

**School Leadership Team Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Virtual Platform - Zoom
Wednesday, November 18, 2020
6:00 pm – 7.45 pm**

Members in Attendance: Sonita Ramkishun (Principal), Ali Lisberger (SLT Timekeeper + UFT), Chidi Amasiani (Teacher), Kiera Sullivan (SLT Chairperson + Teacher), Jean Kim (Teacher), Maria Hantzopoulos (PTA Co-President), Sara Clough (Parent), Sue Sekar (SLT Secretary + Parent), Ian Koh (Parent), Fiona Yung (Parent)

Observers: Anna Milonakis (Assistant Principal), Rachel Weiss (Q300 Social Worker) – until 6.30pm.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6.05pm.

2. SLT Purpose, Goals and Clarifying Questions

The Committee reviewed the purpose and goals of the SLT, as a refresher to what was discussed in the prior month's meeting:

- One of the main goals of the SLT is to develop school's educational programs and make sure there are resources to support the programs. This includes developing and enabling the Comprehensive Educational Program (CEP).
- The SLT roles agreed last month – Chairperson - Kiera, Timekeeper - Ali and Secretary / note-taker – Sue.

Last week Maria had shared a couple of supporting documents about the SLT, including a document published by PTALink.org. These explained the SLT rules and guidelines, including the importance of disseminating data and what the SLT can and cannot do. Maria also noted that the by-laws, CEP and minutes are on both the school and PTA websites, and we should make sure parents are aware of this.

Sonita will continue to share resources with the SLT as they become available, and will continue to include a link to SLT minutes in her Principal's emails to the school community.

3. **Review and approval of October 26, 2020 SLT meeting minutes**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from October 2020. The motion was seconded. All were in favor; none abstained.

Sue will send the approved minutes to Jenny Lando and the PTA Communications team so they can be published on the school and PTA websites, respectively.

4. **Wellness Committee and Wellness Grants**

Kiera (as Chairperson) granted permission for Rachel Weiss, Q300 Social Worker, to address the SLT.

Rachel leads the Q300 Wellness Council, which also includes Anna Milonakis (Assistant Principal), ToniAnne Campuzano (Physical Education teacher), Christine Katartzis (Q300 Middle School Guidance Counselor) and two Q300 parents. They may consider adding a Middle School student in the future.

The Wellness Council works on health and wellness initiatives for our school community. Sonita will share a document with the SLT (that Rachel prepared) that summarizes the Wellness Council initiatives from the past year.

The focus last year was on increasing student's physical health and wellbeing, and doing community wellness events and parent workshops. We received a \$2,500 grant from the DOE which was used for equipment for ToniAnne's physical education program. A scorecard was completed to help define goals and it noted that the school made some improvements over the year.

This year we are applying for another \$1,000 DOE grant, however we do not know if we will be successful as the grants are needs-based.

This year, the Wellness Council has two primary areas of focus;

- a. Supporting outdoor activities in the pandemic environment
Examples may include:
 - *the Move to Improve program, which all our lower division teachers are trained in;*
 - *creation of sensory paths at the lower division campus, in the hallway outside the gym, 4th floor hallway and outside in the playground.*

b. A student-led health initiative

Examples may include:

- *Creation of posters by older students (3rd to 6th grades) to hang in the Lower Division, for the benefit of younger students (K to 2nd grades);*
- *Creation of videos by older students for the younger students to watch.*

Other initiatives and areas of focus for this year will include;

- Continued focus on social-emotional learning;
- Encouragement of social engagement during remote learning;
- Giving students and parents the tools they need to cope in these challenging circumstances;
- Increasing mindfulness activities for our students in both lower and upper divisions;
- providing tools for ToniAnne to be able to have some data on physical health;
- Organizing virtual family events like fitness events and dance parties;
- Training with Mindful Schools – Rachel is doing a 4 week course in January.
- Continue with parent workshops, mandated topics as well as special interest topics for our community.

All of the above initiatives may be integrated into the school curriculum or extra-curricular – likely a mix of the two.

Sara raised the observation that she would like to see health education integrated into the curriculum, based on DOE recommended programming by grade or division. For example, taking care of your body, physical health, gender identity topics etc.

Sonita and Rachel responded that the school provides HIV/Aids and other required learnings to our upper division students as appropriate, and they are currently working through the extensive health curriculum documents from the DOE. Although many of the programs are not mandated, they are keen to have age appropriate conversations with our students in both upper and lower divisions.

Upon conclusion of this Wellness Committee discussion, Rachel Weiss departed the meeting.

