

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

January 29, 2026 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 (Virtual – Address Provided)
Katie Embree	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Maureen Higgins	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Mirlande Joachim	Present
Kristopher John	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Salone Kapur	Absent (Excused)
Lindsey Moschet	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Jennifer Ng	Absent (Excused)
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 December 18th Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

• **Nominating Committee**

- Ms. Persenaire reported that Ms. Kapur announced that she plans to step down from the Board at the end of the fiscal year. The Board discussed possible next steps re: replacement.
- June Board Meeting – Ms. Persenaire reported that the date of the June Board Meeting needs to be changed as, when the meeting calendar was voted on last June, the dates of the Regents exams were not yet public. Given there is now a conflict with a Regents exam that will take place the afternoon/early evening of June 25th, Ms. Persenaire requested that the June Board Meeting move a week earlier to June 18. **The Board voted unanimously to change the June, 2026 Board Meeting to Thursday, June 18.**

• **Finance Committee**

- *Review of the 990* – Ms. Persenaire presented the 2024 draft 990 for Board review. Board members noted that the information in Part III, section 4a was incorrect and that notes on pages 34 and 35 needed to be reviewed. Given these errors, members asked Ms. Persenaire to return the draft to the auditors for a more thorough review and that, given deadlines, the Board would review and vote remotely once the updated 990

was available. They also requested a detailed account of changes made by the auditors when the draft was returned to the Board.

- *December Finance Report* - Ms. Persenaire presented the December Finance Report for discussion, noting that the projected deficit increased slightly due to changes in the calculation of an employee family leave. Ms. Persenaire added that our SPED enrollment numbers are up from the budget projection but not yet reflected in the Finance Report. Board members commented that the projected deficit could be eliminated with an enrollment increase of just ten more scholars.
- *HARLEM Scholarship* – Ms. Persenaire reported that, as of the date of the meeting, no scholarship applications had been received, mostly due to slow rolling the application due to the deficit. Ms. Persenaire added that the graduating class of 2022 was also impacted significantly by the pandemic and did not have the same strong ties as past classes.
- *Recruitment and Enrollment* – Ms. Persenaire reported that 2026 recruitment was progressing with 46 applications received to date, fifteen coming from Underdog digital leads that she has been able to convert to applications. This is slightly ahead of last year.

- **Accountability Committee**

- *Board Retreat* – The Board reviewed the notes from the Board Retreat held on Saturday, January 24th. They agreed that the next steps included exploring setting up a new 501(c)3 “Friends Of” organization to potentially house fundraising; establishing a new Board subcommittee on exploring community-based partnerships that could help with recruitment, enrollment and marketing (including stakeholder mapping); and creating new marketing materials or activities focused on appealing to students instead of parents. Ms. Persenaire noted that Dr. Bond was following-up on the possible “Friends Of” organization and would have more information at the February meeting. The Board discussed creating the new subcommittee with Ms. Embree volunteering to chair the committee and work on a mission and vision statement. Ms. Persenaire noted that she is looking for students to help with social media.
- *December Dashboard* – Ms. Persenaire presented the December dashboard for discussion, noting that the A3K data was impacted by an issue with Google Lens wherein scholars figured out a way to “get around” the system and use AI to complete their assignments. This has now been rectified so the data moving forward should be accurate. Ms. Persenaire also noted that student retention has been stronger this year and that the suspension numbers continue to be dramatically lower than last year. The Board asked if staff recognized this achievement re: lowering suspensions and Ms. Persenaire responded that they do, but it is not top of mind for most as they are more focused on delivering the academic program.
- *Charter Renewal* – Ms. Persenaire reported that Regent Tanikawa will be visiting the school in early February. She also noted that the authorizer said that they would issue their renewal report and recommendation by the end of January.
- *Summer Boost Results* – Ms. Persenaire presented the results of the Summer Boost program which demonstrated that the scholars who participated benefitted greatly from the five weeks of focused ELA and math instruction. St HOPE beat the Lavinia average in ELA by a significant amount. Scholars also beat the math average but the gap was not as large. St HOPE will be applying for the grant again for summer, 2026.

- **Principal Update**

- Ms. Persenaire discussed that one of our 8th graders was selected as a finalist for the ABC Westport program that provides opportunities for gifted young men of color to attend a premier high school in Connecticut, all expenses paid. Final decision will be made in mid-February.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

I, Lindsey Moschet, 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 January 29, 2026 at which quorum was present throughout. (January 30, 2026).