

School Leadership Team Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 21st, 2022
6:00PM-8:00PM

Members in Attendance:

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 6:05 pm for all on zoom.

2. Establishing SLT Roles

The SLT chose the following people for the subsequent roles for this year:

- Timekeeper: Alisha Arthur
- Secretary: Maria Hantzopoulos (Alisha as back up)
- Chairperson: Fiona Yung and Leanne Bolson as co-Chair people

3. Discuss Availability to Choose a Permanent Meeting Day/Time

The SLT reviewed the availability chart that Sonita asked us to fill out. Unless the Open meetings Laws change, our meetings can no longer be fully remote (they can be hybrid or full in-person).

It seems that we could hold meetings on Wednesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm. We decided to select which Wednesdays at the end of the meeting. We also indicated that we may change dates in a few months as schedules may change.

4. Review and Amend [Bylaws](#)

We currently need a quorum number of people present in person to vote at meetings. At present, quorum constitutes 3 parents and 3 staff. Sonita suggested we amend our bylaws to reflect the reality that many will need to be remote in our hybrid meetings. We agreed with changing quorum to 1 parent and 1 staff member in person (though more can come in person). The rest can be virtual. We all voted in favor and the by-laws will be circulated for next meeting.

5. **Schoolwide Updates from Sonita**

Staffing Update:

- Please welcome Stephanie Lema (class 202) and Cynthia (class 201) to our team. They will be supporting second grade this school year as long term subs.
- In the Upper Division, Christine Katartzis will continue to support us remotely this school year as our Guidance Counselor. She will be supporting our 8th grade students with High school applications and our SEL team (with Khary Chang and Rachel Weiss) with Social Emotional Plans for the upcoming school year.
- There are three Maternity Leave this school year. Each class will be notified who the long term sub will be and how they will receive while they are covering us. Sonita also shared that the current teachers will develop the curriculum and have everything in place when the leave replacement comes.

Covid Policies

- Face Coverings are optional indoors and outdoors, but recommended
- Every visitor is required to show proof of vaccination and ID before entering the building.
- Vaccine Mandate is still in place for all DOE staff and personnel.
- No more COVID testing and DOE health screener
- Students and staff will get 4 tests sent home a month. We will send tests out on the first Monday of every month.
- Students should be reminded to wash hands and sanitize frequently, Especially before/after eating and recess
- Students will be transitioning from class to class this year
- Quarantine time frame for students and staff is 5 days and they can return on the 6th day symptom free wearing a KN95 mask until their 10 day.
- Students in Quarantine will receive asynchronous instruction and office hours with their teacher.

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There were a few questions and Sonita also shared that

- K 95 masks are available for students and staff
- Students who are close contacts will be notified on a class by class basis.
- People do not need a negative test to come back after the 5th day; however, students and staff should be symptom free or have improving symptom to return to school on the 6th day.

Assessments:

This year, the school will be using i-ready and Acadience.

- Grades K-8 will take the Math i-ready.
- Grades 3-8 will take the Reading i-ready.
- Grades K-2 will take the Acadience assessment.

Students will be assessed three times throughout the school year (Beginning, Middle, End). Teachers will use the data to inform instruction.

Google Sites:

This year the school will continue to use Google Sites as our communication tool with parents. On the google sites, families will see what their child is learning in their classes. This Friday, September 23, Sonita will be sharing our Google Sites with all families.

GAMA

The school is also using a new Grading, Attendance, and Messaging Application this year. Teachers have begun using the Attendance feature where they can easily take attendance online in a click of a button. Teachers are exploring the use of the Grading application and how we can seamlessly use this application to communicate assignments and grades to parents using their NYCSA.

Sonita will be sending more information to parents on how to use the tool when they have successfully launched that part of the application.

Curriculum Update

This year we will be using Eureka for Math (k-5), Teachers College Reading and Writing (K-5), Amplify Science (K-8), Passport to S.S. (K-8), and a new phonics program called Hegerity (K-2). 6-8 math and 6-8 ELA write their own curriculum using the standards.

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In addition, this year we have transitioned into the Next generation learning standards. Teachers will be using these standards to plan for their instruction. These standards will be used in the 2023 State Test.

Enrichment

Thank you to all the families who donated and to the PTA who helped fund enrichments for the 2022-2023 school year. Our Lower Division students will be getting Art and Music through Art Connection. In addition, 2nd grade will be getting architecture, 3-4 grade will be getting musical theater and Alvin Ailey dance. We will be adding Chess very soon for our K-2 students.