5. Discussion about Fully Remote Learning Announcement

Sonita received notification from the Chancellor today that all public schools are doing fully remote learning until further notice. She noted that Q300's lower division was already fully remote for this coming 2 week period and half of upper division was also fully remote for 2 weeks.

Lower division teachers will send updated schedules to families asap.

Upper division schedules are not changing, but students should continue to be aware of their schedule and make sure they log into online classes on time.

Maria note that some parents have been asking about the items that had been left in the school buildings – can parents come and collect those items (workbooks etc.)?

Sonita said that families will not be able to come back into the building during this time, so we may have to set up a process where we pack everything up and people can pick it up. However, given that we don't know how long this shutdown will last, we will wait and see for now. Note that all K-5th grades should have access to workbooks and resources online. If parents have issues accessing those online/digital resources, they can reach out to the school and they will do their best to make physical workbooks available to them.

Sara asked whether there are still students without devices, which will make virtual learning challenging?

Sonita affirmed that many families (in both upper and lower divisions) who had requested DOE devices were yet to receive them. Sonita said she was very grateful that the PTA had ordered a large batch of chromebooks (over 40) over the summer to try and fill this need, however with a backlog of orders, the devices are only arriving at the end of November (the custodians will alert Sonita about any packages that come in during the Thanksgiving break). Sonita has a list of families who need a device and as they arrive (from DOE or from the PTA purchases), she will prioritize the students who don't have a device at all, and then the families who need a second device to enable learning. Sonita has also ordered I-pads with hotspots for students who do not have access to Wifi.

Maria noted that we are asking the PTA membership to approve purchasing additional chromebooks as Sonita said an additional 50 will be needed, some of which can be funded by unused Teacher Assistant funds from the prior year. These 50 will be used for the upper division, and those devices currently in upper division (which are older) will be given to those families who need to take a device home.

4. **Budget Review**

The budget was discussed, with the following clarifying questions:

How is the budget determined and allocated?

Sonita explained that we are allocated a budget based on the number of students, multiplied by a certain amount per student – this is known as “Fair Student Funding”. This then gets allocated to different line items. We also got extra funding this year under “per Diem – TL COVID” which came from the city to fund extra needs this year due to COVID, like substitute teachers.

Will we use the budget for the second Assistant Principal?

The school would like to hire another AP as there is a need, however right now there is a hiring freeze. If Sonita needs to pull the funding from that line and re-allocate it, she can do so, if there is a higher priority need elsewhere. Note that having this line in the budget this year does not guarantee that it will also be available in future years.

Can the school adjust the budget as need arise?

Sonita can reallocate anything that is allocated from fair student funding – so generally she has control over the budget. However, there are checks and balances in place, in that she would discuss these matters with the SLT, so the Committee can ensure that the changes are for the benefit of the school and in alignment with the school’s educational goals.

What is the ‘setasides’ line in the budget?

If students leave your school before October 30th – that funding is taken away from the school. This “setaside” section of the budget is the amount we expect to have to return, so it is reserved and not allocated to any of particular expense lines, given that it will not be available funds for us to use when they reclaim it. Note that if there is an increase in student numbers post-October 30th, the school does not get additional funding.

5. **CEP Goals**

Sonita noted that the CEP goals we had discussed last month have been uploaded into the Iplan portal. She will make all SLT members “collaborators” so we can see the CEP in the portal.

Each group had a 15 minute breakout session to review our action plans from last month, and brainstorm about how we can measure those items in a fully remote learning environment. Each group was asked to come up with at least one recommendation, in their assigned groups;

Literacy (Diversity)	Jean and Maria H.
Math (Diversity)	Chidi, Sue and Sonita
Science (Diversity)	Kiera, Fiona, and Ian
Social-Emotional (Wellness)	Ali and Sara

After the breakout sessions, the Committee reconvened and outlined the below ideas for action plan measurement in the remote learning environment:

- Literacy (Jean)**

Select Action item identified in October meeting	How to monitor these in virtual learning environment
Relevant professional development for teachers	Explore virtual PD for teachers
Explore more chapter books for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades	Remote learning should enable more opportunities for students to read chapter books.
More focus on culturally diverse and responsive texts	Virtual in-house discussions for literacy teachers. Virtual book clubs, including culturally responsive texts.

- Math (Chidi)**

Select Action item identified in October meeting	How to monitor these in virtual learning environment
More use of different techniques to help support students in explaining their solutions and linking math with literacy	Use of exit tickets – students state which tools or resources they used to solve the problem. Teachers can check the documentation of how students answered problems in different ways.
Techniques may include manipulatives, watching videos, teacher modeling, partner feedback and whole-class share-outs	Use of videos – students watch relevant videos or make their own. Could use flipgrid platform. Students can demonstrate their thinking – explain to viewers how they solve the problem – verbally, using visual aids like a white board etc. Students can watch others videos and comment/learn.

