



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • May 22, 2025

A. In Attendance

Seventy-six (76) Q300 PTA members consisting of (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 in attendance. Quorum was reached.

B. Call to Order

The virtual meeting was called to order at about 6:40 p.m. ET. Co-President Dana Holmes greeted the attendees.

C. Principal’s Report

Principal Sonita Ramkishun reported that the third marking period will end on May 23. Grades must be entered shortly thereafter because promotion in doubt (PID) decisions are due by June 4.

The Upper Division elective showcase will take place on May 30. The Lower Division enrichment showcase will take place on June 4.

Field Day will occur on the following dates: Grades K-4 - May 27; Grades 5-7 - May 28, and Grade 8 - May 29.

Thank you to those who served on the PTA Board this academic year.

In response to a question, Principal Sonita reported that she would check in with the 8th Grade teachers to see if they need support with planning an 8th Grade enrichment field trip to the Tenement Museum

D. Board and SLT Elections

A motion was made to appoint Tomonori Nagano, Maria Hantzopoulos, Ellie Rabinovich and Yvette Choy to the Nominations/Elections Committee. The motion was seconded. The members in attendance then voted to approve the motion.

The Elections Committee administered the elections of PTA Board and School Leadership Team (SLT) parent member positions. The following are highlights:

1. Board Elections.

- a. Election Committee Chair Tomonori Nagano gave an overview of the expedited elections process. Parents/guardians and teachers are eligible to vote. To ensure that only eligible persons cast votes, all participants without a code (or verified phone number) will be removed from the meeting, with the exception of Q300 administration observers (who are unable to vote). This will ensure that all those who vote will be verified voters. All those who are ineligible will not be able to vote on the platform.
- b. Q300 Parent Coordinator Jenny Lando confirmed the eligibility of all voters for the PTA Board elections has been verified. The “anonymous” box was selected in the Zoom platform to prevent tracing votes to specific individuals.

- (i) **President.** The following nominations were taken from the floor: Dana Holmes and Rachana Shah, running as a team. No other nominations were made.
 - (ii) **Executive Vice President.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Lauren Baker. No other nominations were made.
 - (iii) **Secretary.** The following nominations were taken from the floor: David Wang and Kate Swearengen, running as a team. No other nominations were made.
 - (iv) **Treasurer.** No nominations were made.
 - (v) **Vice President of Membership.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Jennifer Holohan. No other nominations were made.
 - (vi) **Vice President of Fundraising.** The following nominations were taken from the floor: Lucy Han and Nicole Friedman, running as a team. No other nominations were made.
 - (vii) **Vice President of Communications.** No nominations were made.
 - (viii) **Vice President of Community Affairs.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Dev Purkayastha. No other nominations were made.
 - (ix) **Vice President of Lower Division.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Piotr Drys. No other nominations were made.
 - (x) **Vice President of Upper Division.** The following nomination was taken from the floor: Alyssa Duval. No other nominations were made.
- c. Without any objections from the members present, a majority of members then present voted to elect (i) Dana Homes and Rachana Shah as Co-Presidents, (ii) Lauren Baker as Executive Vice President, (iii) David Wang and Kate Swearengen as Co-Secretaries, (iv) Jennifer Holohan as Vice President of Membership, (v) Lucy Han and Nicole Friedman as Co-Vice Presidents of Fundraising, (vi) Dev Purkayastha as Vice President of Community Affairs, (vii) Piotr Drys as Vice President of Lower Division, and (viii) Alyssa Duval as Vice President of Upper Division.

2. SLT Parent Member Elections.

- a. The Nominations Committee changed the status of teachers on the Zoom platform so that teachers would not be able to vote in the SLT parent members election. Nominations will be taken from the floor. All nominees will run for the first open SLT parent member position.
- b. Q300 Parent Coordinator Jenny Landor confirmed that the eligibility of all voters for the SLT parent elections have been verified. The “anonymous” box was selected in the Zoom platform to prevent tracing votes to specific individuals.
- c. The following nominations were made from the floor: Heather Clarke, Marisa Nagano and Ping Yeung. No other nominations were made.
- d. Without any objections from the members present, a majority of members then present voted to elect (i) Marisa Nagano and (ii) Heather Clarke.