At the Upper Division we will be partnering with New York Chess Academy, Astoria Film Festival, and Cuny Cat Shakespeare Festival through a grant received from the DOE which was written by some parents. In addition our 5th graders are having a yearlong music residency with Arts Connection. Teachers are excited to start their own electives. I will be sharing in my upcoming principal's message more details. Lower Division starts this Friday. Upper Division starts next week Thursday, September 29th.

Afterschool programming

At the Lower Division, we currently have New York Chess Academy W-F. We will be moving to M-F by the first week of October. We are partners with Serious Fun and NY Edge (which has not started as yet). At the Upper Division, our CBO Global Kids is working with our Middle School students Monday-Friday.

6. Budget Review

We reviewed the overall school budget, and Sonita answered questions. The following clarifications were made:

- Fair Student Funding is tied to our enrollment numbers.
- Sonita will share a clean version soon, as this is not the complete and full budget. There are 99 new students and these need to be accounted for in our Fair Student Funding. Sonita does not expect any decreases in our budget because we recuperated our lost funding through enrollment, which is back to pre-COVID numbers.
- As of right now, we have not received covid relief funding.
- The school is allowed to add to the roster for more funding through October 7. Sonita said she will not be adding any more students from the waitlist at this point because our classes are full and all staffing has been accounted for with the current budget.

7. [Review CEP Goals & Action Plans](#)

Leanne reviewed each goal that we established in June, and gave us a quick refresher of what our CEP goals are for the year.

- Instructional Focus: If we collect and analyze data through multiple methods, teachers will be able to use that data to drive instruction and differentiate to meet students on their levels.
- By June 2023, Elementary/Middle School ELA for all students will increase 18%, from 82% to 100%, as measured by district-appointed assessments and students on-demand writing.
- By June 2023, students will be able to increase their algebraic thinking and knowledge of geometric concepts to solve real world problems and explain the mathematical reasoning behind their answers. Elementary/middle school math for all students will increase by 21%, from 79% to 100% as measured by MOSLs, teacher-created assessments, and Algebra 1 Regents.
- By June 2023, 100% of students will use critical thinking, research, experimentation and questioning skills to enhance their depth of knowledge, resulting in more accurate conclusions through collaboration and inquiry to be at grade-level. This will be measured through lab reports, project based assessments, rubrics, the 4th grade state Science test and 8th Grade living environment regents exam, as well as participation in a school-wide exhibition (i.e. science fair)
- By the end of 2022-23 school year, students will engage in a schoolwide SEL framework to build relationship skills and optimistic thinking tied to social-emotional and academic growth through morning meetings, mixed-grade advisories, classroom and family engagement activities, and one-on-one check-ins with social workers/counselors/teachers. This will be measured by the number of regularly scheduled morning meetings, mixed-grade advisories, enrichment activities, hands-on group projects and teacher-observed engagement levels, and one-on-one check-ins, as well as instances of bullying, with the goal of improving by 9% (to 100%) by the end of end of 2022-2023 school year.

Next month, we will revisit them and see if the next action steps are actionable and revise accordingly.

8. Review [Expectation Guide](#)

The Instructional Team at Q300 put together an Expectations Guide so that communication and protocols can be clear for families, staff, and students. Sonita wants parents to really read it with their kids so that we can all be on the same page on how to promote good citizenship, safety and the core

values of the school. Sonita wanted to give the SLT a chance to review to give feedback from both a parent and staff perspective, and determine what changes might need to be made. We did a go around for feedback and thoughts:

- Question about schoolwide hand signs; only four symbols for now, though more will be added.
- Question about the early pick up section - understands it is from time to time but what if it is all the time? Teachers should reach out - case by case basis
- Question about uniforms. White uniforms t-shirts are allowed in warm weather
- Question about grading charts: The percentages are derived for from Q300; the numbers themselves (ie -4) are derived from the DOE
- Question about the old handbooks. This replaces the blue book and other book
- Question about disciplinary protocols: At what point is Rachel or other SEL pulled into the conversation? Sonita asks Rachel, Christine, or Khary to support students after teachers have communicated to the families and other supports are needed to help the child.
- Recommendations:
 - Fiona suggest an org chart here
 - Info about PTA and other things (link simply to website to keep separate)
 - Sonita will add google site information
 - Sonita will add new Gamma information
 - Maria suggested adding a welcome letter that contextualizes that document, as well as translating the document into multiple languages and maybe have workshops or sessions with families
 - Dragos suggested adding updated versions to the web and a feedback form.
- Sonita wanted feedback about the parent acknowledgement piece as this is really between students, staff, and teachers. However, they would like parents to be aware and understand and also go over it with their child and sign.
 - Yvette: This should be presented as common language
 - Maria: How do we make it less intimidating for families that might not be able to read this or access this? More accessible? We discussed sharing it in chunks
 - Fiona: Some ideas from in chat - might it make sense for teachers to go through with kids as well (so kids sign off); clickable table of contents more clear.
 - Talking about in class more robustly.
 - Leanne: closing loop among kids, teachers, and families
 - Ali: a way to promote core values (i.e. cleaning up and responsibility)
- Sonita would like final feedback in the chart by October 3

