

Board of Trustees

Gabrielle Apollon (Vice President)
Lord Crawford
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

July 24, 2025 from 6:30-8:00 pm
Meeting Conducted In-Person at 222 W. 134th Street

• Welcome

Call to Order

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

Also present at the meeting: Meghann Persenaire, Principal.

• Public Comment

No requests for public comment were received.

• Consent Agenda

Minutes from the June 26th Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

• Nominating Committee

- Ms. Persenaire thanked the Board members for submitting their completed Annual Report of Financial Disclosures forms for the Annual Report.

• Finance Committee

- *June Finance Report* - Ms. Persenaire presented the June Finance Report for discussion, noting that the projected surplus increased from around \$40,000 to around \$107,000. This was due in part to a pending per-pupil reconciliation with the NYCDOE that looks to be \$27,000 or so in the school's favor. Ms. Persenaire noted that most of the difference relates to SPED income, which is difficult to predict down to the dollar given that services, and therefore classifications, often change when annual IEP reviews occur, which are staggered throughout the year. In the end, it can go either way, and this year it happens to be in the school's favor. The final surplus number will not be available for another month or so as additional expenses may come in. Ms. Persenaire noted that she believes it will come in closer to \$90,000. Mr. Dalal asked if the

surplus would then be transferred to the scholarship account. Ms. Persenaire confirmed that this is the norm and the Board will make this decision once the number is final.

- *2024-25 Audit* – Ms. Persenaire stated that the 2024-25 audit was underway and going well, adding that she, as Principal, and Mr. John, as Treasurer, will complete a fraud questionnaire as part of the normal protocol.
- *Recruitment and Enrollment* – Ms. Persenaire reported that Underdog took an organization-wide holiday for the first two weeks of July so school staff, including Ms. Persenaire, conducted daily canvassing. Leadership Team has also been calling all current and prospective students to ensure no time was lost. There are currently 161 applications received, similar to this time last year, with Ms. Persenaire continuing to project 200 students. \$35,000 was redirected from the existing recruitment budget for Underdog to go hard for the next 6 weeks, including marketing and canvassing. Ms. Persenaire presented the results of the parent survey Underdog developed on why families chose St HOPE and why they stay. 62 families responded, with roughly 42% of families reporting they heard about St HOPE by word of mouth; subsequently the school put in place a referral program. Social media ranked second with online search third. Top two reasons why families selected St HOPE – strong academics and a small school with personalized support. Top three reasons families stay - strong academics; safe and supportive environment; and passionate, committed teachers. Ms. Persenaire shared the very strong parent testimonials which will be used for marketing.

- **Accountability Committee**

- *Distraction-Free School Policy* – Ms. Persenaire presented the proposed Distraction-Free School Policy which all schools in NY are now required to implement to ensure that students do not have internet-enabled devices during the school day. St HOPE has been implementing such a policy for 8 years, so it is nothing new for the school's students and parents who are very supportive of the policy. Phones and other internet-enabled devices are turned in at the start of the day and returned at the end of the day. Board members asked questions about the policy, including disciplinary protocol should a student violate the policy. Ms. Persenaire explained that schools may not suspend based solely on violating this policy, which has always been the school's policy. She stated that it is very rare for students to not turn in an internet-enabled device – perhaps a half-dozen cases each year – with escalating consequences clearly laid out in the policy. **The Board unanimously approved the St HOPE Distraction-Free School Policy as presented.**
- *Proposed 2025-26 District-Wide Safety Plan* – Ms. Persenaire presented the 2025-26 District-Wide Safety Plan for Board review, stating that little has changed from last year. NYSED required that language around the types of drills must be consistent with state guidelines and that teacher training must align with this language, with St HOPE's updated plan reflecting these required adjustments. As with prior years, the draft plan is reviewed by the Board before it is posted on the school's website for public comment. The final version will be approved at the August meeting.
- *Charter Renewal* – Ms. Persenaire reported that the kick-off call for all DOE schools going through renewal occurred on June 30th with Ms. Higgins joining Ms. Persenaire as Board Chair. Baseline metrics will remain consistent with prior years with the focus on academic success, financial viability and being a well-run school. The authorizer promised to provide renewal documents in short order but still have not received anything and the due date is September 3rd. The school is proceeding with gathering data and crafting the narrative, but is difficult to do without the templates and knowing whether or not things are changing. During the August meeting, the Board will need to vote on the goals for the upcoming charter term. Ms. Higgins noted that they did discuss Board members joining meetings remotely and stressed that they can only be counted as part of quorum if their address is provided in advance and is made public.
- *June Dashboard* – Ms. Persenaire presented the June dashboard data, including that suspensions are down four from last year and that enrollment is down slightly. Members requested more information in a future meeting on how the school might improve attendance and continue to reduce suspensions next school year.

- **Principal Update**

- Ms. Persenaire reported that Summer Boost is going very well with very high student attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

I, Lindsey Moschet, do hereby certify that I am duly qualified 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 July 24, 2025 at which quorum was present throughout. (July 25, 2025).