



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • December 19, 2022

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 35. Quorum was reached.

B. Call to Order

Co-President Yvette Choy called the virtual meeting to order at approximately 6:30 pm ET. Co-President Salua Baida presented a brief description of the various reports that would be given at the meeting.

C. Principal’s Report

Principal Sonita Ramkishun gave the Principal’s report. The following are highlights:

1. The NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) First Deputy Chancellor sent out a universal indoor masking recommendation for all family, students and staff members entering the building. There has been an uptick in COVID-19 cases and other illnesses at Q300. Many Q300 staff and students have been absent this month. If your child has a slight cough, is sneezing or has runny nose, it is suggested they wear a mask when they attend school. Kids should cough in their elbow and should stay home when they are sick. Staff are regularly washing their hands and sanitizing surfaces in the classroom.
2. The last day of the marking period was December 9. On December 21, report cards will be available electronically via NYC School Accounts (NYCSA) (<https://www.schoolsaccount.nyc/>) and in hard copy via students’ communication folder. Please contact Jenny Lando at jennylando@q300.org if you do not have NYCSA access. If you have questions or concerns, please email your child’s teacher.
3. Winter Break is from December 24 to January 2. Please remember there will be no school or afterschool during that time. All students and staff members will return on January 3, 2023.
4. Thank you to the PTA, David Wang and team for their assistance getting Chromebooks for the Upper Division. They have been delivered and the school is in the process of labeling them and checking to make sure everything is ready to go. They will be put in classrooms in January.
5. The Diversity Committee’s outreach has begun now that kindergarten applications have opened. Principal Sonita will share more information about that and how the community can help in her December 23 Principal’s message.
6. The second cycle of enrichments for the Lower Division begins tomorrow. Students will start learning a different form of art and a different form of music. Thank you to those who attended the Arts Connection Showcase. The students were excited to have their parents in the building to watch the showcase. Principal Sonita hopes the video of the showcase will come out soon. She will share it with parents once she has it.
7. Happy holidays. Stay safe, be well and hopefully we will ring in 2023 with lots of positive energy. Principal Sonita appreciates everyone.

8. The Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) Bus App, which will provide families with the location of their child's school bus during morning pick-up and afternoon drop-off, has not yet been rolled out to District 30. The school has emailed its OPT liaison and will follow-up.
 9. A parent noted that Upper Division students are rushing through lunch due to the short lunch period. Principal Sonita noted that for both campuses, students have 20 minutes for lunch (inside) and 20 minutes recess (outside). If students need more time for lunch, please ask them to speak with the staff members in the cafeteria, who will direct them to tables for those who need more time to eat.
 10. The sixth graders took a field trip today to the Center for Fiction in Brooklyn. The kids enjoyed it. Thank you to the teachers for organizing the trip with the author of the book they were reading.
 11. Thank you to Q300 staffers Pam, Kanneh, and Joyce, who have been instrumental in getting serial numbers for the PTA-funded Upper Division Chromebooks and labeling them with NYCDOE/Q300 markings.
-

D. President's Report

Yvette Choy reported that the Chromebooks have been delivered to the Upper Division. Thank you to David Wang for handling the purchasing of the Chromebooks.

Last month the school had five Teaching Assistants (TAs), but one is leaving this month so we will be down to four. The school is still looking for TAs. If you know of anyone who might be interested or a good fit, please email principal@q300.org. The TAs who are in the school building have been moving through the K-4 classrooms.

Some class parents have put together a flyer to facilitate parent participation and engagement. The flyer will be backpacked next week. It includes info on how to join their grade-specific WhatsApp chats and the PTA's email list and connect with the class parents.

E. Treasurer's Report

Chu Zheng delivered the Treasurer's Report. The PTA has \$59,152.22 in inflow from the Direct Appeal and \$9,909.29 in inflow from other fundraising, including the Thanksgiving pie sales, the Smencils fundraisers, and other activities. The outflow is \$5,436.27 for a net cash inflow of \$63,625.24. If you have questions relating to the report, please email treasurer@q300pta.org.