9. Choose Dates for SLT Meetings: The following dates were confirmed.

- Oct. 12 th
- Nov. 16 th
- Dec. 14 th
- Jan. 11 th
- Feb. 8 th
- Mar. 15 th
- Apr. 26 th
- May 17 th
- June 7 th
- June 21 st

8. Reports (15 min)

- See Appendix for PTA Report
- See Appendix for UFT report
- Principal Report already given

9. Parking Lot: Remaining Questions & Comments

- Will we have a student rep?
- Kick off diversity committee

Appendix 1: PTA/Parent report: Q300 SLT September 2022

(Prepared jointly by Current Pres Yvette and Outgoing co-Pres Maria)

PTA Mission: The mission of the Q300 PTA is to enrich and improve the educational, emotional, and social lives of Q300's students by providing the following: (a) Supporting activities that foster the core values of Q300: 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 at all levels of the Association, and providing opportunities to participate in school governance and decision making; (d) Promoting a cooperative working relationship among the Q300 parents, families, staff, and administration; and (e) Providing a forum where parents and staff members discuss innovations and implementations of curricular and extracurricular activities that afford each student an opportunity to acquire the core values of Q300.

PTA News

1. **PTA Meeting.** The first PTA meeting will be held on September 29. It will be a hybrid meeting. All are welcome.
2. **New Executive Board.** We would like to welcome our new Board Members! Thank you all! They are: <https://q300pta.org/pta/about-us/>
3. **PTA Elections.** Open Positions next meeting including Co-President, Executive Vice President, Treasurers, Co-Secretary, Co-Fundraising, Upper Division Rep, and Lower Division Rep
4. **Class Parents.** Two people can serve per classroom. Ellie at the Upper Division at UDRep@Q300pta.org or Nick at the Lower Division at LDRep@q300pta.org are organizing. Stay tuned!
5. **Volunteer Survey** has gone out and the Membership Committee is forming PTA subcommittees!
6. **PTA Enrichment/Funding Update**

Since the spring, the Enrichment Committee has been working with the school administration to fund enrichment and other things for the school

- Teaching Assistants: 8 TAs in K-4 pending availability
- LD: K-4 Asphalt Green

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- LD: K-2: Arts Connection, 1 full year of art and 1 full year of music in three cycles (except grade 2 has Architecture instead of Art for one of the cycles)
 - LD: 3-4: SEMS choice model Musical Theater, Ukulele & Recorder Ensemble, Cartooning, Painting from Arts Connection, Alvin Ailey Dance, and 2 Teacher Created Enrichment in three cycles
 - UD: 5th Grade: 1 full year of music divided in three cycles (West African Drumming, Musical Theater, and Digital Music from Arts Connection)
 - UD 5-8 Grades: Teacher-led Electives, Chess (vendor TBD), Film (Astoria Film Festival), in two cycles
 - UD Math and Debate Team expenses.
 - Grade 5-8 Special Enriched Trip Fund
- We are also funding teacher wishlists, financial hardship funds, stepping up and graduation events (including for missed experiences for past years - Alley Pond), printers, as well as professional development for teachers as needed and according to our approved budget.

Q300 PTA Fundraising

1. **School-Wide Summer Read-a-Thon.** The Summer Read-a-thon is **still on** and has been *extended to Thursday, Sept 22nd*. Q300 is a community of learners and readers, reading throughout the summer months. The purpose of the Read-a-thon is to support our love of reading while simultaneously raising money for our school's enrichment programs. Our goal is for each Q300 student to raise \$50 (through sponsors far and wide) or to ask 10 people for donations! So far we have raised **over \$2600!** Let's keep it going, readers!
2. **Q300 Blooms.** If you love gardening - or looking for holiday gift ideas for someone who wants to add flowers to their garden - we are partnering with "Flower Power Fundraising" this fall! Now accepting orders for spring garden bulbs! Stay tuned for more details!
3. **PTA Shopping Kickbacks.** Earn money for the PTA just by shopping! Check out the list here of how you can earn money for the PTA throughout the year at [Q300 PTA Shopping Sites](#) (including Amazon Smile program, Land's End uniforms, Mabel's Labels, Book Culture, and more)
4. **Thanksgiving Pie Sales.** Since Q300's beginning, the PTA has organized a pie sale. Pies are picked up at school or sent home the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. We are doing it again and stay tuned! Betty Bakery and La Guli are our partners. Stay tuned!

