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Sarah Yan



**St. HOPE Leadership Academy Board of Trustees**

Board Meeting

***MINUTES***

December 17th, 2020 from 6:30-8:00 pm

Meeting Conducted Virtually

* **Welcome**

Call to Order

Gabrielle Apollon Present

Ankur Dalal Present

Maureen Higgins Present

Kristopher John Present

Salone Kapur Present

Jennifer Ng Excused

Bianca Peart Present

Elizabeth Phillips Excused

Caitlin Robisch Present

Sarah Yan Present

Also present at the meeting: Meghann Persenaire, Principal; and Max Hoover, Assistant Principal. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and closing of the SHLA building, the meeting took place via video conference. The meeting is being recorded and will be posted, along with a transcription, to the SHLA website.

* Public Comment

No requests for public comment were received.

* **Consent Agenda**

Minutes from the November 23, 2020 Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

* **Finance Committee**
  + Ms. Persenaire reported that there has been no further guidance from the state regarding potential impact of COVID-19 on the school budget.
  + Mr. Dalal presented on investment options for the SHLA scholarship account for the board to review and consider potential for volatility and growth across fund types. The board discussed risks vs reward, wanting to minimize reduction to the scholarship account while taking enough risk to grow the SHLA scholarship to withstand inflation and potentially offer more generous and/or numerous scholarships. The board requested further more information about historical data for the funds under review.
* **Accountability Committee**
  + Ms. Persenaire provided the board with an update on the charter renewal process. Ms. Persenaire reported that all school and board components were complete, and shared that the Board of Regents will likely review the decision in March or April of 2021.
  + Ms. Persenaire addressed the recent NYC DOE school closures due to COVID-19, and presented SHLA”s plan to return to the building. Ms. Persenaire shared that the school plans to return for learning centers 2 weeks after the DOE reopen (January 19th), and for in-person hybrid learning after 4 weeks (February 23rd). The board asked questions about students’ access to technology, family interest in in-person learning, and the variables that were considered by leadership in determining a timeline. The board discussed that further decisions by the NYC DOE to delay or pause in-person learning will not influence SHLA”s current reopening plan.
* Ms. Persenaire presented on the results from the Quarter 3 Learning Format survey that was sent to all families. As of now, 78/258 of respondents have chosen in-person learning. 180 families chose to remain fully remote for Quarter 3. 48 families have yet to complete the survey and the SHLA team is continuing to contact those families to attain their responses.
* Ms. Persenaire informed the board that charter schools are not included in the NYC DOE”s random COVID-19 testing for students and staff. SHLA has reached out to a DOE vendor to conduct weekly testing for SHLA students and staff. Ms. Persenaire reports that teachers are feeling more secure knowing that students and staff will be tested.
* The board unanimously voted to approve the re-opening timeline of January 19th for Learning Pods and February 23rd for Hybrid, as laid out by Ms. Persenaire.
* The board unanimously voted to approve the use of SHLA funds for COVID-19 testing for SHLA students and staff.
  + Ms. Persenaire presented plans for an SHLA website and branding refresh as the school heads into the next student recruitment season. Ms. Persenaire reported that the school is currently considering vendor options to conduct the refresh.
* **Dashboard**
  + Ms. Persenaire presented the November dashboard. Ms. Persenaire reported no suspensions and one withdrawal.
  + Ms. Persenaire reported that attendance remained high at 98% for November, and that student engagement has improved. Ms. Persenaire discussed a December incentive program to motivate students to spend more time on Khan Academy and Achieve 3000. The Board asked questions about the school’s approach to chronic absenteeism. Ms. Persenaire addressed these questions, and reported that students who were chronically absent last year were assigned to an advocate, who conducts outreach when needed to monitor and reengage students.
* **Assistant Principal Update**
  + Mr. Hoover presented on the leadership’s team recent decision to pause teacher affinity groups in order to respond to teachers’ needs and request for more preparation time during virtual learning. Mr. Hoover discussed the process that the team used to decide how to create more time for teachers, which included conversations with teachers and consideration of current SHLA priorities. The leadership team felt that professional groups focused on anti-racist pedagogy and project-based learning were too important and aligned to SHLA”s priorities and values, and needed to be retained.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm.

I, Maureen Higgins, do hereby certify that I am the duly qualified and acting as Secretary of St. HOPE Leadership Academy, a New York education corporation and that the above is a true and complete copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the said corporation held on December 17th, 2020 at which quorum was present throughout. (December 17th, 2020)