



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • March 30, 2023

A. In Attendance

It was noted that (a) parents and other “persons in a parental relation” as defined by NYC Chancellor regulations as 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 41. 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 shared with attendees a poem by Kahlil Gibran, “On Children,” in honor of National Arab American Heritage Month. Yvette reminded attendees that if they have a question, they may raise their Zoom hand and they will be elevated to speak. Also, attendees may type their question in a Q&A window.

C. Principal’s Report

Principal Sonita Ramkishun thanked the Co-Presidents for their work on behalf of Q300.

The students have been going on lots of field trips. Last week, the first graders took their first field trip ever at Q300. They visited the New York Hall of Science and have two upcoming field trips scheduled. The second graders visited the Louis Latimer House Museum and have another field trip scheduled. The sixth graders visited the New York Hall of Science today, and the fourth graders visited the New York Aquarium last week. In addition, Class 401 participated in a food tasting at a NYC Department of Education (DOE) site in Long Island City, where they were able to sample different types of foods and give their feedback.

Thank you to the families who made time to attend the various publishing parties held at school to showcase students’ written work.

Kindergarten offers will be released next week. Please pay attention to your emails. Q300 will also be reaching out via email to admitted families. Q300 will begin registration in June and will end registration on June 23, with some leeway for families who cannot make it. This year there will be process for entry for first, second, third and fourth grade. Fourth grade entry is new. At the moment, there is no capacity to bring in additional fourth grade students, but things could change over the summer depending on attrition. In April, students who are eligible to apply to Q300 will receive a letter from the DOE Office of Enrollment. Eligible students will be able to apply through the application portal in their NYC MySchools account between May 5 and May 12. As of now, DOE has not shared its eligibility criteria for grades one through four.

The Q300 Science Fair will take place on May 15. Based on the feedback of the School Leadership Team (SLT), Q300 will be offering in-school support sessions. Ms. Leanne (Class 301) will be hosting lab hours for grades K-4 every Monday during first period. Mr. Esteban (Science) will be hosting lab hours for grades 5-8 during the same time. Teachers are communicating this information, and there are informational flyers at the Lower and Upper Divisions as well. If you are interested in having your child participate, please have them check in with Ms. Leanne or Mr. Esteban during the designated hours. In addition, Ms. Ali (Technology) will be hosting an info session on April 4 via Zoom and will be sending out a Zoom link shortly. Parent Coordinate Jenny Lando will be hosting several parent sessions so parents can help their children prepare at home for the Science Fair. The school will provide science boards, so families do not need to purchase them.

State testing is coming up. English Language Arts (ELA) state tests will be April 19 and 20. Math state tests will be May 2 and 3. Please make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and eats breakfast. Breakfast will also be provided at school. The students have been practicing for the tests in school. For third and fourth graders, there will be a parent session on what to expect on the state tests. If you have any questions about the state tests, please contact your child's teacher.

A special thank you to the students who submitted their designs to the Q300 "Onward and Upward" t-shirt competition. Over 71 designs were submitted. The classes are having a hard time narrowing down the designs. Thank you to everyone who has helped out with this.

Principal Sonita is still waiting for details about the DOE summer youth program, Summer Rising. PS 234 will not be a Summer Rising site this year because the building will be under construction. Once Principal Sonita is informed of the affiliation school, she will let parents know the details.

Q: My child's backpack has been very heavy lately. Are lockers accessible in the Upper Division during the day for storage of students' books?

A: Students have an opportunity to go into homeroom at the beginning of the day to drop their materials in their lockers. They get to go back to their homerooms before lunch, after lunch and at the end of the day. Please make sure your child is prioritizing what materials they need for the day based on their schedule.

Q: Is there any plan to reduce class sizes for next year?

A: No. Right now, DOE is telling us every class should be filled to its contractual capacity. That means 25 students per kindergarten class and 32 students per other classes.

Q: Is there an opportunity for more unstructured play at recess, and what is Asphalt Green's role at recess?

A: The PTA is paying for Asphalt Green to coordinate activities at recess in the Lower Division. Q300 got a co-located deal with PS17. Q300 gets a coach for 4 days a week at a discounted price. The coach is with the younger students on Mondays and Wednesdays and with the older students on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are opportunities for free play at every recess if the child chooses. At the beginning, the coach explains a new game. If the students want to participate in the activity, they go with the coach. If not, they go to the designated area for free play. The coach helps organize the recess yard as best as they can. Q300 has a new coach who has been very helpful and very engaging with the kids.

