

School Leadership Team Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 22, 2023
6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Members in Attendance:

- Sonita Ramkishun (Principal)
- Alejandra Roma (Teacher)
- Leanne Bolson (Teacher)
- Alisha arthur (Parent)
- Laura Parris (Teacher)
- Ali Lisberger (Teacher + UFT Rep)
- Yvette Choy (Parent + PTA President)
- Maria Hantzopoulos (Parent)
- Fiona Yung (Parent)
- Dragos Bozdog (Parent)
- Luka Makino-Siller (student)

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 6:07 pm for all on zoom.

2. Review and approval of last month's minutes

Motion to approve Feb minutes were made and seconded.

3. Students at the Center- Chapter 5

Based on what we have heard thus far about how teachers are incorporating these practices into the classroom, How might you suggest that this work is communicated to parents? How can we engage parents as partners in the work?

Parents

- Parent Engagement Night - a session to explain concepts
- Google sites or newsletter updates so teachers can explain in their classrooms
- Create a survey for teachers to ask how they are doing it (and create a fun easy newsletter)
- Some sort of exhibition to see ideas in motion
- Some brief summary, and show what has been implemented
- Focus on self-esteem and confidence in communicating to parents (and other terminology)

Teacher and Administration

- Make a session in the google sites
- Exhibitions in class to see projects in motion
- Students can write the newsletters on google sites (in advisory) (or co-create with younger kids)
- Brief sessions and meetings for parents to talk with parents

- Sharing the 16 Habits of Mind and socializing them to parents (maybe next year); maybe mention a few at orientation

4. Student Report

- Light the Night Fundraiser to support Leukemia (across homerooms)
- Green Team for classrooms in the upper division (purpose to clean homerooms)
- PTA Book swap with students to promote reading

5. Review 2023 [student perception](#) survey results (45mins)

- Classroom Climate & Classroom Engagement - Leanne, Maria, Luka
- Pedagogical Effectiveness: Alejandra & Alisha
- Rigorous Expectations- Yvette & Laura
- Shared and Inclusive Curriculum & Teacher-Student Relationships - Ali, Dragos, Fiona

6. Drafting Actionable next steps for student perception survey results (20 mins)

- This [document](#) records noticings and next steps
- Here is also a summary (recorded by Fiona as Maria had to leave for share out):
 - Leanne, Maria, and Luka: Classroom Climate & Classroom Engagement
 - Classroom Climate and Classroom Engagement - the two topics were very connected; almost every category dropped a few points, but the scores were still very high; one interesting thing about the data was that other students' behavior doesn't affect their own
 - Student Engagement - it went up in every category; there was a large number of students who were choosing "sometimes"; Luka thinks it is very subject-based or individual-based
 - Potential next steps - continuing w/ morning meetings and advisory and doing it with fidelity; having kids lead and having kids decide on how they build their own community; buddy system for 5th graders going into middle school as well as for new students coming into the school w/ someone who is in an older grader or someone really familiar w/ the school; using the school's guidebook to help students understand what the rules are so they can see what is fair or not
 - Yvette and Laura: Rigorous Expectations
 - Rigorous Expectations - scored very high; questions are very broad and the answers can be very individualized based on students' attitudes that day or how they feel about a class
 - Potential next steps - more intentional ways for teachers to slow down their lessons so students can elaborate on their thinking (to connect w/ Habits of Mind); thinking of ways

teachers can survey students or check-in w/ students to personalize the teaching for students;
Habits of Mind came up a lot as potential next steps

- Alejandra and Alisha: Pedagogical Effectiveness:
 - Pedagogical Effectiveness - many of the questions were contradictory to each other; how well do middle school students understand the applicability of what they are learning to real life / their future since that question had a lower score; questions that were not as favorable were the ones about students applying their learnings to their future whereas questions about teachers teaching concepts were favorable
 - Potential next steps - helping students connect their learning concepts to real life applications; student interest surveys can be used to support students in helping them feel like their teacher is personalizing their learning
- Ali, Fiona, Dragos: Shared and Inclusive Curriculum & Teacher-Student Relationships
 - Shared and Inclusive Curriculum - the distribution is all over the place for each question around inclusive curriculum - is that due to the different subjects, some of which may not normally talk about people directly (e.g. math, science)?
 - Teacher-Student Relationships - students feel respected by their teachers (81% favorable), but not necessarily connected (44% favorable); how did students interpret “feeling connected”?
 - Potential next steps - maybe we highlight mathematicians / scientists / historians / explorers / etc. from different races, ethnicities, genders, etc.; how can that be incorporated into the curriculum; layer on additional supports, such as individual student-teacher check-ins, and larger group check-ins on top of what we are already doing at the school to check on students’ social and emotional well-being; have more opportunities for students and teachers to have “fun” opportunities and events, similar to field day but without the high resources needed or intensity (e.g. game day, teachers vs. students)
- Idea to have a survey for LD students to evaluate their experience in similar areas; Sonita and Leanne will get together to talk about creating / using a survey for 2nd to 4th graders so the survey language resonates w/ students of that age

