



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES • September 29, 2016

A. In Attendance

It was noted that (a) parents and other “persons in a parental relation” as defined by the regulations of the New York City Chancellor and designated persons having a relationship to a child or children currently attending Q300 (the “**Parents**”) and (b) eligible Q300 teachers and instructional staff members who are currently employed on a full-time basis (the “**Staff**”) at Q300 were present. The total number of Parents and Staff present was 47.

B. Call to Order

Co-PTA President Maria Hantzopoulos and Andrea Tappert called the meeting of the General Membership of the Q300 Parent-Teacher Association (the “**PTA**”) to order at 6:35 pm in the auditorium at the lower division campus at 28-37 29th Street, Astoria, NY 11102.

C. President’s Report

Maria and Andrea gave the President’s report. The following are highlights:

1. Both greeted the Members and noted that the school year is off to a great start.
2. Members are encouraged to volunteer for at least one hour during the school year.
3. The PTA’s mission is to help deepen and enrich the educational, emotional, and social lives of all Q300 students by:
 - a. Supporting activities that foster Q300’s core values: Inclusion, Inquiry and Responsibility;
 - b. Providing support and resources to Q300 for the benefit and educational growth of its students;
 - c. Developing parent and staff leadership, fostering and encouraging participation, and providing opportunities to participate in school governance and decision making;
 - d. Promoting a cooperative working relationship among the Q300 community; and
 - e. Providing a forum where members discuss innovations and implementations of curricular and extra-curricular activities that afford each student an opportunity to acquire the core values of Q300.
4. Each board member introduced themselves to the Members.
5. Andrea provided an status update of various PTA-funded programs and items:
 - a. Five of seven teaching assistants have started working in the lower division.

- b. Art House Astoria has started its visual arts program in kindergarten, first, and seventh grade. The second and third grade programs will begin shortly.
 - c. Alvin Ailey Dance Theater will shortly begin its dance programs in the third and eighth grades.
 - d. The Center for Architecture will begin its second grade architecture program on October 17.
 - e. The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music has begun its music program in the kindergarten and first, second, third, and seventh grades.
 - f. The PTA is ordering robotic kits and a class set of chromebooks for the middle school.
6. Maria and Andrea expressed appreciation for the volunteer work of many members including the following:
- a. **8/23/2016 Informal Gathering at Rainey Park.** Thanks to Pooja O’Hanlon, Farhana Osmani, Nishka Chandrasoma, Thomas Murphy Stephanie Luxenberg, Evie Hantzopoulos, Hong Van Tieu, Micki Spiller, David Wang and many others for their work in making the Gathering. Over 70 families attended as well as Principal Bill Biniaris, Assistant Principal Kristina Jelinek, and many of the teachers, staff, and community partners from both campuses. Special thanks to Pooja for coordinating the event, Hong for coordinating the Clothing Drive, and David for organizing the Uniform Swap.
 - b. **Private Buses.** Thanks again to Catherine Leopando, Keith Berger, Melissa Berger, Shirley Moy, Ellie Rabinovich, Michael Rosner, Sonal Ross, Sarah Willett-Chang, and others for coordinating the private buses that transports students to and from northern Queens, central Queens, and Brooklyn.
 - c. **Afterschool Bus.** Thanks to Amanda Speilman for organizing a bus from the afterschool programs Serious Fun and Global Kids to Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Woodside.
 - d. **9/18/16 Informal Mets Outing.** Thanks to Michael Ross for organizing the Mets outing and to Keri Goldman for inviting participants to run the bases after the game. Over 20 family members attended.
 - e. **School Supplies Delivery.** Thanks to Anar Bhimani Chanda, Francis Englert, Fumiko Nozaki, Glenn Mathes, Kim Yap, Lynn Kennedy, Sara Lin, and Saswat Pattanayak for delivering the Mulee school supplies from the elementary school workrooms to the appropriate classrooms. A number of Q300 students helped as well.
7. Parents are encouraged to sign up to be Class Parent for each class. The PTA will shortly be distributing job descriptions.
8. The lower division afterschool programs Serious Fun and Chess have started. The chess program has modified its session so that students will have the opportunity to play chess at the beginning of each session.
9. The upper division afterschool program Global Kids has open spots.
10. The Summer Read-a-Thon raised about \$9,450, with over 80 student participants.
11. Upcoming events and volunteer opportunities include the October Costume Party, in-school volunteering, and November Night at the Gallery.