Q: Under the New York State's Education Department's evaluation system, Q300's previous "Good Standing" designation has been changed to "Local Support and Improvement" based on the performance of our students on New York State assessments in school year 2021-2022. What local support will Q300 be given in light of the new designation?

A: We have not yet been given information on that. Most of the schools in District 30 fall into the "Local Support and Improvement" category. We are fortunate to be in a good district with great schools and an amazing Superintendent.

Q: What is the status of the NYC School Survey?

A: The deadline to complete the school survey has been extended to April 20. Please reach out to Ms. Jenny if you need your student's OSIS number (the 9-digit number issued to all students who attend a NYC public school) for the survey. The students will be taking the survey in-school this week. The survey is multiple choice.

Q: Will more students join the fifth-grade classes?

A: Every year we accept incoming sixth graders to populate the sixth-grade classes to their contractual limit, which is 33. Offers to incoming sixth graders will be coming out at the end of April. As of now, we do not know how many incoming sixth graders will be joining us.

Q: How will class sizes be made smaller under NYC's five-year plan to reduce class size in compliance with the new state law?

A: No information has been provided to Principals at this time. Q300 may have difficulties reducing class size because its physical space is extremely limited. A group of Q300 parents and teachers have been working together as the “One School Committee” to advocate that the NYC School Construction Authority find a single building to house the Lower and Upper Divisions. This has been an ongoing process for many years. If you are interested in joining the One School Committee, please contact Lynn Kennedy at lynnk@q300pta.org.

David Wang and Ellie Rabinovich thanked Principal Sonita, the Upper Division teachers and guidance counselors for helping students with their applications to high school.

Enjoy your Spring Break and any holidays your family is celebrating.

D. President’s Report

Co-President Salua Baida reported that Nicole Pujols, School Food Service Manager, DOE Office of Food and Nutrition Services, was unable to attend tonight’s meeting to answer parent questions. If parents have questions for Ms. Pujols, please send them by email to Salua and Yvette at president@q300pta.org.

Q: How long do students have for lunch? Is it sufficient time for them to eat?

A: They have 20 minutes, including the time it takes to go downstairs. If students need longer to eat, they should tell their teacher and their teacher will accommodate that.

Q: Will there be discussions with Food and Nutrition Services about food allergy aware meals?

A: Please email us and we will make sure it gets on Ms. Pujols’s agenda.

Students are voting on the Q300 “Onward and Upward” t-shirt design submissions. There were over 71 submissions. It was amazing to see them come in and to see how amazing and talented the children are. Thanks to our teachers for helping the students in grades K-8 and staff members vote in class. The PTA hopes to be able to share the designs with parents soon.

The Enrichment and Budget Survey will be going out to families right after Spring Break. Maria Hantzopoulos reported that she, Salua Baida and Lauren Baker updated the Enrichment and Budget Survey, which is done every year. They shared the survey with the PTA Enrichment Committee and then with Principal Sonita to get their feedback. The survey will be sent out by grade band except for the Upper Division, which gets one survey. Upper Division students will also receive surveys. At the moment, it is unclear whether the student surveys will be sent out by the school or by the PTA. The important thing is that everyone completes the survey, so we have a lot of input. You will be asked to evaluate current programming and to identify your priorities. Please keep in mind that the priority for the enrichment funding is to fill in enrichment gaps for the school. For example, in the Lower Division there are no arts teachers, so this is something the PTA fills in with the enrichment funding. The surveys will not take long to complete, and they contain a write-in section. The PTA shares the results with Principal Sonita and parents in May, and this informs the budget that the PTA will create in June.

The IS126 PTA is beginning an assessment of its auditorium, which it shares with the Upper Division. The auditorium is very old, and its audio video equipment is so old it cannot play movies. The seating needs replacement and the auditorium needs repainting. The group, which includes the school administrators, is trying to determine the first steps to get the space renovated. If you are interested in getting involved, please email Yvette Choy at yvettec@q300pta.org.

E. Treasurer’s Report

Sophia Peng delivered the Treasurer’s Report. As of February 28, 2023, the PTA had a total inflow of approximately \$9,400, approximately half of it from the Direct Appeal and approximately half of it from the WinterFest auction, and a total outflow of approximately \$6,800, most of it for enrichments. If you are interested in getting a copy of the PTA budget or the financial report for any month, please email treasurer@q300pta.org. The PTA budget for Asphalt Green is \$4,700. In the past, the school has paid for Asphalt Green.

F. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report

SLT parent member Maria Hantzopoulos gave an overview of the SLT's March 22, 2023 meeting. The following are highlights:

1. The SLT approved the minutes of its previous meeting. SLT minutes are available for the public to view on the Q300 website and on the PTA website.
2. The SLT discussed the book Students at the Center: Personalized Learning with Habits of Mind, which is being read by SLTs across District 30 and which addresses student-led inquiry in classes and how educators can support students in that quest. The SLT discussed how to communicate this approach to parents and how to engage parents as partners. The SLT discussed having classroom exhibitions or a session during Parent Engagement Night to explain this approach to families, in addition to using the Google sites.
3. SLT student member Luka delivered the student report. The Upper Division Student Council will be organizing a "Light the Night" fundraiser to support leukemia research. The Student Council will also be organizing its own Green Team to keep the school clean. Finally, the Student Council will be organizing a book swap to promote reading.
4. The SLT reviewed the student perceptions survey results. The survey was taken by students in grades 6-8. The SLT broke into four different groups (classroom climate and classroom engagement, pedagogical effectiveness, rigorous expectations and shared inclusive curriculum and teacher/student relationships) to discuss the results. The results are mostly very strong, although there was some critical feedback as well and some areas that were in between. The SLT discussed how to address the "glows" and the "grows."
5. The following reports were given at the March 22, 2023 SLT meeting: Principal's report, UFT report, and PTA report. As part of the Principal's report, Principal Sonita reported that 33% of parents had completed the school survey. Students in grades 1-8 have been participating in emergency preparedness workshops from Ready New York, NYC Emergency Management's public education campaign. Through the program, students learn about the hazards they may face in NYC and prepare for all types of emergencies. The Diversity Committee continues to work on monthly cultural themes where they research resources (such as books, articles, and trips) that align with the Committee's monthly focus. These resources are then shared with teachers for cultural enrichment. The Green Team is planning a May excursion to Randall's Island to celebrate Earth Week. In March, the Wellness Council hosted a Family Ice Skating Party at World Ice Arena, which over 150 people attended. In February, students in the Lower Division participated in Jump Rope for Heart and raised over \$5,000 for the American Heart Association. Q300 will be providing individual school supplies for students in the upcoming academic year. The PTA will continue to support some communal supplies. As part of the UFT report, the recent traffic death of a student at PS85 was discussed. A petition was started to install a traffic light at the intersection where the student was killed. As a result of the petition, a traffic light will now be installed. The UFT continues to fight for a fair contract. UFT recently organized a trip to Albany to advocate for full funding for NYC public schools and to oppose charter school expansion.

Mauricio Lopez noted that in the last Q300 school survey, fewer Black and Hispanic students reported feeling supported and safe at school than students from other racial and ethnic categories. Maria Hantzopoulos urged parents to contact Principal Sonita to ask how the school planned to address those disparities. Mauricio asked that the SLT surveys be tailored in the future to address disparities identified in the school survey. Maria said that in the past, the SLT designed its own survey questions and that if Principal Sonita is open to it, the SLT could do so again. Ellie Rabinovich said that in the past, the SLT had included survey questions about how students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were feeling in the school and suggested that be done again.

G. Committee Report

1. Co-Membership Vice President Erica Soto Eng reported that May is Teacher and Staff Appreciation Month. An email will be going out before Spring Break to solicit volunteers for a committee of parents to brainstorm ideas, such as a lunch. National Gun Violence Awareness Day is June 7. Erica reached out to Parent

Coordinator Jenny Lando and asked if the school could recognize June 7 as wear orange day and make it school-wide initiative. Even if the school does not recognize June 7, everyone is encouraged to wear orange that day to raise awareness for the need for stricter gun laws.

On Saturday, June 3, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at Katch Astoria, we will be holding the Stepping Into Summer auction and party. This is the first time since 2019 that the auction will take place in-person. Tickets will go on sale soon. In the meantime, we are soliciting donations for the online auction that will run from May to June. We could use parent help in getting donations from community businesses. We have a form letter that can be sent to businesses such as camps and local restaurants and that is available at: <https://q300pta.org/2023/03/11/q300-pta-stepping-into-summer-2023-6-3-2023/>. Lynn Kennedy is graciously helping to assemble themed baskets, such as a game night basket and a science-themed basket. If you have new items that would be appropriate for those baskets, please send them over and we will figure out a way to bundle them. Questions about the auction can be addressed to auction@q300pta.org.

