



## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • March 21, 2024

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### A. In Attendance

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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 43. Quorum was reached.

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### B. Call to Order

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President Mauricio López Campero called the virtual meeting to order at approximately 6:35 pm ET. He welcomed Q300’s District 30 Community Education Council (CEC) liaison, Whitney Toussaint.

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### C. Special Guest – CEC District 30 President and Q300 Liaison, Whitney Toussaint

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CEC District 30 President and Q300 Liaison, Whitney Toussaint, encouraged parents to attend CEC District 30 meetings. CEC meetings are held monthly, and the public may attend in-person or virtually. Links to the meeting schedules are available here: <https://www.cec30.org/meetings-sched.html>. At the meetings, CEC District 30 Superintendent Lisa Hidalgo reports on happenings in the district. The CEC passes advisory resolutions that go to the Department of Education (DOE) and alert it to the district’s priorities. There are two public speaking sessions at the meetings, one at the beginning and one at the end, and parents are welcome to speak on any education topic. There is also an opportunity after each agenda item for the public to speak on that item. The CEC is profiling district schools on its Instagram account. District 30 Family Fun Day is happening on May 11 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Dutch Kills Park in Astoria.

Whitney said she would help spread the word to underserved communities about Q300’s Diversity Initiative, which prioritizes 40% of incoming kindergarten seats for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch and/or currently reside in citywide Section 8 housing, citywide NYCHA housing, or citywide temporary housing.

Whitney reported that most School Leadership Teams (SLTs) are using a hybrid model, with SLT members attending meetings in-person and some non-members attending via remote means. So long as there is an in-person quorum and the SLT by-laws (or an SLT resolution) provide for an in-person quorum and commit to abiding by the Open Meetings Law, hybrid meetings can be held. SLT members who attend virtually must be permitted to speak. Whitney offered to give Q300’s SLT access to the CEC’s webinar account.

The CEC has a vacancy. Applications are due by April 5. Candidates who apply will be interviewed publicly at a candidate forum. The PTA Presidents’ Council, which is comprised of the PTA presidents within District 30, will provide feedback on the candidates. Only the CEC members can vote. The candidate who receives a majority of votes will be elected to the CEC. Since this is a vacancy, the “same school rule” does not apply, meaning that even if there is already a CEC member whose child attends a certain school, a candidate whose child attends the same school can be elected.

The citywide Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) has vacancies for 5 parent member positions. The CEC presidents of each of NYC’s five boroughs elect one of the parent members. The PEP meets in-person every month at different schools across the city. The PEP votes on important items like siting schools, the estimated DOE budget, and the capital plan, which is used to allocate funds for new schools and for physical improvements in schools. Both the CEC and the PEP meet year-round and require a substantial time commitment, particularly

the PEP position. Applications for the PEP position are due by April 15 and are available (along with eligibility criteria) at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/get-involved/families/panel-for-education-policy>.

Whitney provided feedback on Q300's "One School" proposal, which aims to secure a single school building to house Q300's Upper and Lower Division. Whitney encouraged Q300 parents to attend CEC meetings to hear what is going on and speak up during public comment. In particular, parents should attend the CEC meeting in October, when the Office of District Planning presents on school building utilization and buildings that are in the pipeline. Q300 parents should also attend meetings where the School Construction Authority (SCA) presents so they can ask the SCA questions about site referral and their processes. Whitney will ask the SCA on behalf of the PTA for guidance as to the site referral process. Whitney encouraged parents to view the building utilization reports available at [https://www.cec30.org/docs/presentations/District%2030%20Data%20Summary\\_2022.pdf](https://www.cec30.org/docs/presentations/District%2030%20Data%20Summary_2022.pdf). For example, the building housing PS17 and the Lower Division is currently at 124% utilization. Relocating Q300 to a single, accessible building would promote compliance with the new class size law and would allow Q300 to better serve students with physical disabilities. Whitney answered questions from parents and brainstormed with them as to how Q300 might enhance its chances of securing a single building.