D. Treasurer's Report

Executive Vice President Sue Sekar circulated the attached Treasurer's Report, which summarizes the PTA's finances as of August 31, 2016. The following are highlights:

1. The PTA raised approximately \$6,600 over the summer from the Summer Read-a-Thon, receipts from members using websites such as www.goodsearch.com and www.amazon.com, and the uniform swap program.
2. As of August 31, 2016, the PTA has an adjusted cash balance of \$76,400.72. Over the summer, the PTA paid for middle school books, gym storage, and teaching assistant salaries for the first four months of the school year.

E. Principal's Report

Principal Bill Biniaris gave the Principal's Report. The following are highlights:

1. Bill shared his personal statement. He seeks to be part of a team that fosters an educational atmosphere capable of honoring and deepening each student's distinctiveness. The instructional approach and social emotional learning opportunities offered to students help ensure that high ability, creativity, and task commitment are harmonized in an optimal fashion. Ultimately, Q300 will spark and cultivate a genuine "love of learning" in its students as they acquire the skills necessary to succeed academically, socially and emotionally, and as reflective citizens.
2. Elementary School Report.
 - a. The following is a list of enrichment programs:
 - (i) All grades are taught Spanish language.
 - (ii) Kindergarten and first grade are participating in Explorations.
 - (iii) Kindergarten through third grade are participating in music and visual arts.
 - (iv) Second grade is participating in architecture.
 - (v) Third grade is participating in vocal and dance. A teaching assistant is teaching the vocal class.
 - b. Bill noted all classes are participating in morning meeting, where students greet one another and share stories about themselves and their families. Morning meetings are a practice of the Responsive Classroom approach, which emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong school community. Q300 believes that how children learn is as important as what they learn, and that academic success is inextricably tied to building social-emotional competencies. Q300 provides K-8 educators with practical training and resources to help create safe and joyful classrooms and schools where children can thrive.
 - c. Bill briefly discussed the standards of the National Association of Gifted Children. Those standards are the following:
 - (i) Educators understand the needs of students with gifts and talents for both solitude and social interaction.
 - (ii) Educators provide opportunities for interaction with intellectual and artistic/creative peers as well as with chronological-age peers.

- (iii) Educators assess and provide instruction on social skills needed for school, community, and the world of work.

3. Middle School Report.

- a. Students are participating in beginning of year assessments in all subject areas including physical education and health.
- b. Electives are in full swing and include the following: robotics, Model UN, debate, animae, creative writing and math club.
- c. The following trips/events have occurred or are being planned: NY Botanical Gardens trip; Brooklyn Latin High School tour; meeting with representatives from Stuyvesant High School; Rocking the Boat Water Treatment Tour; and Taconic Outdoor Education Center overnight trip.
- d. Other Issues
 - (i) Bill requested that students refrain from trading Pokemon cards during the school day in the elementary school. Trading has resulted in conflicts among certain students.
 - (ii) Bill has requested parent help during lunch recess. He noted that there is a limited number of school employees to watch over lunch recess; parents' help would be appreciated.
 - (iii) Bill requested volunteers to help table at the middle school fair, which will be held on Thursday, October 6, 2016 at 5:30 pm at I.S. 204 in Long Island City.
 - (iv) Bill is working on a plan to introduce sixth grade Spanish language class by mid-year, pending budget and scheduling constraints.

F. School Leadership Team (“SLT”) Report

The SLT's first meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2016 at 5:30 pm in the lower division campus.

G. Membership Committee

Co-Vice President of Membership Paula Marisi gave the Membership report. The following are highlights:

- 1. The Membership Committee's aim is to create a sense of inclusion and family within Q300. She encouraged parent and staff to participate in Q300's activities. Upcoming volunteer opportunities include Costume Party, scheduled for October 28, 2016 at 6:30 pm at the elementary school and Picture Day, which is scheduled for November 28, 2016. Parents can also volunteer at school, including during lunch and recess time.
- 2. Paula requested that volunteer help organize booths, get party supplies, and distribute pizza and other foods for the Costume Party. A sign-up link will be sent to the Q300 informal parent google group.

