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**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. 39 members were present. Quorum was reached.

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**B. Call to Order**

The virtual meeting was called to order at approximately 6:35 p.m. EST.

Co-President Mauricio López Campero thanked the meeting attendees, Board members, volunteers and Q300 staff, with special appreciation to Principal Sonita Ramkishun and Parent Coordinator Jenny Lando, for all their work. He spoke about recent efforts to engage with Q300’s co-located schools, PS17 and IS126, on fundraising and other initiatives. If you become aware of any vacant buildings that could potentially house the Upper and Lower Division in a single site, please contact [president@q300pta.org](mailto:president@q300pta.org).

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**C. Principal’s Report**

Principal Sonita Ramkishun thanked families who attended the in-person Meet the Teacher event on September 12 and who participated in virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences on November 7. If you have not had a chance to meet your child’s teacher, please email them to set up a time. Each teacher has 55 minutes of parent engagement time per week. Families will receive first trimester report cards on December 11.

Next week, students in grades K-8 will be participating in Project Soapbox competitions. Project Soapbox is a series of lessons to help students identify an issue they care about and develop and deliver a persuasive speech on why others should care about that issue. Students previously presented to their classrooms about their chosen topics. Students voted on their favorite topics, and the winners from each class advanced to a schoolwide presentation. Upper Division winners will be reading their speeches in the auditorium on Monday, and Lower Division winners will be reading their speeches on Wednesday. Winners from each division will advance to the district and then the citywide level.

Thanksgiving pies ordered through the PTA Pie Fundraiser will be distributed next week.

A drive for new toys and gently used clothing will be taking place at the Upper and Lower Divisions. More details will be shared in Friday’s Principal’s Message.

Principal Sonita thanked the PTA for its partnership and wished meeting attendees a Happy Thanksgiving.

In response to a parent question, Principal Sonita reported that Q300 has hired and onboarded a total of 5 teaching assistants (TAs). They have been assigned to the following grades: a TA has been assigned to each of the two Kindergarten and First Grade classes (for a total of 4 TAs) and a TA has been assigned to cover both Third Grade classes. Principal Sonita will be interviewing additional TA candidates for three open TA positions that will be assigned as follows: a TA will be assigned to each of the two Second Grade classes (for a total of 2 TAs) and a TA will be assigned to cover both Fourth Grade classes. In the meantime, a Department of Education (DOE)-funded paraprofessional (para) is assigned to each of the two Second Grade classes and a substitute teacher is assigned to support both Fourth Grade classes with testing and accommodations

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In response to additional parent questions, Principal Sonita noted that she begins the hiring process during the summer and that the full complement of TAs is not in place by the start of the school year in September due to the timing of the DOE onboarding process, the decision of TA candidates to decline the school's employment offers, and other issues. Principal Sonita thanked David Wang for his efforts in posting the TA job openings on various recruitment websites.

In response to a parent question, Mauricio noted that the hourly pay rate of \$20 per hour for new TAs is competitive with those offered by other citywide gifted and talented schools. Further Q300 TAs receive paid federal holidays and two paid sick days during the school year. Returning TAs are paid an enhanced hourly rate.

To date, approximately 140 individuals have applied to be TAs at Q300 for the 2024-2025 school year. Résumés from interested candidates are given to Principal Sonita, who is responsible for TA hiring and management. During the summer, the PTA transfers sufficient funds to pay the salaries of the full complement of 8 TAs for several months and replenishes those funds during the school year.

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#### **D. Treasurer's Report**

Co-Treasurer Sophia Peng delivered the Treasurer's Report. As of October 31, there was \$9,000 in Direct Appeal collections. In November to date, an additional \$31,000 has been collected, bringing total collections to \$40,000.

In October, there was an additional \$7,000 in non-Direct Appeal cash inflows. There were more sales of Q300 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary merchandise. From the Costume Party, a net of \$4,000 was collected in tickets and raffle ticket sales. \$600 was spent on the DJ. If you incurred any expenses from the Costume Party, please submit a check request to [treasurer@q300pta.org](mailto:treasurer@q300pta.org). In October, the PTA began collecting some of the money from the Thanksgiving pie orders. Total inflows for October were approximately \$11,000.

For cash outflows, the PTA has spent \$35,000 to date on TAs. The PTA reimbursed the Debate Club for its participation in some competitions, and paid for some of the teacher wish lists for the Upper Division. The PTA also helped fund professional development for the teachers. The PTA incurred operating expenses from the Welcome Breakfast and directors and officers' insurance policy. Total outflows for October were approximately \$14,000. The ending cash balance was \$286,000.

If you would like more details from the Treasurer's Report, please contact [treasurer@q300pta.org](mailto:treasurer@q300pta.org).

The PTA received a grant from Councilmember Tiffany Cabán's office to fund hydroponics lab maintenance in the Upper Division, so will not need to pay for that this academic year.

