

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

April 23, 2026 from 6:30-8:00 pm
Meeting Conducted In-Person at 222 W. 134th Street

- **Welcome**

Call to Order

Gabrielle Apollon	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
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 (Virtual – Address Provided)
Kristopher John	Present
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 and Constance Bond, Leadership and Board Consultant.

- **Public Comment**

No requests for public comment were received.

- **Consent Agenda**

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

- **Nominating Committee**

- *Community Partnership Subcommittee* – Dr. Embree confirmed that the subcommittee will meet over the next month and will present next steps at the May Board meeting.

- **Finance Committee**

- *March Finance Report* – Ms. Persenaire reviewed the March Finance Report, noting that the projected deficit had again decreased, dropping below \$100,000 after depreciation. This was due mostly to increased revenue driven by a rise in both enrollment and number of students with IEPs. The scholarship line was also adjusted to reflect that there will be one scholarship award this year.
- *Recruitment and Enrollment* – Ms. Persenaire reported that the lottery was held on Friday, April 3rd with 92 applications received as of that date. Every family was contacted personally by phone and text with 42 accepting their seat, either immediately on April 3rd or in the weeks following. This is an increase over last year's number of 38. Of the 42, 33 have been in regular contact with Ms. Persenaire and five have decided to leave their current school and enroll this year. A new family pizza party was held last Thursday with six

families attending, two of whom fully enrolled after touring the school. Ms. Persenaire and Dr. Bond noted that this high-touch recruitment and enrollment is a very heavy lift, but it is clearly critical to have someone who is passionate about the school and well-versed in all St HOPE has to offer be the primary prospective family contact. Budget increases are likely at this point to ensure digital ads and canvassing continue. Underdog shared that the current cost per lead in Harlem is \$120, three times the normal average, confirming how difficult it is to find students in Harlem right now. Board members added that they are seeing a lot more advertising this year on TV and streaming services, so clearly all schools are struggling. Ms. Persenaire added that she is focusing on a couple of charter schools in the Bronx that recently announced they are closing as St HOPE has already received applications from families looking for a new school next year.

- *501(c)3 Follow Up* – Dr. Bond discussed what she learned through discussions with CSBM and schools that currently have a Friends Of organization to assist with fundraising. The sample budget shows that the costs associated with the organization, assuming a revenue of \$100,000, run around \$35,000 if administration is provided in kind from the school. Schools that have these organizations have urged caution with this, as all of them have at least one full-time staff member focused on fundraising. This, of course, would require significantly more fundraising revenue simply to cover costs. Given that administrators are already taking on extra duties due to the enrollment struggles and that recruitment and enrollment need to take priority, there is no additional bandwidth to absorb this. The Board discussed putting a donate button on the website to do a couple of virtual fundraisers (Giving Tuesday, etc.) as a starting point, also suggesting that perhaps it could be targeted to a specific school program like college trips. Dr. Bond said she would investigate further and report at the May Board meeting.

- **Accountability Committee**

- *March Dashboard* – Ms. Persenaire presented the March dashboard for discussion, noting that there was slight growth in the 7th grade CCR number, with 6th grade going down slightly due to a sample size change and 8th grade staying steady at 50%. Enrollment continues to increase with another new student starting on Monday, bringing enrollment to 150. The suspension rate has been reduced significantly with Ms. Persenaire detailing that strong weekly community building circles, a girl's group to minimize drama and a Dean who implements restorative practices with integrity likely driving the reduction. Attendance continues to be a struggle given that 10% of students are chronically absent, at this point missing 40 or more days of school. About half of these have open ACS cases, but this no longer addresses the issue. The school knows each child's individual circumstances and staff are doing everything they can to support families. For some, families will not answer calls or texts for weeks at a time.
- *Charter Renewal* – Ms. Higgins detailed her call with the authorizing team to discuss the terms of the renewal and the Board's feedback about the process, noting that the team was not open to making any changes. The recommendation now goes to the Board of Regents for review at their May meeting. The Board discussed next steps, including how to navigate the new political landscape.

- **Principal Update**

- Ms. Persenaire discussed the implementation of the ELA state exams that occurred this past Tuesday and Wednesday. The scholars worked incredibly hard and all went smoothly.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 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 April 23, 2026 at which quorum was present throughout. (April 24, 2026).