The month of May, in addition to being Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Mental Health Awareness Month, is also U.S. Healthy Vision Month. There will be a collaboration between the Wellness Committee, the Green Team, and the Upper and Lower Division Student Councils, and Lions Club International, which runs an eyeglasses recycling program and sends the eyeglasses to individuals in need in developing countries. Please start gathering any eyeglasses you would like to donate. As long as the eyeglasses are still usable, it does not matter what the prescription is or if they are adult or children's eyeglasses.

2. Co-Fundraising Committee Vice President Christina Lee reported that Square 1 Art orders are due by April 10. If you can join up with other families to coordinate shipping to one household, you can save on shipping costs. The Spring Flower Power fundraiser is happening now; orders are due by May 15. Please send the link out to family and friends: <https://q300pta.org/2023/03/27/q300-spring-flower-bulbs-fundraiser-2022-by-5-15-2023/>. The Zumbathon will be taking place on May 5 in collaboration with PS17. A portion of the proceeds will go to earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria. The Scholastic Book Fair will take place at the end of May for both the Upper and Lower Divisions. This will be a new event for us. We are hoping that parents can volunteer at the Book Fair; we will be sending out an email to volunteers. There will be an option for parents to shop for books in-person and online. The winner of the Q300 t-shirt design competition will have their design printed on t-shirts which the PTA will sell.
3. Co-Vice President of Community Affairs Christine Serdjenian-Yearwood reported that the Zumbathon will be taking place in-person this year; last year it was virtual. Movie Night, which will be taking place on April 28 in collaboration with PS17, will be green-themed for Earth Month. Thank you to the Green Team for the idea and for collaborating on the Movie Night project. Participatory budgeting, which is a democratic, grassroots-driven process in which community members directly decide how to spend at least \$1 million in capital funds, will close on April 2. Anyone age 11 or older who lives, works, or goes to school in District 22 is entitled to vote. This year, a brand-new shared library for Q300/PS17 is on the ballot. You can vote online or in-person. Upper Division students will be voting at school on March 31 in the morning. We are hoping everyone who is eligible will vote for the library, which would provide a safe, healthy environment for our children during and after school, and which would promote technology and life skills.
4. Upper Division Co-Vice President Ellie Rabinovich reported that now that it is getting warmer, if you are interested in suggesting a local venue for an outdoor community event, please reach out to one of your division representatives or to membership@q300pta.org. In addition, the PTA has budgeted \$200 for each grade band to use in a community event. If you have a proposal for your grade band, please let your class parents know so they can propose it to their division representative. For the Upper Division, the Math Team needs snacks, which the Math Team teachers often fund out of their own pockets. Upper Division parents are encouraged to send snacks in with their kids on the bus or subway. The majority of our eighth graders got one of their first five choices on their regular applications. 77% of our eighth graders who took the SHSAT got one of their choices; 67% got multiple choices. Thank you to the Eighth Grade Graduation Committee – Sae Makino-Siller, Sue Sekar, David Wang, Leila Wong, Nicole Gallagher, Kevin Gallagher, and Ingrid Kennedy. Thank you to Ingrid who hosted the eighth graders' art event at her gallery, to all the parents and teachers and

community members who came out to support the eighth graders, and to the Aaron the art teacher who helped create the event.

5. Lower Division Co-Vice President Mauricio Lopez asked that the School Safety Committee share its safety protocols in light of the recent school shooting in Nashville, Tennessee. Yvette Choy suggested that interested parents email Principal Sonita at principal@q300.org if they want more details.

H. Resolutions

A motion was made to approve a resolution allocating \$100 from PTA funds to pay a fee associated with the first graders' fieldtrip to the Bronx Zoo. The motion was seconded. The Members then present approved the motion.

A motion was made to approve a resolution to reallocate \$4,000 from the Teaching Assistant budget to produce and distribute Q300 "Onward and Upward" t-shirts to every student and staff member. The motion was seconded. The Members then present approved the motion.

I. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 16, 2023 general membership minutes. The motion was seconded. The Members then present approved the motion.

J. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:25 pm ET. The next general membership meeting will be held on April 27, 2023 at 6:30 pm ET on a virtual platform.

Kate Swearengen & David William Wang, Co-Secretaries