Q300 has had a One School Committee since its inception aimed at securing a single building for the school. Thank you to Lynn Kennedy for her work on this committee over the years. If you are interested in working with the One School Committee, please email [president@q300pta.org](mailto:president@q300pta.org).

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#### **D. Principal's Report**

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Principal Sonita Ramkishun reported that report cards will come out on March 27. Paper copies will be backpacked home. Parents may also access report cards via their NYC Schools Account (NYCSA). If you need help accessing NYCSA, please email parent coordinator Jenny Lando at [jennylando@q300.org](mailto:jennylando@q300.org).

Starting on March 25, the DOE's composting initiative will begin at the Upper and Lower Division. Spaces will be available for students to separate their compostable garbage during lunch. Principal Sonita will be soliciting parent volunteers to help at lunchtime at the Lower Division. At the Upper Division, the Student Council will be supporting students with composting. More information will be provided in the Principal's Message on Friday. If you have any questions about the composting initiative, please email Vice-Principal Anna Milonakis at [annam@q300.org](mailto:annam@q300.org) or Jenny Lando at [jennylando@q300.org](mailto:jennylando@q300.org).

State testing dates will be provided in the Principal's Message on Friday. Please make sure you review these dates, which are before and after Spring Break, and plan accordingly. There will be make-up dates for students who are sick on the scheduled test dates. If your child is sick on a test date, please tell your child's teacher.

This year, Field Day will be taking place at Astoria Park instead of Randall's Island. Dates will be provided in the Principal's Message on Friday.

Kindergarten offers will be released on March 27. Middle school offers will be released on April 3. The G&T application for Grades 1-4 will open on April 15. Officers will be available on <https://www.myschools.nyc>. If you have any questions after you receive your offer, please email Jenny Lando at [jennylando@q300.org](mailto:jennylando@q300.org).

All schools in District 30 are using a new reading program, HMH Into Reading. CEC District 30 provided coaching through Generation Ready for teachers at all schools within the district, including Q300, on how to effectively use the program. Q300 is implementing inquiry projects with the reading materials to engage students more deeply. The program has brought more structure to reading at Q300. Students are enjoying the program and teachers continue to prepare their classrooms by shifting out their leveled libraries to Lexile libraries. Students continue to read whole books, not just the excerpts in the program materials. Grades 3-5 continue to use book club, where students work in small groups using leveled books, based on the topic they are learning.

In response to a parent question about the use of ClassDojo for teacher communications, Principal Sonita responded that there is no school-wide guidance. Teachers can pick the communication medium that works best for them and their students' families.

In response to a parent question about classes making their own solar eclipse glasses, Principal Sonita responded that the school does not have the specialized materials to do that.

In response to a question about the cleanliness of the fourth-floor bathrooms at the Lower Division, Principal Sonita responded that the bathrooms are heavily used (300 students using two bathrooms, all day long) and that the custodians clean them every 2-3 hours. Students will be reminded at school about bathroom etiquette and the importance of cleaning up after themselves. Please remind students of these expectations at home. The bathrooms are due for a physical upgrade but there is no date for this yet. Principal Sonita addressed a false narrative that has been circulating about a student being injured in the bathroom. The injury did not occur in the bathroom.

There will be a solar eclipse on April 8. Dismissal will take place as normal. Students should not look at the sun without proper protection. Specialized solar eclipse glasses purchased from a reputable supplier are necessary to view the eclipse safely.

Thank you to the parents volunteered to speak to Upper and Lower Division students about their jobs for Career Day (March 26).

The Q300 Chess Team will be hosting a chess tournament at the Lower Division on March 23. Due to an issue with the wall separating the auditorium from the gymnasium, there will be restrictions on space.