<p>Parent workshops to enable them to better support their children in current math strategies</p>	<p>Parent workshops – conduct virtual workshops and track attendance, then look for evidence that the students are improving with better support from home. Can also track by having parents check in with math teachers. Also have reflection/feedback sheets on the usefulness of the workshops or other suggestions for topics.</p>
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- **Science (Kiera)**

Select Action item identified in October meeting	How to monitor these in virtual learning environment
<p>Encourage hands-on investigation through using household or common objects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use flipgrid platform, instead of using classroom time, for the presentations of the investigations. Children can view others and give feedback and comments and make sure they give feedback to different students. - Utilize breakout rooms so there are smaller groups, students have more opportunities to discuss and do inquiry-based learning, which is easier in smaller groups. Monitor how many breakout groups are being done in science class.

- **Social-Emotional (Ali)**

Select Action item identified in October meeting	How to monitor these in virtual learning environment
<p>Incentives for remote students to participate in gym class with cameras on</p>	<p>Offering incentives for kids to have their cameras on, shout-out in Sonita's weekly email for the class that has the highest camera participation rate. Or use flipgrid for students to show ToniAnne their participation, if having cameras on is not possible.</p>

Sonita will share the CEP goals, the action plans (and the ideas about to monitor these plans in the remote learning environment) with the staff at their professional development day on December 7th to get their input/feedback. She will come back to SLT with any suggestions or tweaks in the December SLT meeting and we can discuss that feedback and also any other action plan items and how we can monitor them in the remote learning environment and also be able to be flexible if we switch back to blended or fully in-person learning in the future.

6. Reports

All reports were submitted in advance of the meeting and taken as read. Full reports are attached as Appendices to these minutes. Any updates to those reports (discussed in the meeting today) are outlined below:

1. Principal Report – Appendix 1

Additional note: The school closure announcement and return to fully remote learning means that the in-person groups outlined in the Principals report will come back into play when blended learning can resume.

2. UFT Report – Appendix 2

Additional note: Ali's notes about dressing warmly for in-person learning will apply when we have students returning to classrooms.

Sonita noted a huge appreciation for our teachers and staff for going above and beyond in their efforts to maintain both virtual and in-person learning for our students, and the Committee wholeheartedly agreed.

3. PTA Report – Appendix 3

Additional notes:

- Maria and Sonita will connect offline about how to deliver teacher holiday gifts since the schools are now closed without a known re-opening date.
- There is a virtual Q300 Board Retreat this Saturday to connect everyone.

7. **Parking Lot – Questions and Comments**

- Maria said a parent had asked whether there was any impact on Q300 from the planned District 30 re-zoning. Sonita said she was not aware of any impact. Ali noted that a meeting was held last night and all Principals of impacted schools had been invited, so if Sonita had not heard about it, presumably this meant Q300 was not impacted.
- Sonita will work on the SLT by-laws and note areas where changes/updates may be required, which she will get the SLT's views on. She will then have them formally reviewed by the DOE lawyers and updated and finalized. We will aim to go through the proposed changes in the December meeting.
- Marie note that many middle school parents were anxious about the lack of information on high school admissions. Sonita recognized it is very hard for those families right now. Sonita will continue to share all information as soon as she receives it (and usually does so via Christine Katartzis) so that 8th grade families are receiving the information as soon as it comes in.

8. **Next Steps**

The next SLT meeting is on December 16th from 5.30-7.30pm.

9. **Adjournment**

The Committee members took turns sharing various shout-outs and appreciations including:

- Appreciation for the teachers and staff for their dedication, hard work and commitment to giving the students the best education they can in very challenging circumstances;
- Appreciation for the school administration for their ongoing support of the teachers, staff and students;
- Appreciation for this SLT Committee for being devoted to their goals, staying motivated and creating an open dialogue where questions and discussion are encouraged;
- Appreciation for the parent community for their continued support, engagement and willingness to help out in many aspects.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.43pm.

APPENDIX 1 - Principal's report-November's SLT

Staffing Update:

- Esteban will be taking parental leave starting at the end of November. Julio will be taking over as a long-term substitute for the class. Julio has been working closely with Esteban to live stream classes and plan for the Science content.

Covid Related Updates:

- Lower Division building has been closed for 14 days. The building is scheduled to reopen on November 30, 2020.
- Upper Division Group A students and one class have been asked to quarantine until Nov. 30th. This quarantine also affected 11 staff members. Therefore, we have requested substitutes to cover our classrooms on the days it is needed and teachers will continue to live stream their lessons.

