

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

October 23, 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 (Virtual – Address Provided)
Ankur Dalal	Present
Katie Embree	Present
Maureen Higgins	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Mirlande Joachim	Absent (Excused)
Kristopher John	Present
Salone Kapur	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Lindsey Moschet	Absent (Excused)
Jennifer Ng	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Elizabeth Pernick	Absent (Excused)

Also present at the meeting: Meghann Persenaire, Principal; Christopher Daniels, CSBM; Daniel Smolan, PKF O'Connor Davies; and Constance Bond, Board Consultant.

- **Public Comment**

No requests for public comment were received.

- **Consent Agenda**

Minutes from the September 25th Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

- **Finance Committee**

- *2024-25 Audit* - Ms. Persenaire introduced Daniel Smolan from PKF O'Connor Davies who presented the results of the 2024-25 financial audit to the Board. The auditor 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 2024-25 financial audit, as presented.**
- *September Finance Report* - Ms. Persenaire presented the September Finance Report for discussion, reminding the Board that the approved budget was based on an enrollment of 200 with this budget representing an enrollment of 180. As noted at the September meeting, enrollment has come in far below anticipated with the current number at 145. Mr. Daniels presented the budget v. actuals, noting that leadership was able to cut expenses to reduce the \$1.2 million loss in revenue to a projected cash deficit of approximately \$380,000, \$280,000 after depreciation. Mr. Dalal asked questions around the projected deficit, including long term ramifications and whether further cuts could be made. Ms. Persenaire explained that staffing is currently at the absolute minimum to run an effective school. The Board asked Mr. Daniels about the consequences of operating in the red this year. Mr. Daniels explained that there is no short-term financial

issue given the significant cash on hand and the \$3 million in the investment account. It becomes a significant issue if the underlying cause of decreased enrollment is not addressed and the school operates with a deficit for multiple years. It also likely means that the audit next year will note the financial constraints. Dr. Bond added that it is statute that charter schools in NY State must operate with a balanced budget, so it will be noted by the authorizer and the state. The Board discussed this context, along with consequences to the school and the students if further cuts are made. The Board determined that, given all of these factors, expenses should not be cut further and the school would run a likely deficit this fiscal year. The Board will discuss the possibility of not awarding scholarships this year at the November meeting. The Board also determined that a retreat is needed to strategize ways to strengthen enrollment. The Board will conduct this retreat on Saturday, January 24th, time and location TBD.

- *Recruitment and Enrollment* – Ms. Persenaire reported that recruitment for 2026-27 is already underway and that she is spearheading the efforts, including communicating directly with applicants.
- *Title Funding* – Dr. Bond discussed Title III funding with the Board.

- **Accountability Committee**

- *September Dashboard* – Ms. Persenaire presented the September dashboard for discussion, noting that there have been no suspensions to date this school year and that September attendance is usually a bit lower than other months given that a few families elect to delay the return of their students from visiting family abroad.
- *Charter Renewal* – Ms. Persenaire reported that the charter renewal site visit is scheduled for December 9th, but there are no further details yet on when the authorizer will meet with the Board or conduct the public hearing.
- *Annual Report Enrollment and Retention* – Ms. Persenaire reported that the school met or exceeded all enrollment and retention targets during the 2024-25 school year.
- *NWEA MAP Baseline* – Ms. Persenaire noted that the 2025-26 NWEA Baseline results will be reported at the November meeting.
- *Plan to Address Suspensions and Chronic Absenteeism* – Ms. Persenaire noted that the plan to address suspensions and chronic absenteeism will be discussed at the November meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 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 23, 2025 at which quorum was present throughout. (October 24, 2025).