding or grant to the DOE to pay TAs and does not in any capacity play a role in employing, paying, hiring, firing or managing the TAs. So unfortunately, and despite the TAs wonderful contributions, they are not working past May 14. The PTA has offered assistance to the TAs in understanding and applying for pandemic unemployment funds available as needed. We will miss the TAs and hope to see them next year, pending budget. We thank them dearly for their service.

Enrichment

Enrichment and budget surveys are under review and will be going out soon for parent completion with the understanding that things may still evolve.

PTA Elections

The PTA is not sure if it can hold elections nor vote on a budget for next school year this spring 2020, and awaits further information in the meantime from FACE as per specific, procedural issues. The PTA is contemplating holding off on elections until fall 2020, while proposing a budget for next year that can be amended next fall and based on developments. The PTA will continue to work closely with the school's administration to determine need for next year and the PTA budget allocations.

Direct Appeal Campaign

Our direct appeal campaign is more or less on hold given that families are having their own financial concerns about the future. Some families who were making monthly deposits have withdrawn that for example, due to financial hardship, as well as one of our biggest fundraisers, our spring auction, being cancelled. The PTA has been able to do small online fundraisers, such as Square 1 art, tea collection and book fair to help continue fundraising but these are smaller contributions and percentage to overall efforts.

Highlights

Highlights during the last few weeks since school closures, include our recent May newsletter, highlighting the resiliency of our community despite the COVID 19 health crisis, as well as high parent involvement in fundraising efforts for broader community initiatives, like food and supplies for hospitals.

Next Virtual Meeting

Our next virtual meeting will be May 7, 6pm and a community invite will be emailed out.

VII: Next Steps

June 8th, 2020 next SLT meeting. Tentative date of June 22nd, 2020 if needed.

Update school calendar and notify families that we will have the virtual SLT meeting on the above two dates.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.