7. Reports

- See Appendix for Principal Report
- See Appendix for UFT Report
- See Appendix for PTA Report

8. Parking Lot: Remaining Questions & Concerns

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Assistant Principal | Anna Milonakis

Appendix 1: Principal Report

Ramadan

Ramadan begins on **March 22** and ends with the celebration of Eid al-Fitr on **April 21**. During this religious period, some Muslim students may choose to observe Ramadan by fasting from sunrise to sunset and will go without eating or drinking throughout the school day. Per [Chancellor's Regulation A-630](#), students who fast should be allowed to sit separately during meals, if they so desire. We want to support and respect our students who may be fasting during the school day. Please send me an email at principal@q300.org if your child would like this option during breakfast/lunch so we can plan accordingly.

Emergency Preparedness Workshop

Next week, our 1st-8th grade students will have a presentation from Ready New York, NYC Emergency Management's public education campaign. Through the program, students learn about the hazards they may face in New York City and prepare for all types of emergencies by writing an emergency plan, choosing a meeting place, gathering supplies for their home, and preparing a Go Bag in case they need to leave their home in a hurry. Further information <https://www.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/ready-new-york.page>

DOE School Survey

So far 33% of our families have completed the NYC DOE School Survey. Please note that the survey can be taken until **March 31st**.

You can access the survey in 2 ways

- Paper version - please check your child's backpack for your survey
- Digital version -
 - You will need your child's OSIS number to complete the online survey. For assistance please email Jenny (Jennylando@q300.org)
 - <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/school-quality/nyc-school-survey>

In school Committee Updates:

Our in school committees work with both teachers and parents to bring change and opportunities to our school. Please see below for some mid-year updates:

- **Diversity Committee Update:** The Diversity Committee promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion at Q300. One of our first initiatives this year was conducting community outreach to pre-kindergarten families to share that 40% of our Kindergarten seats were being prioritized for students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (based on family income), who live in temporary housing and/or live in public housing.

In addition, The diversity committee has worked and continues to work on monthly cultural themes where they research resources (books, articles, trips) that align with our monthly focus. These

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resources are then shared with our teachers for cultural enrichment. Most recently the N-Y Historical Society has been scheduled to present a lesson on Civil Rights to our 6th grade classes.

- **Green Team Update:** Q300's Green Team is currently working on finalizing details for our trips to Randall's Island to celebrate Earth Week during the first week of May. We are so excited for students to experience hands-on activities in nature and learn more about the importance of caring for our environment. Green Team is also working on putting together some fun and educational Earth Week activities for students to participate in in school throughout the week of April 24th-28th. One of these activities will be planting seeds and taking them home so students can continue to care for them and watch them grow. Permission slips for Earth Week at Randall's Island are coming soon.
- **Wellness Council Update**
 - We had a great Family Ice Skating Party last Saturday at World Ice Arena. Over 150 people attended. It was great to see students and families from all grades enjoying some ice skating and mingling! Thanks to everyone who took part in the event. Thanks also to ToniAnne for covering the fees. Families who went ice skating should keep an eye out for the payment form in their child's folder today or Monday. Payments can be returned to Ms. ToniAnne in the UD and Ms. Rachel in LD..
 - Our Student Councils are hosting our Student Wellness Leaders this year. They are operating as Student Council Committees. In the UD, students are working on organizing a student-staff sports event. In the LD, students prepared presentations that they shared with all classes on Jump Rope for Heart.
 - Jump Rope for Heart was completed in the LD in February. Students raised over \$5,000 for the American Heart Association. As an added benefit, our students have become jump roping stars—the play yards are filled with students jumping rope at recess!
 - **Upcoming:** We are working on planning an outdoor family activity for the Spring (lace up those sneakers and get ready to run!), a possible collaboration with the upcoming Zumbathon, building out a Wellness calendar to help guide our work, and more!

Student Council Spirit Day

Our Student Council has determined that March 29th will be our next spirit day. "Who Inspires You?" Students and staff are asked to come in dressed as a person who inspires them. Maybe it is a celebrity or a public figure or even one of the teachers... Please see the attached flier for details.

School Supplies

We are excited to share with you that Q300 will be providing individual school supplies for our students for the 2023-2024 school year. As well, we anticipate some support from the PTA for communal supplies so we continue to be grateful to our parents for donating to the PTA.

