



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • December 21, 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 30. Quorum was reached.

B. Call to Order

President Mauricio López Campero called the virtual meeting to order at approximately 6:35 pm ET.

C. Principal’s Report

Executive Vice President Yvette Choy reported that there is no Principal’s report, as Principal Sonita Ramkishun was unable to attend the meeting. Please contact her directly at principal@q300.org with any questions.

D. President’s Report

President Mauricio López Campero reported that the PTA Board held a half-day retreat on December 9. At the retreat, PTA Board welcomed new members and discussed this school year’s priorities and activities, including organizing a Carnival, where Q300’s 10-year anniversary will be celebrated, and streamlining its communications with the Q300 community. If you or anyone you know is familiar with email management solutions or general contact management solutions and is willing to volunteer a bit of time to advise the PTA, please let us know by contacting president@q300pta.org or communications@q300pta.org. You can also participate in the Fundraising Committee’s monthly fundraising call, which takes place on the third Wednesday of every month.

E. Treasurer’s Report

Co-Treasurer Sophia Peng delivered the Treasurer’s Report. From September to the end of November, inflows from the Direct Appeal are approximately \$86,000 (with \$65,000 coming in during November alone). For the month of December, thus far, we will be adding approximately \$50,000 to the Direct Appeal. Total inflows for November are approximately \$80,000 (including the Direct Appeal), bringing year to date income to approximately \$110,000. In November, the PTA collected approximately \$2,000 net from the Thanksgiving Pies fundraiser, approximately \$800 (to date) from the Gift Card fundraiser, \$310 from the Flower Power fundraiser, and approximately \$1,000 (to date) from the New York Martial Arts Academy fundraiser. The PTA earned bank interest and incurred PayPal fees related to the Direct Appeal. Cash outflows for the month of November were approximately \$11,000. If you would like details from the November Treasurer’s Report, please email treasurer@q300pta.org.

F. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report

SLT Parent Member Maria Hantzopoulos reported on the December 11, 2023 SLT meeting. The SLT reviewed its norms and approved its minutes. SLT Student Representative Jarvis reported that the Student Council is discussing school lunch times and strategizing how to have more time to eat.

The SLT continued its review of the 2022-2023 school survey results from parents, teachers, and middle school students. PTA President Mauricio López Campero presented a chart comparing the survey results with those of other schools in the district and other citywide schools. A link to that chart will be in the December 11, 2023 SLT minutes, which will be posted at <https://ps300q.org/slt.html>.

The SLT discussed Diversity Committee updates. This year, Principal Sonita has attached the Diversity Committee to the SLT. A member of Q300's staff is needed to spearhead the Diversity Committee. Khary Chang used to fill this role. However, staff in the Upper Division is stretched because of the loss of three full-time teachers and staff. As a result, the SLT will devote 30 minutes of each meeting to Diversity Committee work. Principal Sonita presented an overview of Q300's outreach process to prospective kindergarten families, including Q300's diversity initiative, which prioritizes 40% of available kindergarten seats for students who qualify for free lunch and/or live in Section 8 housing, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) housing, or temporary housing. The SLT provided feedback on the outreach materials, which Principal Sonita will incorporate. Translated versions of Q300's outreach materials will be available soon. On a separate note, Q300 will not have a Wellness Committee this year due to lack of staff capacity.

The SLT discussed the participatory budgeting process, which enables communities to vote for City Council funds to be allocated to their priorities. This year, Q300 is partnering with its co-located schools, PS 17 and IS 126, to submit a list of funding priorities in each campus, including auditorium renovations, classroom air conditioners, shared library materials and furnishings, courtyard renovation.

The Principal's Report, PTA Report and United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Report were delivered. The UFT Report focused on the UFT's efforts to organize against the Mayor's announced school budget cuts.

The SLT intends to develop an internal school culture survey for Q300 staff, students, and families. This is something the SLT previously did in 2017 and 2018.

G. Committee Reports

1. Fundraising Co-Vice President Lisa Christopher thanked Q300 families for supporting the Book Fair, which took place in December at the Upper and Lower Divisions. Through the book fairs, the PTA provided new books to supplement classroom libraries. The Fundraising Committee is seeking donations for its Summer Camp auction. Please solicit donations (for example, a week or several weeks' worth of summer camp) to the PTA from camps your children may have attended. The PTA will then auction those donations via an online platform in the weeks leading up to and after Winter Fest. The Fundraising Committee is researching vendors for the 10th Anniversary Carnival, which will happen in May. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact fundraising@q300pta.org.
2. Direct Appeal Co-Chair David Wang spoke about the Direct Appeal, which raises more than 80% of the PTA's budget and helps fund Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the Lower Division, enrichments in the Lower and Upper Divisions, teacher "wish list" stipends for classroom use, and many other things. Thank you to Sue Sekar who is the Direct Appeal Co-Chair and to the Q300 families who have made donations or pledges to the Direct Appeal. Thank you to PTA Co-Treasurers Sophia Peng and Amy Wong for their work on the Direct Appeal. As the year draws to a close, if you are able and have not yet done so, please donate to the Direct Appeal. If the amount is meaningful to you, it is meaningful to the PTA. You can send Direct Appeal donations via your child's backpack or through the mail; online donations are generally disfavored because of the credit card fee. If your donation is received or postmarked by December 31, 2023, it will be counted for the 2023 tax year. The PTA will issue an acknowledgement letter that can be used for tax purposes. The Direct Appeal has currently raised \$139,860, or roughly 56% of its goal of \$230,000.
3. Lower Division Representative Erica Soto Eng reported on behalf of the Membership Committee. The date for Winter Fest will be Saturday, February 3, 2024 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Upper Division. Winter Fest is a celebration of the diversity and cultures of the Q300 community. Families can bring potluck dishes to share with others. Each grade can host tables showcasing a game or craft with a cultural component. More communications about Winter Fest will be going out soon. Additionally, December 22 is Cultural Day at school. Students are encouraged to wear something that represents their cultural heritage.