Marking Periods:

- Our school has made a shift to 3 marking periods instead of 4 marking periods. Originally, we aligned our marking period dates to the opt-in dates. After having conversations with the teachers and after working with families to ensure students were connected to their classes, teachers determined it would be helpful to have more time to get to know each individual student. In addition, this extended time in the first marking period gives students to complete any missed assignments and teachers the opportunity to grade assignments.
- The first marking period will end on December 11.

Marking Period	# of Days	Dates	Teachers complete report cards by	Parents Receive report cards
1	57	Sept. 16 - Dec 11	12/18	12/23
2	56	Dec. 14 - Mar 19	3/26	3/31
3	61	Mar. 22 - Jun 11 Final grades Jun 14- Jun 18	3rd marking period 6/4 Final Grades 6/23	6/25

Grading Policy:

There has been a shift in the DOE grading policy for the 2020-2021 school year. In elementary school grades K-5, instead of receiving a grade of a 1 or 2, the grade will appear as an N on the report card. In middle school grade 6-8, instead of receiving a grade 64 or less, the grade NX will appear on the child's report card.

Grades K-5		
Rubric Level	Numeric Values	Description
4	93% and above	Exceeds Grade Standards
3	80%-92%	Meets Grade Standards
2 (N)	65%-79%	Below Grade Standards
1 (N)	64% and below	Well Below Grade Standards

The 30th Avenue School (Q300)



Lower Division: 28-37 29th Street, Astoria 11102: 4th Floor
 M: (718) 626-8502 F: (718) 626-8508

K-8 Citywide Gifted and Talented School

Upper Division: 31-51 21st Street, LIC 11106: 5th Floor
 M: (718) 726-0501 F: (718) 726-0949

Principal | Sonita Ramkishun
 Assistant Principal | Anna Milonakis

Grades 6-8		
Rubric Level	Description	Assessments graded on a percentage basis correlation
4	Exceeds Grade Standards	93% and above
3	Meets Grade Standards	80%-92%
2	Below Grade Standards	65%-79%
1 (NX)	Well Below Grade Standards	64% and below

MAP Growth Assessment:

- Every year each school is asked to administer a baseline data to all students to help plan for instruction and to help progress monitor the school's CEP goals. This year we had the opportunity to try MAP Growth which allowed students to take a reading assessment online. The teachers are currently reviewing the data and condensing the information. We hope to share results with families before their first report card.

Next Steps for NEW blended learners:

- Sunday, November 15, was the last day that families were allowed to opt-in their child for blended learning. All students who opted in have been placed in a group and parents have been notified. Currently, we can continue with an AB model at Q300. The tentative start date is November 30 for Group A and December 2 for Group B. Please see below for the updated numbers:

class	Group A	Group B	Remote
Kindergarten	14	13	22
1st Grade	12	13	35
201	8	6	17
202	6	7	17
3rd grade	11	11	36
4th Grade	13	12	34
5th grade	13	13	33
601	6	6	18
602	8	8	16
701	8	9	11
702	7	8	11
703	0	5	22
801	6	7	9
802	8	8	8

Diversity Proposal:

Q300's diversity proposal is in the stage of being vetted through legal. At this time, there are no additional updates on G&T admissions or testing. We are awaiting next steps.

APPENDIX 2 - NOVEMBER 2020 UFT Report for SLT

- 1. Ventilation Guidelines for Winter:** Experts recommend increasing the circulation of outdoor air into buildings to lower the concentration of COVID-19. The buildings get quite cold as we must keep the windows open for proper ventilation. In addition, our custodial staff has the air vents open to reduce recirculation of air. We would like to remind students and parents about the importance of dressing warmly for school.
- 2. Outdoor Play/Mask Breaks:** Students should be allowed to be outdoors whenever possible. Outdoor play should not be prohibited based on temperature alone. DOE policy states, unless it's snowing, there is ice on the ground, or the wind-chill factor is below 0° F, students should be allowed to go outside.
- 3. COVID Testing:** The DOE and the UFT encourages all its students and staff to get tested at regular intervals throughout the remainder of this crisis. This is a reminder that NYCDOE students and staff get prioritized rapid communication of test results at any of its 34 city-run testing locations.
- 4. School Based Options (SBO's):** A School Based Option is a modification of the UFT/DOE contract. An SBO gives schools the opportunity to collaboratively modify certain contractual articles and/or create positions that the contract does not automatically allow.

