



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • February 27, 2020

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 (Parents) and (b) eligible Q300 teachers and instructional staff members who are currently employed on a full-time basis (Staff) at Q300 were present. The total number of Parents and Staff (together, Members) present was 33. Quorum was reached.

B. Call to Order

Co-President Lynn Kennedy called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm in the upper division auditorium.

C. Presentations

1. Two upper division students who are members of the Global Kids’ Census Squad urged all New Yorkers to fill out the 2020 census.
 2. Shibley Day Camp representatives gave a presentation about the Camp’s summer program. The camp is located in Roslyn Heights, Long Island. It provides door-to-door bus transportation.
-

D. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the General Meeting held on January 23, 2020 were presented. A motion was made to approve such minutes. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the minutes.

E. Co-Presidents’ Report

Co-President Lynn Kennedy gave the President’s report. The following are the highlights:

1. Congratulations to those who organized the International Winter Potluck, where over 300 community members attended. The PTA grossed \$6,000. Q300 alumni attended the Potluck.
2. Thanks to Sonita Ramkishun for facilitating the CUNY Creative Arts Team afterschool program that features play, improvisation, physical theater, and playwriting in the Lower and Upper Divisions.
3. Thanks to those who have reached out to potential speakers on scientific topics in connection with the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEM) fair.
4. Local parents trained by Planned Parenthood will be holding a 4-part workshop from 8:45-10:45am on March 2, 9, 16, and 23 in room 509 at the Upper Division. These workshops are designed to help parents learn new ways to communicate, strengthen parent-child relationships and to feel comfortable talking to your children about sexuality.
5. At the next PTA general membership meeting, Assembly Member Aravella Simotas will give a presentation on the importance of all New Yorkers to fill out the 2020 Census.

F. Co-Treasurers' Reports

Co-Treasurer Yi-Wen Wang delivered the Co-Treasurers' Report. Attached is a copy of summary of the PTA's finances for January 2020. During this period, the PTA raised over \$27,520, which included over \$24,925 from the Direct Appeal and over \$2,500 from other fundraisers. Expenses were over \$1,310, which included academic and enrichment payments.

G. Principal's Report

Principal Sonita Ramkishun and Assistant Principal Milonakis gave the Principal's Report. The following are highlights:

1. During February, Q300 will participate in the Department of Education's (DOE) initiative "Respect for ALL." During this month, the school have held events including the following:
 - a. The lower division is holding presentations on respecting diversity, religious acceptance and racial diversity presentation and in-class activities. The in-class activities include reading culturally relevant texts and doing reflective writing.
 - b. Both lower and upper divisions are holding "Respect for ALL" assemblies.
 - c. In the upper division, peer leaders from student council will provide peer-to-peer anti-bias training
 - d. Peer leaders from the upper division will be presenting to the 3rd and 4th grade classes.
 - e. Teachers have been participating in professional development on respecting diversity, religious acceptance and racial diversity.
2. The Wellness Council held a cooking class by The Connected Chef. It may hold another one in the spring.
3. Please attend the Planned Parenthood workshops. (See above).
4. Recent field trips include: 3rd grade trip to the NYC Center of Aerospace & Applied Mathematics; 4th grade trip to the National Museum of Mathematics; 5th grade trip to the New Victory Theater; and upper division trip to "To Kill a Mockingbird" performance at Madison Square Garden. In response to a question, Principal Ramkishun stated that some field trips are planned far in advance; others are planned in a shorter time frame if a field trip opportunity comes up.
5. The school has adopted a "no-food" policy for in-class celebrations where students share their writing and other class work with their parents. The new policy will put more emphasis on the classwork. The new policy does not affect snack time, field trips, and bake sales.
6. Plans are being made for kindergarten and 4th grade stepping up ceremonies and 8th grade graduations.
7. Parent-teacher conferences will be held on Mar. 3 for all students. It will be a half-day for students. In the lower division, on that day, Serious Fun will hold its afterschool program starting at 2:30 pm EDT, which is 2-hour or so after students are dismissed. (Parents will have to arrange for afterschool childcare for that period). For Thursday, March 5, Serious Fun has cancelled its afterschool program, since our co-located school P.S. 17 is holding its parent-teacher conference. A parent suggested that for next year, the lower division parent-teacher conference should be held on the same day as P.S. 17's parent-teacher conference so that lower division parents will have to arrange for afterschool care for one day rather than 2 days.
8. The 3rd-8th grade English Language Arts state exams will be held on Mar. 24 and 25. The 3rd-8th grade Mathematics state exam will be held in May.
9. Q300 is organizing its annual talent show. A piano will be available for those who want to perform.

10. The STEAM Fair will be held on May 14, 2020. In the lower division, each grade will pick a topic that aligns with the students' interest and the curriculum. In the upper division, the Fair will be called "STEAM-plus" fair and may incorporate social studies and English Language Arts.
11. In the lower division campus, Q300 must coordinate its scheduling of the lunchroom and outdoor space with its co-located school P.S. 17. As a result, for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades, they will have recess with the entire grade once every three weeks. On all other days, each class will not have the same recess time with its respective partner class. (Each grade has 2 classes). In contrast, for kindergarten and first grade, the entire grade has recess together each day.
12. A parent who is a gastroenterologist offered to have one of his co-workers, who is a dietician, provide nutrition education to students. Another parent suggested that teachers should organize walks around the neighborhood to promote physical education, in addition to the 2-period a week physical education classes.
13. In response to a parent question, Ms. Ramkishun confirmed that Q300 does not have a policy of taking recess away from a student as a disciplinary measure.

H. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report

SLT parent member Sara Clough gave the SLT report. The following are highlights:

1. Previously, the SLT proposed the following changes to the Q300 admission policy to encourage more diversity at Q300: provide priority to 40% of kindergarten seats to applicants who get an overall score of 97 or above and who live in NYCHA housing, housing funded in part or whole by Section 8 housing choice vouchers, or temporary housing, and who live in School Districts 4, 5, and 30 (East and Central Harlem and Astoria, respectively). In response to family feedback following the January 23, 2020 PTA general meeting, at which Principal Ramkishun presented the proposal, the SLT suggested broadening the priority to include 40% of applicants who get an overall score of 97 or above and who are eligible for free and reduced lunch in all NYC school districts.
2. After feedback from Daniel Hildreth from the DOE Office of Enrollment and last month's PTA meeting on the proposed policy changes, Principal Ramkishun formed a school working group to draft a written proposal. The members included Principal Ramkishun, teachers Ali Lisberger and Chidi Amasiani, upper division guidance counselor Khary Chang, lower division social worker Rachel Weiss, and parent coordinator Jenny Lando. Among Mr. Hildreth's suggestion included expanding the admission criteria to give priority to applicants who get an overall score of 97 or above and who are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.
3. At its February 10, 2020 meeting, the SLT voted to expand the admissions criteria. The committee would revise the proposed policy change and submit such a proposal to the DOE in June 2020. If approved by the DOE, the criteria would be in place for the incoming 2021-2022 school year. The SLT indicated that Principal Ramkishun had reached out to Mr. Hildreth for guidance on submitting the proposal.
4. The SLT indicated intent to develop the policy and reach out to the community for the feedback in the coming months.
5. Since the previous school year, the SLT has discussed changing the admissions policy
6. The SLT approved a "No-Food" policy at in-class celebrations at the school. The new policy would accommodate students with food allergies.

I. Committee Reports

1. **Principal Candidates Outreach Committee.** David Wang gave an update. The following are highlights:

a. **Number of Candidates.** Thank you so much to those who reached out to family, friends, colleagues, and networks to encourage qualified candidates to apply for the Principal Position. Thanks to your efforts, **28 candidates** applied for the Position. Out of those candidates, **25 candidates** were deemed “**qualified**”. In comparison, when the Q300 principal position was last open in 2016, only 10 candidates applied – 4 of whom were unqualified and 1 of whom failed to show up to the Level I Committee interview.

b. **Selection Criteria.**

- a. Thanks so much for those who provided input on the PTA selection criteria (the “**Selection Criteria**”) for the Position. As you know, pursuant to Reg. C-30, the PTA is provided an opportunity to recommend selection criteria for the Position. The Selection Criteria is based on over 30 comments from parents/guardians and a list of principal qualities from teachers gathered by the Q300 United Federation of Teachers chapter chairperson Alison Lisberger, as well as numerous discussions with Q300 community stakeholders.
- b. A resolution that includes the Selection Criteria was offered to the Membership. All amendments that were offered on the floor were accepted and incorporated in the resolution. The resolution, as amended, is attached hereto. A motion was made to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the resolution.
- c. The PTA will submitted the resolution to School District 30 Community Superintendent Philip Composto and the Level I Committee.

- 2. **Enrichment Committee.** Enrichment Committee Co-Chair Maria Hantzopoulos noted that the Q300 PTA enrichment and budget survey will be emailed to Members after the April school break.
- 3. **Fundraising Committee.** Auction Committee Chair Joanna Holzman noted that early bird tickets for the Stepping into Summer Party & Auction party are available online. Maria Hantzopoulos noted that the PS 17/Q300 Zumbathon fundraiser will occur on April 3. 25% of the proceeds will benefit Puerto Rico earthquake relief. The balance will be split between the schools. David Wang reported that \$228,000 has been raised thus far for the Direct Appeal. The PTA has begun its March Madness – “31 Days for Q300”, which is focused on increasing the Direct Appeal family participation rate. Thus far, the family participation rate is at 47%.
- 4. **Library Committee.** Meghan Cirrito reported that the library committee met with Principal Ramkishun. Q300 has requested that Booksource to evaluate and recommend books for the school’s classroom book collections to ensure that each class has a robust collection. In response to a question about book donations, Meghan will speak to the school about training volunteers to determine the reading level for the donated books and sort them for the classroom book collections. She noted that the DOE’s Department of Library Services can help provide technical services.
- 5. **Upper Division.** The 8th grade committee will hold its Hogwarts fundraiser at 2:00 pm EDT on February 29, 2020. Come dressed up as your favorite Harry Potter Character if you wish! Proceeds from the event will help fund 8th grade graduation expenses.

J. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm EST. The next general membership meeting will be held on March 19, 2020 at 6:15 pm at the lower division campus.

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