H. Fundraising Committee

Co-Vice President of Fundraising Kevin Gallagher gave the Fundraising report. The following are highlights:

1. The mandate of the Fundraising Committee is to raise funds to meet the PTA's budget. This year's fundraising goal is \$276,000. The PTA raises 30% of its funds through a variety of fundraising activities and the remaining 70% through the Direct Appeal.
2. The fundraising activities, which raises 30% of the PTA's funds, include the following:
 - a. Stepping into Summer Dance Party and Auction, which raised over \$30,000 last year;
 - b. Wine party at an art gallery owned by a Q00 parent;
 - c. Summer Read-a-Thon, which raised over \$9,450 this year;
 - d. Smaller events including pizza and movie nights;
 - e. Thanksgiving pie sale;
 - f. Joint fundraisers with parent-teacher associations at the other schools in the lower and upper division campuses. Last year, the PTA and P.S. 17's PTA organized a joint Zumba-thon to fund projects that benefited both schools.
 - g. Affinity programs, such as www.smile.Amazon.com; Oliver's Labels; and Box Tops. More info is available at the PTA's website; and
 - h. Spiritwear (e.g. gym clothing, hats, etc.).
3. The Direct Appeal, which raises the remaining 70% of the PTA's funds, is a method to solicit donations directly from the PTA's membership. These funds are used to provide staffing, programs, and equipment that are not funded by the Department of Education. These items include teaching assistants, enrichment programs, and items like laptops and lab equipment. For the last 2 years, the school-wide family participation rate has been 78%. David Wang, who served as the PTA's founding president, will chair this year's Direct Appeal.
 - a. The suggested donation to the Direct Appeal is based on whether or not a student's grade has a PTA-funded teaching assistant ("TA"). For those grades with a TA, the suggested donation is \$1,500. For those grades without a TA, the suggested donation is \$1,000. Though the PTA has suggested a donation amount, the PTA asks the Members to contribute an amount that works with their family budget. Any amount is appreciated. Donations have ranged from over \$3,000 to under \$100.
 - b. If a monthly contribution makes more sense for a Member's budget, the PTA can set up a monthly payment plan. A 10-month plan, which aligns with the school year, is available, but a Member can choose any number of months.
 - c. The PTA stresses that a Member can give or get funds to meet the suggested donation. The PTA is developing a toolkit that will help Member ask for funds from family members, friends, and colleagues.

I. Nomination Committee

Maria announced that the following positions are open on the Board: (a) Co-Treasurer; (b) Co-Vice President of Communications; (c) Vice President of Community Affairs; (d) Co-Vice President of the Lower Division; and (e) Co-Vice President of the Upper Division.

J. Participatory Budgeting

Maria noted that Lynn Kennedy is serving as a delegate for the participatory budget committee in City Council District 22. In previous years, Q300 parents helped advocate the funding of a playground at the upper division campus.

K. Resolutions

- a. **Nominations Committee.** The PTA is required to appoint a nominations committee to solicit potential candidates for open seats on the Board and to administer the elections. A motion was made to appoint Vikas Shah, Ryoko Mathes, and Harold Overweg to serve on the Nomination Committee. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
 - b. **Allocation of Funds to Costume Party.** The PTA is organizing a Costume Party on October 28, 2016. Funds will be used to pay for pizza, food, and entertainment. A motion was made to allocate an additional \$500 for the Costume Party. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
 - c. **Allocation for Musical Instruments.** Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, has requested that the PTA purchase certain musical instruments for its music program at Q300. A motion was made to allocate \$2,500 for instruments including recorders, keyboards and Orff instruments. The motion was seconded. A majority of Members present approved the motion.
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L. New Business

There was no new business.

M. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The October General Meeting will be held on Friday, October 28, 2016 at 6 pm in the **Lower Division campus.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

/S/

David William Wang, Secretary