There will not be a new Spanish language teacher hired for the Upper Division this academic year. The hiring process for the position will open at the end of April. Principal Sonita would like to hire a new English as a New Language (ENL) instructor for the next academic year to replace Mr. Edwin.

The Eighth Grade graduation will be taking place on June 25 at 12:00 p.m. More information will be forthcoming from the Eighth Grade teachers.

Finally, Happy Holi and Happy Easter to those who celebrate.

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## **E. Treasurer's Report**

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Co-Treasurer Amy Wong delivered the Treasurer's Report. In the month of February, Direct Appeal inflows were approximately \$15,700. February inflows from fundraising events were roughly \$7,000. The PTA earned bank interest and incurred PayPal fees related to the Direct Appeal. Cash inflows for the month of February were approximately \$23,000. Cash outflows for the month of February were approximately \$3,000. Only half of the Teaching Assistant (TA) budget has been used due to TA attrition. If you would like details from the February Treasurer's Report, please email [treasurer@q300pta.org](mailto:treasurer@q300pta.org).

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## **F. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report**

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SLT parent member Fiona Yung reported on the SLT's meeting on February 26.

The SLT heard a student report about various Student Council projects. The SLT also discussed a mandated training for all SLT members.

The SLT finalized a short Q300-specific survey with five questions for families, five questions for teachers, and five questions for students. These questions focus on areas of concern identified by the SLT in responses to last year's NYC School Survey. They include questions about inclusion, school-family communications, school responsiveness to family concerns and outreach, and curriculum and activities. After the DOE School Survey closes, Principal Sonita will send the surveys to families. Q300 leadership and the SLT will review the survey results and use them to prepare for the upcoming school year.

Please ensure that you also complete the NYC School Survey. The SLT reviews those results and uses them to build the school's academic and social-emotional plans.

The SLT reviewed the mid-year i-Ready data to plan for next year's math and English language arts (ELA) goals.

The SLT received reports from Principal Sonita and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) representative.

The SLT addressed the Diversity Committee's activities. This year, the Diversity Committee is a subcommittee of the SLT. At each SLT meeting, the SLT will devote 30 minutes to the Diversity Committee's work. Principal Sonita addressed the need to source vendors to bring diverse cultural presentations, workshops and assemblies to

the school for the 2024-2025 school year. The SLT will be researching potential vendors. If you have any suggestions as to individuals or places the SLT should contact, please email [president@q300pta.org](mailto:president@q300pta.org).

