



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • September 30, 2021

A. In Attendance

It was noted that (a) parents and other “persons in a parental relation” as defined by NYC Chancellor regulations 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 (Members) present was 74. Quorum was reached.

B. Call to Order

Co-President Lynn Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm EST on the Zoom virtual platform. Such virtual meeting is permitted under “Functioning in the Virtual Environment: Guidance for PA/PTAs and Presidents’ Councils”, issued June 4, 2020, by the NYC Department of Education (DOE).

C. Principal’s Report

Parent Coordinator Jenny Lando announced that Principal Sonita Ramkishun apologized that she had a last-minute conflict and that she was unable to attend tonight’s meeting. Prior to the meeting, the community had submitted 30 questions on issues ranging from physical distancing protocols, quarantine and isolation procedures, air purifiers, curriculum matters, state test results, lower division lunch time and recess, Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT), the Diversity Admissions Initiative, and the hiring of Lower Division teaching assistants. Attached as Exhibit A is the list of questions.

The following are highlights:

1. Ms. Lando stated that Principal Ramkishun has reviewed the submitted questions and noted that she had already answered a number of these questions in her Principal’s email messages and in her emails to individual parents/guardians. She noted that Principal Ramkishun would answer questions as many as she can in her next Principal’s email message. She hoped that the community would read through the Principal’s email message and to recognize that the information provided may change due to DOE guidance.
2. Ms. Lando stated that K-4th grade families will be asked to provide their children’s nycenet.edu student account and password in order for their teachers to log them into their student account at school.
3. Ms. Lando also noted that in years prior to the pandemic, the PTA provided funds to the School Professional Agency, which is the DOE’s staffing and recruitment company, for the hiring and managing of teaching assistants in the lower division. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the DOE has not yet provided a mechanism that would allow the School Professional Agency to accept PTA funds for the hiring of teaching assistants.
4. Ms. Lando explained that in the Lower Division, either Q300 or its co-located school P.S. 17 would be scheduled to have an early lunch period in the cafeteria. For this school year, it is Q300’s turn to have an early lunch at 9:25 am in the cafeteria and an early afternoon snack in the classroom. During the lunch period, half of the Q300 students has lunch first for the first 20 minutes or so, and then go outside for recess for the rest of the period. The other half first has recess and then lunch.

5. Ms. Lando noted that if families have concerns about the OPT bus, they should register their concerns with OPT. A parent expressed concern that the route time for a particular upper division bus is over the maximum time permitted (which is 90 minutes).
6. A parent requested that because the Principal was unable to attend tonight's meeting, that she holds a school-wide townhall meeting to answer questions as well as follow-up clarifying questions.
7. In response to a parent question, Ms. Lando stated that she would confirm that a number of air purifiers in the classroom have HEPA filters. (Ms. Ramkishun later confirmed that some classrooms indeed have Honeywell TrueHEPA air purifiers that have HEPA filters as well as Intellipure air filters, which do not have HEPA filters.)
8. Ms. Lando stated that parents can consent to their student taking a COVID-19 test either via the DOE website or paper consent form. In response to q question, she noted that DOE sometimes randomly selects the same student for a COVID-19 test in successive weeks.

D. Co-Presidents' Report

Co-President Maria Hantzopoulos and Lynn Kennedy delivered the Co-Presidents' Report. The following are highlights:

1. They thanked the outgoing board members and welcomed and introduced the new board members. They also thanked the teachers and staff for continuing to educate our children no matter the challenges and taking safety considerations into every decision made. Q300 PTA's mission statement was read.
2. This year the PTA is working closely with the administration to fund safety supplies including some air purifiers for larger spaces, KN-94 face masks, and outdoor seating equipment. PTA and/or school-funded enrichment programs include the following:
 - a. Kindergarten and 1st and 3rd grades will receive 1 art and 1 music class taught by Arts Connection. 3rd grade may also get an architecture class taught by the Center for Architecture.
 - b. 2nd Grade will receive a music class taught by Arts Connection and an architecture class taught by the Center for Architecture.
 - c. 5th grade will have a music class., with guitar or ukulele lessons or computer music composition taught by Arts Connection.
 - d. 3rd through 8th grades will have "Genius" hour, which is time for students to research a topic that they are passionate.
 - e. The PTA will assist in funding upper division electives that are offered by upper division teachers in 6–8-week cycles on Tuesdays and Thursdays and funding expenses for upper division math and debate teams.
 - f. The PTA will also be funding teacher wish lists, financial hardship funds for student activities, and Stepping Up and Graduation events, as well as professional development for teachers as needed.
 - g. The DOE has not provided a funding mechanism to allow PTA to fund teaching assistant positions in the lower division. A parent claimed that the PTA of a Forest Hills public school was funding teaching assistants in their school. (The PTA board of that school later confirmed that it was in a similar situation with the Q300 PTA and that no teaching assistants were being funded by the PTA of that school.)
 - h. Upcoming PTA events include the Read-a-thon, a Flower bulb fundraiser, Thanksgiving Pie sale from La Guli Bakery of Astoria and Betty Bakery of Brooklyn.
 - i. The PTA is seeking volunteers for PTA committees, as well as those who have amazing skills and talents, willing to volunteer them to benefit the school. Whether it is for one specific task (color printing, translating, making a flyer) or leading a committee of enthusiastic parents/guardians.

- j. For those who have not been receiving PTA communications, please fill out the PTA parent/guardian contact survey, so that the PTA can get your contact info to send you timely information about Q300 and the PTA.