The membership discussed ways to attract more candidates for TA positions. The PTA provides a grant to the NYCDOE that is earmarked to pay for TA salaries. The NYC serves as the employer and hires the TAs as independent contractors at an hourly rate without benefits. A parent noted that the Q300 TA hourly rate is above the rate of another citywide school. Ways to attract candidates include raising the hourly rate, offering incentive bonus after a certain period of working, and paying for certain bank holidays.

The PTA typically pays a portion of the TA salaries in August/September and makes two other payments during the school year. Given that the PTA had allocated the salaries of six TAs for the school year and fewer than six TAs have been hired, there will likely be funds left over for the TA line item at the end of the year. If there is an excess amount that has been granted to the NYCDOE but not spent, the PTA will write a letter to the NYCDOE requesting that the excess funds be rolled over to the following school year.

F. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report

SLT parent member Dragos Bozdog gave an overview of the SLT December 18 meeting. The following are highlights:

1. Student SLT member Luka gave a report. The Upper Division students created a suggestion box to collect ideas and feedback. Some students requested better school lunches. Principal Sonita will launch a survey to learn more about this. Also, the students expressed interest in having vending machines in the cafeteria. Cleanliness of the bathrooms is also a recurring problem. A contractor was sent to tour the Upper Division bathroom as there was funding from the state allocated three or four years ago for a bathroom upgrade. The

SLT will look into elevating this issue to the District 30 Community Education Council (CEC). Parents can also reach out about bathroom cleanliness and hygiene concerns to Nicholas Cruz, the UFT Director of Community and Parent Engagement, who is reachable at ncruz@uft.org. Parents can also reach out to the Queens UFT Health and Safety Liaison, Diane Yodice, who is reachable at dyodice@uft.org. Finally, there will be a school dance organized by the Student Council on February 10. The Student Council will fundraise for it.

2. The SLT revisited the school survey that goes to families, as well as to students in the Upper Division and to teachers. It was distributed last year between February and April and was recently published on the DOE website (<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/school-quality/nyc-school-survey>) The SLT looked at the Q300 survey in terms of “glows” (good things) and “grows” (areas of improvement). Dragos reported that the Upper Division students rated very highly cultural awareness and inclusivity, classroom instruction and student trust. However, with respect to the social-emotional component, many students indicated they felt bored, stressed and/or worried. The SLT has developed proposed strategies to address this which includes holding advisory sessions, scheduling catch up dates, having teachers check in with each other in terms of the amount of homework being assigned, and increasing communication from the guidance counselor. Another proposal is to allow students to lead social-emotional learning conversations and team building activities. With respect to teachers’ responses to the survey, Dragos reported that there were high ratings for teacher-to-teacher trust, guidance, and cultural awareness. The “grow” areas are effective school leadership and classroom behavior. The SLT is proposing surveying teachers to better understand the status of their respective classrooms and to have teachers create classroom responsibilities, mindfulness, and breaks, and to revisit with the students the schoolwide expectation guide so as to hold students and teachers accountable. With respect to families’ responses to the survey, a “glow” is parent-teacher trust. “Grow” areas are inclusive leadership and parent-principal trust, which is lower than average. The SLT is proposing surveying the parents to learn more about their expectations, increasing parental involvement in school-wide activities and creating more opportunities for the parents to see students’ work.
3. The SLT also discussed the Diversity Initiative which was approved last year. The SLT is creating a document that can be posted on the web to explain the Diversity Initiative. Under the Initiative, 40% of seats (20 out of 50 seats) for the incoming kindergarten class are prioritized for residents of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), Section 8 housing, or temporary housing and/or for students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. For this year’s kindergarten class, Q300 admitted 20 students who met the Initiative criteria through either the Initiative or sibling priority (being a sibling of a current Q300 student).