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5. **Costume Party.** Pending permits and other details, the PTA is hoping to revive the Costume Party! Stay tuned.

Appreciations

1. **Back to School Meet up.** Thanks to all the parents, caregivers, and staff who came! Big shout out to Erica Soto-Eng, Amy Wong, David Wang, Yvette Choy, and Ellie Rabinovoch for organizing!
2. **PTA Welcome Breakfast.** Many thanks to all who came. Appreciations to Yvette Choy, Amy Wong, Ellie Rabonovich, Helena Liljebblad, Maria Hantzopoulos, 8th Grader Ben & 6th Grader Ziyad for volunteering.
3. **Readathon.** Thanks to Lisa Christopher for spearheading!
4. **Aigner Chocolates Sale.** Also thanks to Lisa for spearheading. We are still awaiting totals.
5. **Enrichment Committee.** Thank you to the Enrichment Committee for working alongside the Administration in the spring on the Enrichment and Budget Survey. Special thanks to the following folks who met with Sonita in June to solidify plans for this year: Maura McDemrott, Maria Hantzopoulos, Suni Caraballo, and Margarita Soto. Many thanks to Maria and Margarita for working with CAT and Sonita on the Shakespeare Festival Grant. We got it!
6. **Fun Run.** Big shout outs to Marco Newberry, Tomonori Nagano, Nick Skolnick, Susan Stewart, Yvette Choy, Lynn Kennedy, Christine Serdjinian, Barbara Monroe, Maria Hantzopoulos, and many others for helping to organize the fun run last June. Special thanks to Kazumi Naimoli & family for their work on the t-shirts! Thank you again to our local sponsors: Jackson Heights Orthodontics, Art House Astoria, and NYChessKids, and to Q300 families' support! We raised **about \$1600.00.**
8. **8th Grade Graduation Committee.** Big shout out to the group of parents who helped students plan fundraisers, events and activities for graduation and beyond. We are so grateful for the event you planned for the kids at the end of June. Thanks to Maria Hantzopoulos, Hayoung Kim, Suzannah Hill, Ryoko Mathes, Margarita Soto, AJ Jackowska, Rosana Gati, Sarah Clough, Jenny Lando, Kasha Caesar, Mitzie Duggan, Lyn Kirkland, and others for organizing the event. Big shout out to Rachana Shah, LD parent, who donated her time for the photo booth!
9. **Budget Work.** Thanks to Sue Sekar and Maria Hantzopoulos for updating this year's budget, which is approved at the next PTA meeting!

Appendix 2: September 2022 UFT Report for SLT

Prepared by Ali Lisberger

- 1. New Law will Lower Class Sizes:** Gov. Kathy Hochul on Sept. 8 signed into law landmark legislation that will lower class sizes in New York City by a third, closing a decades-long gap in class sizes between the city and the rest of the state. The legislation will be phased in over five school years, starting with the 2023-24 school year. The current school year will be a planning year.

During the current planning year, the city and the Department of Education, in collaboration with the UFT and the principals' union, will develop and sign off on a class-size reduction plan. The plan will detail how schools will achieve the targets and will include a waiver process for schools that claim it would be a hardship due to space, over-enrollment, license shortage areas or other issues. The city must have a plan to overcome hurdles for schools with exemptions.

The law requires that maximum class sizes be reduced from 25 to 20 for kindergarten; 32 to 20 for grades 1-3; 33 to 23 for grades 4-8; and 34 to 25 for high school. The maximum size for high school physical education courses and performing groups will be 40. Individual schools can exceed the caps for elective and specialty classes if the school receives a waiver or UFT members approve it in an SBO vote.

For more information, read our [class size FAQ](#).

- 2. School Budget Fight Continues:** The mayor cut school funding by \$469 million for this school year. Despite the valiant efforts of scores of UFT members, parents and advocacy groups in July and August, the mayor's school budget cuts remain in place. A lower court's ruling invalidating the DOE budget on procedural grounds was placed on hold by the Appellate Division until it hears the city's appeal. That court hearing was pushed back until Sept. 29. We will continue to support the lawsuit and prod this administration to overhaul the Fair Student Funding formula so our schools won't suffer further damaging cuts as a result of this formula in the future.

You can help by calling 311 and telling the representative that the mayor should reverse his budget cuts to NYC schools.