Q300 adopted some new SBO's. Teachers are now able to conduct their office hours remotely. While teachers will strive to keep their office hours time consistent, they may get changed from time to time but teachers will let you know when they are available in their newsletters and/or google classroom.

We have also agreed to adopt the current school model which means that teachers in grades K,1, and class 201 will have an in person teacher and a remote teacher per grade. Teachers in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and class 202 will be responsible for teaching both in person and remote students.

As stated in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) live streaming is an individual teacher's choice and therefore shall not be included in any SBO proposal.

- 5. UFT Coat Drive:**
Help take the chill out of winter for homeless children. Your monetary donation will go toward the purchase of new winter coats and accessories (scarves, mittens, gloves and hats) for New York City public school students living in a homeless shelter or other temporary housing. You can donate here [link removed].

Thank You: With the Thanksgiving holiday (almost) upon us, we want to take this opportunity to express how grateful we are to be part of such a special learning community. It is a true gift to work among such talented students and staff. We are thankful, parents, for your support and dedication to your children's academic, social-emotional and physical growth and development. Our partnership fosters your children's education and enhances all aspects of our school. Thank you for your continued support!

APPENDIX 3 - NOVEMBER 2020 PTA Report for SLT

1. **New Executive Board:** <https://q300pta.org/pta/about-us/> . We have elections tomorrow now for vacant positions.

We also welcome our new class Parents: <https://q300pta.org/pta/q300-class-parents-2019-2020/>

2. **PTA Enrichment/Funding Update.** Our Direct Appeal campaign for 2020-21 will be launching soon! This year will look a bit differently, and we are still working closely with the school on this! Thus far, we are funding chromebooks across the whole school, but particularly in the Upper Division. We are also finding supplies, teacher wishlists, financial hardship funds, stepping up and graduation events, as well as professional development for teachers. Due to space and other constraints by DOE, we cannot resume our TA program at this time.

For the Lower Division, at the request of the school, we are aiming to fund a Visual Arts program through Arts Connection very soon. The school is still working on programming for the January 2021 and beyond (as everything is in flux), but we hope to resume more robust programming in the Spring at both campuses to include more Music, Dance, Architecture, Film-making etc..

But as a quick update, we have purchased 43 Chromebooks this year, including loaner ones for families whose DOE devices have not come in yet. We will discuss soon, but we would like to purchase 50 more for the school.

3. **Book Fair.** Our online book fair with our partner Children's Bookstore is running now through Nov 20th. We will receive 30% of all sales during this time period. They have a great selection of children's books from board books to Young Adult and the owner assured me that shipping to New York City has been smooth and fast, despite the pandemic. [Q300 PTA Online Book Fair](#)
4. **Thanksgiving Pie Sales.** **Once again**, the PTA is partnering with La Guli Bakery of Astoria and Betty Bakery of Brooklyn to bring you delicious pies for Thanksgiving. This year we exceeded our expectations and sold over 130 pies! While sales are over, if you ordered a pie, you will receive information for a socially distanced and masked outdoor pick up on Tuesday, November 24th! Thank you for your support!!
5. **TDay Treats for teachers and staff .** Thank you to all that participated. While we could not hold our luncheon this year, we were hoping to send home delicious individually wrapped pies to our amazing teachers, administration, and staff in honor of their hard-work! Unfortunately, the RONA once again had another plan for us and we will figure out other ways to honor our teachers.

6. **Q300 PTA 2020 Virtual Costume Party Parade:** We couldn't gather in person this year for our annual Costume Party, but we couldn't miss the opportunity to see all of our Q300 friends in their fun and fabulous costumes. We are so grateful to Tomonori Nagano, Erica Soto, and Ellie Rabinovich for helping to organize and of course, grateful to all that were able to participate!
7. **Winter Holiday Collection for Teachers.** We will be launching this again.
8. **Retreat.** We have a retreat planned for this Saturday (via zoom).
9. **Brief Committee Reports and Plans.**

Communications:

- They have integrated new families into Mailchimp
- Newsletter Update: Our issue will come out after TDay

Membership

- Volunteer Survey Update: Committees forming (List of Committees on website)
- Other discussions and ideas emerging including a cooking class etc.
- Fun Run Idea

LD and UD Reps

- Class Parent Meeting
- Ideas that came up ranged from Trivia nights, grade level clubs, A giant mystery/clue night

Fundraising

- Direct appeal Update
- Group meeting to reimagine WinterFest and Auction, etc.)
- Shopping Sites mention: Amazon, Goodshop, etc.

Community Affairs

- We sent a list of other places having Coat Drives
- Queensgiving: Donating to TDay meals