E. Co-Treasurers' Report

Co-Treasurers Yi-Wen Wang and Yan Zho delivered the Co-Treasurers' Report. Attached is a summary of the PTA's finances through August 2021. In July and August, the PTA raised over \$4,500.00. The PTA expenditures were about \$95.21, which included Pay Pal fees for online donations. The PTA 2021-2022 budget assumes funding expenditures that corresponds to the pre-pandemic expenditures; however, given the DOE has not provided a mechanism for the hiring of teaching assistants thus far, the PTA's expenditures this year will likely be lower than budgeted.

F. Committee Report

1. VP of Communications Dana Holmes thanked all who contributed to the October email bulletin, which will be issued in the next day or so.
2. Co-VP of Membership Ellie Rabinovich thanked those who organized the Back-to-School Meetup at Rainey Park earlier in the month. She encouraged parents/guardians to organize grade outdoor events and step up to become class parents, and purchase pies for the Thanksgiving Pie fundraiser. They also noted that the PTA website has a number of shopping links, where a portion of any purchases will be donated to the PTA.
3. Co-VP of Fundraising Lisa Christopher and Susie Stewart encouraged families to participate in the Read-a-thon, buy flower bulbs in the Flower Power fundraiser, over Division Yvette Choy stated that the panel judging the design submissions for the "Q300 Strong" t-shirts and bookmark will shortly be announcing the winning design. The PTA will provide each Q300 student with a t-shirt; Q300 will provide the bookmark. The gifts are a way to help amplify community spirit, given this unprecedented, difficult year, where the Q300 community has not been able to meet in-person. Families will have the opportunity to buy additional t-shirts.
4. Co-VP of Community Affairs Rachana Shah gave brief highlights of the September Community Education Council 30's meeting, which included COVID-19 related issues such as air purifiers, and a resolution to urge the DOE to get parent input before changing the gifted and talented program.
5. VP of Upper Division Sunilda Caraballo encouraged parents/guardians to become class parents. Class parents help teachers organize activities and serve as a liaison between the parents/guardians and the PTA.

G. New Business

1. A motion was made to approve the following resolution:
 - a. Resolution 1. A resolution to establish a nomination/election committee, co-chaired by Kevin Gallagher, for the 2021-2022 school year. The committee's responsibilities shall include canvassing the community for eligible candidates, preparing materials related to the election (including candidate bios), and running the election virtually. After discussion, the motion was seconded. A majority of Members then present voted to approve the resolution.
 - b. Resolution 2: A resolution to appoint parent Carol Varikos and Emanuella Resende to the nominations/elections committee. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members then present voted to approve the resolution.
 - c. Resolution 3. A resolution to reallocate \$6,000 from the teaching assistant budget line to the school supplies and professional development budget line. The school supplies and professional budget line may include the purchase of COVID-19 personal protective equipment and mitigation equipment, including

air purifiers, as agreed by the Q300 administration and the PTA Board. Because the DOE has not provided a mechanism to allow PTAs to fund teaching assistants, teaching assistants have not yet been hired. The saving from not yet hiring teaching assistants would be reallocated to pay for school supplies and professional development budget line. After discussion, the motion was seconded. A majority of Members then present voted to approve the resolution.

H. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 pm ET. The next general membership meeting will be held on October 21 at 6:30 pm ET on a virtual platform.

/S/

David William Wang, Secretary

Exhibit A

1. Quarantine Rule

- Will kids be marked absent if they are quarantined due to exposure at school? What if they are quarantined due to exposure outside of school? Will high schools be considering attendance for admission?
- Will families be notified if there is a positive covid case in their child's classroom, bus, or after school class even if they are not deemed a close contact who has to quarantine?
- Please explain the new quarantine rules. How will this impact closures?
- Absence related to ANY COVID where the DOE has not warranted it a COVID case of close contact, is as I understand going to be marked as an absence for the child. How is this possible in a pandemic?

2. Physical Distancing

- Are teachers being encouraged to share openly regarding the true distances within classrooms, when it comes to "close contact" and as that relates to important next steps, quarantining or attendance?
- I know the school is doing everything it can for children's safety, and I trust this, although I do wonder how the school is really able to successfully maintain 3-foot distancing.

3. Other COVID-related Issues

- Are there plans for acquiring air purifiers with true HEPA filters to better help protect students from Covid?
- My son gets tested every time they are covid testing in school? Does this mean that not that many parents filled out the covid testing consent?
- It is my understanding that (5) classrooms were closed in PS 17. Why is the larger community not alerted such closures as this seems to impact our potential functioning as well?
- It appears the LD may not have received consent forms in folders regarding giving permission for COVID testing; is there plan to get those forms out so more parents can be encouraged to participate?

4. State Tests Results

- Any idea when state test results will be released?

5. Lunch/Recess Issues

- Could Kindergarten snack time and lunch time be swapped so that a hearty snack is served in the morning (9:25) and lunch can be moved to later in the afternoon? Concerned that lunch is too early.
- How can we work together to address the Kindergartners earlier 9:25 (breakfast) lunch schedule? Could we consider outdoor eating arrangements so that lunch could be pushed back to a later time?
- I know this isn't a priority at this time, but are there any plans to allow both classes in the same grade to have recess at the same time? My child misses her friends in the other class.
- Has outdoor learning or lunch been able to be implemented or is it planned to be implemented and when?
- Kindergartners eat lunch at 9:25am, is it possible to request school to move to a later time? 2. With many confirmed cases at P.S.17, how can reduce the chances of sharing facilities

6. PTA Issues

- What are the next steps required to hire Teachers Assistants (Grades K-2)? What can the PTA do to help?
- Pls give context regarding Resolution 2 before parents vote. Which grade levels currently have TAs? Is this a simple issue of prioritizing \$6k of PTA money FOR COVID precautions, RATHER THAN for TAs?