G. Committee Report

1. Co-Membership Vice President Amy Wong reported that Winter Fest will be happening this year and that registration information will be going out before the holidays. Winter Fest will be a free event.
2. Co-Fundraising Committee Vice President Lisa Christopher thanked those who participated in the gift card fundraiser. The Square 1 Art fundraiser is beginning soon. Art paper will go home to families over the holiday break. Students can do artwork on the paper and Square 1 will print the child’s artwork on things like mugs or pillows. The finished product will be available by Mother’s Day.
3. Direct Appeal Co-Chair David Wang reported on the Direct Appeal, which to date has raised a total of \$102,000, roughly 43% of our goal. You can send checks via your child’s communication folder or U.S. mail or can donate via the website. As long as the donation is postmarked by December 31, 2022, it will be counted for tax year 2022. In January, the PTA will issue an acknowledgement of the donation amount and date for tax purposes. Thank you for those who have donated. For those who have not, there is still time. There is the option of breaking up your payment in monthly payments via the website. Some employers offer corporate matching, which the PTA has been processing as well.
4. Co-Communications Vice President Betty Ruan thanked the parents who have joined the Communications team’s subcommittees, which include a copy team, web skills, graphic design, and translation. The PTA has

a quarterly newsletter, and the Communications Committee welcomes any parents who want to contribute to that by writing articles.

5. Co-Community Affairs Vice President Christine Serdjenian-Yearwood reported that the PTA collected approximately 15 winter coats for the Astoria Food Pantry/Free Store Astoria coat drive. They appreciate all of the donations. If you missed it, they accept donations on the last Wednesday of every month. Yesterday the Take Two NYC Sock Drive ended. Co-Community Affairs Vice President Janet Perez will be delivering the collected socks to Take Two. Movie nights with PS 17 will be coming back, starting in January.
6. Lower Division Vice President Nick Skolnick asked that families start thinking about what types of food they might want to bring to the Winter Fest/International Potluck. There will be craft tables set up and each grade will be tasked with putting together a game or craft that can tie into the international focus of the festival, or which can be separate. Please reach out to the class parents or any of the Lower Division or Upper Division representatives if you have any questions. Upper Division Vice President thanked in advance Maria Hantzopoulos and Erica Soto-Eng and the other people on the committee who are spearheading this event, and the class parents for their work.

H. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made to approve the October 20, 2022 general membership minutes, with one amendment noted by Yvette Choy. The motion was seconded. The Members then present approved the motion.

A motion was made to approve the November 17, 2022 general membership minutes, with one amendment noted by Betty Ruan, one amendment noted by Maria Hantzopoulos and one amendment noted by Yvette Choy. The motion was seconded. The Members then present approved the motion.

I. New Business

Some friendly reminders. Look out for flyers. Please ask permission before you take photos of people. The UFT sponsors Dial-A-Teacher, which offers free homework help for K-12, Monday through Thursday while school is in session. The number 212-777-3380. The UFT also offers a speaker workshop series that can come to PTA meetings. We have reached out to them for more details. Thank you to the Pie Committee (Maria Hantzopoulos, Sae Makino-Siller, Susan Stewart, Joanna Holzman, Frankie Chan, Joann Kiser, Janet Perez-Garcia, Christina Lee, Erica Soto-Eng, Lisa Christopher, Jeff Li, Joanna Holzman, Nick Skolnick, Amy Wong, Nikki Mandel, and Fabiola Terrazas) for selling and distributing the pies. Tomorrow is Silly Sock and Sweater Day per the Student Council's monthly school spirit day. We have ordered 80 Chromebooks. 76 have arrived; we are trying to track down the other four. We need to confirm the Chromebook specifications. If someone is available to physically power up each of the Chromebooks and check, that would be great. David Wang will send an email out about that. Thank you for everything the Q300 Community has done the past four months. See you in the new year. Thank you to Maria Hantzopoulos, Alyssa Duvall, Julie Chen, Shatavia White and the other individuals who organized the teacher/staff holiday collection and raised \$14,000 which was distributed to the teachers and staff. Thank you to Amy Wong for organizing afterschool chess gifts.

J. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm ET. The next general membership meeting will be held on January 19, 2023 at 6:30 pm ET on a virtual platform.

/S/

David William Wang & Kate Swearingen, Co-Secretaries