E. Treasurer’s Report and Proposed Budget

Co-Treasurer Amy Wong delivered the Treasurer’s Report. In April, the Direct Appeal collected \$7,200 and other fundraising collected \$3,000 (mostly from the Winterfest online auction and the NYC Football Club ticket fundraiser), bringing total income for the month of April to \$10,000. In April, the PTA paid out \$230 in teachers wishlist items. Total net income for the month of April was just under \$10,000. As of the end of April, the PTA had almost \$278,000 in the bank. If you would like more details from the Treasurer’s Report, please contact treasurer@q300pta.org.

Due to a scheduling conflict, Co-Treasurer Sophia Peng was unable to attend the meeting. Instead, a video in which she presented budget options for the 2025-2026 academic year, was played at the meeting. In the video, Sophia explained that at the end of the current school year, we will have approximately \$280,000 in the bank. We have determined that we can spend down about \$80,000 from such reserves and end the 2025-2026 academic year with approximately \$200,000 in the bank. We would like to start with \$200,000 in order to fund Fall enrichments and Fall teaching assistants (TAs) for the 2026-2027 academic year, and to have a cushion in the event of a budget emergency. In addition, we will have approximately \$18,000 in unspent TA funds from the current school year that we can apply to the 2025-2026 academic year. Finally, we are setting an aggressive target of raising \$240,000 through fundraising in 2025-2026. The fundraising goal would represent a \$200,000 Direct Appeal goal (\$15,000 more than was raised in the current academic year) and \$40,000 in other fundraising activities (\$5,000 more than was raised in the current academic year).

The largest expenditure is TAs. TAs cost approximately \$33,000 per year. Historically, we have funded 8 TAs (2 TAs per grade for K-2 and 1 TA per grade for 3-4). However, during the past three years, the school has not been able to hire all 8 TAs to start at the beginning of the year, and TAs have also resigned mid-year. Further, TA compensation packages have increased more than 45% from 2019-2020 as we try to stay competitive. Funding a full year of 8 TAs would cost almost \$365,000, which is not feasible for our budgeted spend of \$338,000.

The second largest expenditure is vendor-led enrichments. This past academic year, we spent \$122,000 on vendor-led enrichments (\$2,800 per class per semester). Historically, we have funded vendor-led enrichments like visual arts, music, architecture, dance, chess and film production. This past year, we supported just under 700 sessions including soccer as an additional vendor-led enrichment. Vendor rates have increased roughly 25% due to inflation. In addition, we are funding 42 more sessions than we have in 2019-2020.

The third largest expenditure is other academic support, which includes professional development and supplies, teacher wishlists, teacher-led electives, monthly speakers, funding for graduation-type events in grades K, 4 and 9, Math and Debate Club, and sports.

Finally, there are operating expenses which are expected to grow in the 2025-2026 academic year, partly due to the need to transition to an external tax accountant if we are not able to find a parent volunteer to help with our end of year tax filings.

We have about \$340,000 that we can responsibly spend for the upcoming school year. If budget were not an issue, we would like to spend \$264,000 on 8 TAs, \$145,000 on vendor enrichments, and \$67,000 on operating expenses. However, that would leave a \$140,000 gap between what is responsible for us to spend versus what we would like to spend. Therefore, choices will need to be made about spending priorities.

The administration's preference is that we use our budget to fund 4-5 TAs (2 for Kindergarten, 2 for First Grade and, if the budget allows, 1 shared TA for Second Grade). The administration believes there are enough paraprofessionals (paras) in Grades 2-4 to provide support. In addition, the administration is open to exploring student teachers for those grades. However, teachers would need to be willing and able to support student teaching objectives.

The administration has expressed preference that the PTA increase the vendor-led enrichment budget, including funding Alvin Ailey dance. The dance program had been funded through a non-recurring grant this school year.