4. Communications Co-Vice President Emanuella Drummond put out a call for parent/guardian volunteers with marketing or customer database marketing experience. The Communications Committee would like to vet potential communication platforms. Please reach out to communications@q300pta.org or secretary@q300pta.org if you are able to help with this.
5. Community Affairs Vice President Salua Baida reported that the first Q300/PS 17 Movie Night of 2024 will be taking place on January 12, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. The movie, Super Mario Brothers, will start by 5:45 p.m. On December 1, 2023, Q300 and PS 17 hosted a Winter Coat giveaway. Q300 and PS 17 families donated coats for those in need. Thank you to Sunilda Caraballo, Janet Perez-Garcia, Erica Soto Eng and all of the families from Q300, PS 17 and IS 126 who contributed. Thank you to those in the Q300 community who applied to be budget delegates in the participatory budgeting process. Several delegates from the Q300 community were selected. The budget delegates will transform the ideas submitted by the various community groups into formal proposals. Neighborhood committees will then review the proposals and decide what items make the ballot the public will vote on. Students who are 11 and older and attend school in City Council District 22 (even if they reside in another City Council district) are eligible to vote. The Community Affairs Committee has invited Councilmember Tiffany Cabán to speak at the Lower Division and read aloud the children's book Sofia Valdez, Future Prez in January 2024, and to a participatory budgeting kickoff at the Upper Division in April 2024. Finally, if you know anyone with a connection to Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, please tell them that the Community Affairs Committee would like to invite the Congress member to Q300.
6. Upper Division Vice President Sunilda Caraballo reported that the Winter Dance took place today in the Upper Division. Shoutout to the teachers who decorated the gym and organized pizza, a DJ and a dance competition. Congratulations to grade 802, which won the dance competition, and Ms. Laura, who choreographed the dance.

H. Community Education Council Liaison Report

Whitney Toussaint, Community Education Council (CEC) District 30 President (and Q300's CEC liaison) introduced herself and explained the CEC's role. The CEC holds monthly hybrid meetings at District 30's offices at 28-11 Queens Plaza North. A schedule of meetings is available at <https://www.cec30.org/meetings-sched.html>. District 30 Interim Acting Superintendent Lisa Hidalgo gives a report at every meeting, and responds to attendees' questions. The CEC passes resolutions that are advisory for the Department of Education (DOE). Most recently, the CEC passed a resolution against Mayor Adams' plan to limit stays for migrant/asylum seeker families in New York City shelters to 60 days. District 30 currently serves the highest population of asylum-seeking students. There are two open public speaking sessions at each CEC meeting where attendees can speak about issues at their school or in the district. The first session occurs at the very beginning of the meeting, and the second session occurs at the end. Comments during the open public speaking sessions are limited to two minutes or so. Attendees can also speak after the various agenda items, but their comments and questions must be limited to the agenda item.

If a school has requests for capital plan projects, such as an auditorium renovation, the school's principal can submit them to the CEC. The CEC then considers them and votes on whether to submit them to the School Construction Authority (SCA). Requests are due to the CEC by January 12, 2024, and can be emailed. This process is done once a year. Approved requests are submitted by the CEC to the SCA in March. Participation in participatory budgeting does not preclude participation in the CEC/SCA process.

A parent reported that Q300 has been waiting since 2017 for SCA to update a bathroom in the Lower Division. The SCA assessed the bathroom last year but there have been no further developments. Whitney promised to raise the issue with the Chancellor.

The CEC has an Instagram account where it is hosting school profiles for every school in District 30. District schools and/or their PTAs are invited to take over the CEC's account for the day and can post material of their choosing to spotlight the school.

The CEC is looking for committee volunteers to be involved in the CEC. The CEC is opening the following committees to parents: Communication and Outreach; Empowerment, Engagement and Equity; Special Education; Academic Advancement; and Family Fun Day. The solicitation for these committees will be posted on the CEC's website in January 2024.

Finally, the New York State Department of Education is currently holding hearings on mayoral control. In 2002, a law went into effect that shifted control over public education in New York City from local school boards to the mayor. Mayoral control expires every few years and is up again on June 30, 2024. Information about future meetings and recordings of past hearings are posted at <https://www.nysed.gov/new-york-city-mayoral-control-hearings>. Written electronic testimony may also be submitted via the same website until January 31, 2024.

In response to a question about whether SLT meetings could take place in-person with virtual option for parents who would like to observe, Whitney stated that she would investigate.

A parent thanked the CEC for its longstanding support for a single site for Q300, and asked if there were further efforts the CEC could make to help Q300 get one school. Whitney stated it would be helpful for individuals to attend CEC meetings and continuously advocate for this.

A parent expressed concern that because of the new class size law, Q300 and other co-located schools might be subsumed into the co-located school and lose its identity. Whitney encouraged Q300 to be vocal about its position on this and other issues.

I. New Business

Co-Vice President of the Lower Division Erica Soto-Eng reported that the Membership Committee is organizing a silent auction at the Winter Fest. Please consider donating any items (excluding alcohol) to the silent auction.

Vice President of the Upper Division Sunilda Caraballo reported on an initiative to bring sports into the Upper Division. Approximately 20 students took part in a bi-weekly morning volleyball practice with the hope that the students could compete against other schools, but the school was unable to find a league to play in. Some students have expressed interest in a basketball team.

J. Approval of the Minutes

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

K. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 pm ET. The next general membership meeting will be held on January 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm ET on a virtual platform.

Kate Swearngen & David William Wang, Co-Secretaries