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## G. Committee Reports

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1. Co-Vice-President of Membership Afrosa Amin reported that the PTA is looking for volunteers to research school supply distributors. In the past few years, Q300 has used its budget to provide students with school supplies. This year, Q300 will be providing parents with a list of school supplies which parents will be responsible for purchasing. The PTA is trying to identify a distributor who can provide the supplies on the list and deliver them in bulk to Q300. Parents will pay a fee for the supplies. Q300 has a financial aid program available to those who need it. If you require financial aid for school supplies, please email parent coordinator Jenny Lando at [jenny@q300.org](mailto:jenny@q300.org). If you would like to volunteer to research school supply distributors, please email [afrosaa@q300pta.org](mailto:afrosaa@q300pta.org).
2. Vice-President of Community Affairs Salua Baida reported on Participatory Budgeting. New York City Council District 22 community members will be able to vote, thanks to Councilmember Tiffany Cabán, to allocate \$1 million on various ballot items put forward by the community. If you live, work, or attend school in District 22 and are at least 11 years old, or are the guardian of a child who attends school in District 22, you are eligible to vote. There are two ballot items that will benefit the Q300 community. One is for bathroom renovations, courtyard renovations and auditorium renovations at PS 17. The other is for water fountain updates at IS 126. Councilmember Cabán will be visiting the Upper Division, where students will learn about the process from her and be able to vote in real time. Voting will take place from April 6-14. Community members can vote in-person or online. Salua thanked Cate Riordan, Councilmember Cabán's Legislative Fellow, for providing information and assistance to Q300 in connection with the Participatory Budgeting process. Salua reported that Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's office declined Q300's invitation to speak at Career Week this year. On April 19, Dr. Yaisa Andrews-Zwilling, a neuroscientist, will be coming to the Lower Division, reading *Ada Twist, Scientist* and answering questions about her work. Thank you to Alisha Arthur for referring Dr. Andrews-Zwilling. March 22 is Movie Night. The movie is *Mulan*. PS 17 and Q300 parents will be using Movie Night to raise funds for sports jerseys. Please complete the New York City School Survey. The survey gives school leaders a better understanding of what members of their school community think about their school. The information collected by the survey is designed to support a dialogue among all members of the school community about how to make the school a better place to learn. The survey closes April 19. You can fill out one survey per child. Please contact Jenny Lando at [jennylando@q300.org](mailto:jennylando@q300.org) if you have not received the survey or if you have questions about the survey.
3. Lower Division Co-Representative Erica Soto Eng thanked the school community for participating in the Kindness Challenge, which is an opportunity for each grade to highlight Q300's core values of inquiry, inclusion, and responsibility by performing community service or highlighting worthy causes. Thank you to the administration for making available an indoor space at the school on March 16 for grades to come together and assemble their projects. Thank you to the grades who led their own Kindness Challenges. Thank you to Jacqueline Leamer who led many grades in a clean-up at Astoria Park. Finally, thank you to those who helped assemble 80 toiletry bags to be donated to two local non-profits. Teacher Appreciation Week is approaching. If you would like to join Erica and Alisha Arthur on the Teacher and Staff Appreciation Committee, please contact Erica at [erica@q300pta.org](mailto:erica@q300pta.org).
4. Upper Division Representative Sunilda Caraballo reported on Eighth Grade graduation fundraising events. There will be a Comedy Night for ages 18 and older on April 14 at 5:00 p.m. at QED in Astoria. Tickets are \$20. There will be a 50-50 raffle.
5. Communications Co-Vice-President Betty Ruan asked parents who are not receiving the Q300 PTA monthly email bulletin to make sure that their spam filters are not blocking it. The bulletin is being sent by [communications@q300pta.org](mailto:communications@q300pta.org).
6. Fundraising Co-Vice President Christina Lee reported that the Flower Power fundraiser, where families can purchase garden bulbs, will run through May 15. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Carnival is tentatively scheduled for June 1, with a rain date of June 8. To get involved with planning the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Carnival, please email

the Fundraising Committee at [fundraising@q300pta.org](mailto:fundraising@q300pta.org). The PTA raised over \$13,000 through the Winter Fest silent auctions and raffles. Thank you to the donors and families who participated.

7. Direct Appeal Co-Chair David Wang reported on the Direct Appeal, which raises more than 80% of the PTA’s budget and helps fund TAs in the Lower Division, enrichments in the Lower and Upper Divisions, teacher “wish list” stipends for classroom use, Chromebooks for the Upper Division, and many other resources. Thank you to Sue Sekar who is the Direct Appeal Co-Chair, Co-Treasurers Sophia Peng and Amy Wong, and to all the Q300 families who have made donations or pledges to the Direct Appeal. The Direct Appeal is now in the “March Madness” phase, where the goal is to increase participation among Q300 families. Some grades have already exceeded 51% participation. To date, the Direct Appeal has raised \$231,000, exceeding its goal of \$230,000. Anything that is given now will help the PTA hit the ground running in September. 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. Please send Direct Appeal donations via your child’s backpack or through the mail; online donations require a credit card fee.

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## **H. Approval of the Minutes**

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A motion was made to approve the February 15, 2024 general membership minutes. The motion was seconded. The members then present approved the motion.

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## **I. Adjournment**

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The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:35 pm ET. The next general membership meeting will be held on April 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm ET on a virtual platform.

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Kate Swearngen & David William Wang, Co-Secretaries