In prior years, the PTA has funded the New York City Department of Education (DOE) arts and music requirements in the Lower Division so that the school is able to fund gym, technology and Spanish.

At the recommendation of the PTA budget committee, the PTA could allocate about \$340,000 in the 2025-2026 academic year in one of the following ways:

1. Fund 4 TAs and increase the vendor enrichment spend to \$145,000. The increased budget would cover Alvin Ailey and other desired enrichments. About \$61,000 would be budgeted for other academic support.
2. Fund 5 TAs, keep the vendor enrichment spend at \$122,000, and cut funding for other academic support to \$51,000 (reducing the budget for professional development, supplies, and monthly speakers).

3. Fund 6 TAs and reduce the vendor enrichment spend to \$105,000 (which would drastically reduce Upper Division vendor-led electives), and cut funding for other academic support to \$35,000 (cutting professional development and supplies, monthly speakers and sports, and reducing the budget for teacher wishlists and teacher-led electives).

We are seeking feedback to determine what budget proposal should be put forward at the June budget meeting. Voting on the proposed budget will take place at the next PTA meeting on June 12, 2025.

While art is a required subject, the DOE does not require technology and Spanish language courses. The founding Q300 principal prioritized the school funding technology and Spanish language classes while the PTA funded art. The PTA must work in collaboration with the administration in determining what enrichments to fund.

PTA spending in the Lower Division has always had been higher due to TA salary funding. The PTA has tried to maintain parity between the level of enrichment funding in the Lower and Upper Divisions. Much of the budget surplus that has accumulated over the past several years is due to the contribution of current Upper Division parents when their children were at the Lower Division. Finally, the suggested Direct Appeal donation amount is less for the Upper Division than for the Upper Division.

Paarents who are interested in researching and applying for grants are encouraged to volunteer by contacting president@q300pta.org.

Please stay tuned for a parent survey to gather feedback on the three budget options presented above. Parents are encouraged to complete the survey and to approach it from a one-school perspective by focusing on what is best for the school as a whole rather than your child's grade or what is best for your individual child.

F. Committee Reports

1. David Wang reported on behalf of the Membership Committee that the Welcome Breakfast for new families will take place on Saturday, June 21. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at the breakfast to help answer questions from new families.
2. Fundraising Co-Vice President Nicole Friedman reported that the deadline to submit items for the Spring Auction is May 21. Please email fundraising@q300pta.org with any items or questions.
3. Christina Lee, who is chairing the Carnival Committee on behalf of the Fundraising Committee, reported that the Carnival will be taking place on Saturday, June 14 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. It will take place at the Upper Division and families from Q300's co-located schools, PS 17 and IS 126, are invited to join. Emails will be going out soon with registration information and how to volunteer. In addition to volunteers, we are looking for families to loan items like folding tables, chairs, tents, coolers and trailers. Please note that the emails to Q300 families and emails to PS 17 and IS 126 families will have different registration links. Please email fundraising@q300pta.org with any questions.
4. Community Affairs Vice President Dev Purkayastha reported that the Community Education Council (CEC) District 30 Family Fun Day will be taking place on May 31 at the IS 145 Playground in Jackson Heights. Q300 will have a table at the event and will be hosting a table game. All District 30 families (which includes Q300 families) are welcome to attend.
5. Communications Co-Chair Emanuella Drummond asked that anyone with suggestions as to how the PTA can improve its communications or who can provide tips on social media management email communications@q300pta.org.

G. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report

Parent SLT member Dev Purkayastha reported that the SLT is working on trying to get better audio for the SLT meetings and are working on transcription and transcription issues. In addition, the SLT is working on its Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals for the 2025-2026 academic year.

H. Approval of PTA Minutes

A motion was made to approve the April 24, 2025 general membership minutes. The motion was seconded. The members then present approved the motion. The minutes are posted at <https://q300pta.org/>.

I. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m. EST. The next meeting will take place on June 12, 2025, in a virtual format.

Kate Swearengen & David William Wang, Co-Secretaries