Science Fair

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Teachers will guide students through the scientific process; students would be completing the projects at home; on May 15th, students will bring in their boards and the science fair will be exhibited on that day; encourage group work and group projects, such as sibling coordinated projects. Other key points and ensuing discussion noted below by Fiona (as Maria left):

- Ali is leading the science fair; ideas on implementation are still being discussed by Sonita and Ali
- Volunteers for judges needed; discussion about doing 1st through 3rd place awards in grade bands; also giving each student who participates a participation award; also idea, since this is the first year of the science fair, that instead of doing 1st through 3rd place awards, doing awards in categories such as "Most Creative," "Best Design," "Best Chemistry Project," "Best Physics Project," "Best Use of Scientific Method," etc. so there is less pressure on getting a ranked place
- Yvette noted that she doesn't know anything about science fairs - only knows the concepts from movies - so very important to think about how to support students whose families have no idea what a science fair is or how to support their students in participating
- Once parents have submitted interest for their student, Ali or another teacher will work closely with the groups of students to help them develop their ideas (a few teachers participating to each guide/mentor a group of students)
- Looking at tapping Jenny Lando, who used to be a science teacher, to hold workshops for parents around how to support their kid(s) in developing a science fair project
- Are there parents we can tap who can be resources or point people in supporting parents as well?
- Idea to do a science fair started w/ doing in-class projects, but after discussing w/ teachers, it was apparent that teachers didn't have the bandwidth with all the other things going on to also incorporate a science fair project into their curriculum for this year. This format is designed for this year only based on timing.

SAVE the DATES:

The next few months are full of activities. I want to thank my staff and our families for their support in organizing so many wonderful and enriching events for our students and our community. You can follow our calendar here <https://ps300q.org/calendar.html>

Save the Dates (more details will follow)

May 5th: Zumbathon (PTA)

May 6th: Q300 Invitational Chess Tournament

May 8th-May 12th Earth Week Celebration on Randall's Island

May 15th: Q300's Science Fair (K-8)

June 2nd: 8th Grade Field Day

June 5th: K - 4th grade Field Day

June 6th: 5th - 7th grade Field Day

June 12th: Multicultural Talent Show (K-8)

June 14th: Kindergarten Stepping Up Ceremony

June 15th: 4th grade Moving Up ceremony

June 23rd: 8th grade Graduation

Appendix 2: UFT Report

1. PS85's Letter to the Mayor: Leah Lin, chapter leader of 85Q, generated a letter to the mayor on behalf of the family of Dolma Naadhun who was tragically killed on Newtown Road and 45th Street in Astoria, Queens. The community would like to push for a traffic light at the intersection of where the accident happened. I attached the letter that has been signed by the school. There is also a link below to add your name as a digital signature. Please sign and share if you see fit.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1FoLe9WAgS8TApXtoR-5hnr1C5jSBpBAyJhZ2cbDSgbM/edit>

2. Update on fighting for a fair contract: The quality of our contract affects the communities that we serve. We want a contract that provides members with the time they need to plan, prepare, and deliver quality instruction and services to our students, and protects the health and safety of the school community. There are a bunch of actions that schools across the city are doing. Earlier this month I joined PS17's action day where they handed out fliers to the community and walked to local businesses asking them to contact local representatives and pledge their support of a fair contract for all NYC DOE educators and UFT members.

3. UFT trip to Albany: Nearly 800 UFT members traveled by bus to Albany on March 13 to advocate for full funding for New York City public schools and expansion of successful union programs including the UFT Teacher Center, and to oppose charter school expansion in the city. The very next day New York's state legislature formally rejected Gov. Kathy Hochul's proposal to allow more charter schools to open in NYC.

Appendix 3: PTA Report

1. Q300 Onward & Upward T-Shirt Design Competition

a. Extended Deadline Monday March 27

2. **Enrichment Committee** has formed and are working with Principal Sonita to create Surveys for our families and Upper Division Students to take around the end of April or early May. Thanks Maria for leading this charge again.

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3. **D22 Participatory Budgeting Voting** is starting this Saturday March 25 - April 2. Anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in D22 can vote. And 11 and up. A shared library for PS17 & Q300 LD is on the ballot. Please vote for our schools to get a library!
4. Past Events -
 - a. **Uniform Swap** on 3/9 - Thank you to Christina Lee, Amy Wong and Erica Soto-Eng for organizing it on the half-day.
 - b. **Q300 & PS17 Movie Night** on 3/17 - Hidden Figures - Thanks to parents from PS17s PTA and Q300 PTA and also several 3rd Grade and 8th Grade students who help organize, sell concessions and raise money for both schools
5. UPCOMING EVENTS -
 - a. The Auction Committee is collecting donations for the big **Stepping Into Summer & Auction** event. In-Person! In Astoria. There will be an online and live auction. Open to all families, parents/guardians and kids. June 3rd 1-4pm.
 - b. **PTA General Membership Meeting** is next Thursday, March 30 @ 6:30pm on Zoom.
 - c. **8th Grade Gallery Show** Fundraiser for 8th Grade Graduation - this Saturday 7:30pm - 10pm at Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery in Tribeca.

Visit q300pta.org for more info.