The PTA received approval from the administration last week to launch a new Grants Committee. If you are interested in looking for grant opportunities or writing applications for grants and sharing them with Principal Sonita (many grants require the school principal to submit the application themselves), please contact [treasurer@q300pta.org](mailto:treasurer@q300pta.org).

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#### **E. Committee Reports**

1. Co-Vice-President of Communications Emanuella Drumond asked that those with ideas as to how to improve communications and those interested in contributing to or working on the Q300 PTA Newsletter to contact her at [comunications@q300pta.org](mailto:comunications@q300pta.org). Past editions of the newsletter are available at <https://q300pta.org/pta/newsletters/>.
2. Vice-President of Community Affairs Dev Purkayastha reported that he had been speaking with past Community Affairs Vice-Presidents and attending events in District 30 to get ideas about how to plug into the community. Dev is hoping to more broadly promote some of the drives that Q300 will be hosting. If you are interested in serving as a Co-Vice-President with Dev, or in volunteering for any Community Affairs matters, please contact Dev at [communityaffairs@q300.org](mailto:communityaffairs@q300.org).
3. Co-Vice-President of Fundraising Nicole Friedman reported that Thanksgiving pies will be distributed next week. The gift card fundraiser is ongoing; the last day to order is November 27. This year the gift card

fundraiser is online-only. If you require a paper order form, please contact Jenny Lando at [jennylando@q300.org](mailto:jennylando@q300.org). The Flower Power fundraiser ends December 1. The Scholastic Book Fair will run December 2-December 5. The PTA has partnered with the Barclays Center to offer discounted tickets to events held there, including Disney on Ice. The PTA will receive \$5 for every ticket sold that is purchased through the PTA's dedicated page at <https://fevo-enterprise.com/group/Q300fundraiser>. The annual Summer Camp Auction will take place at Winterfest, which will occur in late January or early February. If you know of summer camps that might be interested in donating a free week or two for the PTA to auction, please email [fundraising@q300pta.org](mailto:fundraising@q300pta.org). Information about all the PTA's fundraisers is available at <https://q300pta.org/>. The PTA is working on compiling a comprehensive listing of its ongoing fundraisers (e.g., Mabel's Labels, Shutterfly, Book Culture, Barclays Center, Tea Collection) for families to use and share.

4. David Wang reported on the Direct Appeal, where over 80% of PTA funds are raised. The Direct Appeal funds enrichments, TAs, and other projects that benefit Q300 students. The suggested donation amount is \$1,500 per Lower Division student and \$1,000 per Upper Division student. Many corporate employers offer matching; please check with your employer to see if they do so. Families should give an amount that makes sense for their budget; all donations are meaningful, irrespective of the amount. This year, the PTA's goal is to raise \$230,000 from the Direct Appeal. To date, the PTA has raised roughly 10% of its goal. The PTA will soon be sending out an email about the Direct Appeal that parents can share with their families, colleagues and friends for Giving Tuesday. Thank you to the Q300 community for its generosity over the years supporting the Direct Appeal.
5. Vice-President of Lower Division Erica Soto Eng reported that two more volunteers are needed at the Lower Division for the Thanksgiving Lunch for Teachers and Staff, which will take place on November 22 at the Upper and Lower Divisions. If you can help carry the food upstairs at the Lower Division and set up a nice display, please contact [ericas@q300pta.org](mailto:ericas@q300pta.org).
6. Vice-President of Upper Division Nick Skolnick reported that more volunteers are needed at the Upper Division for the Thanksgiving Lunch for Teachers and Staff. If you can help, please contact [nicks@q300pta.org](mailto:nicks@q300pta.org).

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

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Parent member Dev Purkayastha reported on the SLT, a body of parents, teachers and administrators who work to create Q300's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), which specifies the goals and the strategies of the school for the academic year. The SLT also provides guidance for critical decisions of the school.

Currently, the SLT meets in-person at the school. The SLT is exploring whether meetings can be hybrid, so that SLT members can attend virtually. The SLT is also exploring whether arrangements can be made so that parents who are not SLT members can listen in to its meetings remotely.

At its last meeting, the SLT reviewed the current presentation materials for the "One School" committee. Over the years, the One School committee has focused on (1) creating awareness around Q300's need to consolidate its two locations, and (2) framing a proposal that not only benefits Q300 but also the local Astoria community and all of Queens.

The SLT also reviewed the 2023-2024 state test results and discussed participatory budgeting.

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#### **G. Approval of PTA Minutes**

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A motion was made to approve the October 24, 2024 general membership minutes. The motion was seconded. The members then present approved the motion. Once PTA General Meeting minutes are approved, they are posted on the PTA website at <https://q300pta.org/>.

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#### **H. Adjournment**

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The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:38 p.m. ET. The next meeting will take place on December 19, 2024, in a virtual format.

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Kate Swearengen & David William Wang, Co-Secretaries