

## Board of Trustees

Gabrielle Apollon (Vice President)  
Ankur Dalal  
Katie Embree  
Maureen Higgins (President)  
Mirlande Joachim  
Kristopher John (Treasurer)  
Salone Kapur  
Lindsey Moschet (Secretary)  
Jennifer Ng  
Elizabeth Pernick



## St HOPE Leadership Academy Board of Trustees Board Meeting

### MINUTES

October 24, 2024 from 6:30-8:00 pm  
Meeting Conducted In-Person at 222 W. 134<sup>th</sup> Street

- **Welcome**

#### Call to Order

Gabrielle Apollon	Present
Ankur Dalal	Absent (Excused)
Katie Embree	Present
Maureen Higgins	Present
Mirlande Joachim	Present
Kristopher John	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Salone Kapur	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Lindsey Moschet	Absent (Excused)
Jennifer Ng	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Elizabeth Pernick	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)

Also present at the meeting: Meghann Persenaire, Principal; Emilene Rodriguez, ENL Director; Jimmy Vora, BDO; Christopher Daniels, CSBM; Adam Cole, BDO; Shubham Deshpande, BDO; and Lord Crawford, prospective Board Member.

- **Public Comment**

No requests for public comment were received.

- **Consent Agenda**

Minutes from the September 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

- **Nominating Committee**

- Ms. Apollon introduced prospective Board member Lord Crawford, an alumni of St HOPE, who is attending the meeting as part of the Board member selection process. Mr. Crawford described the strengths and unique perspectives he brings to the Board and asked questions of the Board about priorities and initiatives. Ms. Persenaire reported that Mr. Crawford had conducted the required school visit and principal interview the prior week. Ms. Crawford's membership will be voted on at the November meeting.

- **Finance Committee**

- *2023-24 Audit* – Ms. Persenaire introduced Jimmy Vora, Adam Cole, and Shubham Deshpande from BDO who presented the results of the 2023-24 financial audit to the Board. The auditors reviewed the financial statements and noted that it was a clean audit with no findings. Board members asked clarifying questions. **The Board voted unanimously to approve the 2023-24 financial audit, as presented.**

- *September Finance Report* - Ms. Persenaire presented the September Finance Report for discussion, reminding the Board that the finance report reflected the adjusted enrollment of 185, with expense reductions that ensured a continued balanced budget with a surplus. Ms. Persenaire noted that enrollment has not yet stabilized and if it falls below 185, additional cuts will be made. These include reducing the field trip and student incentives lines, as well as realizing additional savings on the 401k expense line. The Board discussed implications, particularly if the enrollment levels out lower than 185.
  - *Vendor Management* – Ms. Persenaire reported that, after three separate issues with financial management last fiscal year with CSBM, she met with CSBM leadership to discuss concerns. As these issues were continuing this fiscal year, she asked that CSBM replace the team member who was making the errors. CSBM agreed and a new team member has been assigned.
- **Accountability Committee**
    - *MAP Baseline Scores*– Ms. Persenaire presented the NWEA MAP baseline ELA and math scores. 6<sup>th</sup> grade scores are the lowest average RIT in the school’s history, meaning that the school’s incoming class is significantly behind their national peers. Ms. Persenaire noted that, while this is daunting, it is also an opportunity for tremendous growth. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade averages were encouraging, with the growth made since they entered St HOPE clearly evident.
    - *ENL Supports* – Ms. Persenaire introduced Ms. Rodriguez, the ENL Director, to discuss the supports she is providing to the English as a New Language scholars, particularly the large number of new scholars who are mostly migrant students with limited schooling. Ms. Persenaire reported that ENL scholars now comprise 22% of the school’s scholar population, the highest number in the school’s history. Ms. Rodriguez described the classroom push-in support as well as ways the school is making the curriculum accessible to all students.
    - *Potential Name Change* – Ms. Persenaire introduced the idea of a potential name change for the school, based on feedback from Underdog. The canvassers and others indicated that having St in the name was confusing to some prospective families, as they think St HOPE is a Catholic school. This may have been an advantage in the early years, but now that so many Catholic schools are closing, it is no longer a help. The Underdog team also indicated that it would be helpful to include “Middle School” in the name so families are clear on the grades the school serves. A name change is considered a material revision to the charter, with all paperwork due on November 1<sup>st</sup> if the Board wishes to make the decision in time to impact the next recruitment season. The other option would be to wait until charter renewal, which is next year with materials due on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The recommendation from leadership team is to wait to ensure that all constituencies can be involved in the process and all pros and cons can be fully considered. Ms. Persenaire added that Dr. Bond had discussed the name change process with the Charter Center and they indicated that name changes usually are approved by the authorizer and the state if there are clear reasons for the change. The Board discussed and elected to wait until renewal to provide adequate time to fully consider the change.
  - **Executive Session**
    - The Board voted at 7:20 to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

I, Katie Embree, do hereby certify that I am duly qualified acting 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 October 24th, 2024 at which quorum was present throughout. (October 25th, 2024).