

Board of Trustees

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



St HOPE Leadership Academy Board of Trustees Board Meeting

MINUTES

September 24, 2026 from 6:30-8:00 pm
Meeting Conducted In-Person at 222 W. 134th Street

- **Welcome**

Call to Order

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

Also present at the meeting: Meghann Persenaire, Principal, and Constance Bond, Senior Director, Finance and Compliance

- **Public Comment**

No requests for public comment were received.

- **Consent Agenda**

Minutes from the August 27th Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

- **Nominating Committee**

- *Community Partnership Subcommittee* – Dr. Bond updated the Board on the enrollment sprint facilitated by EdSolutions. The six-week sprint is now complete with the last weeks revolving around creating a blueprint for a long-term recruitment and enrollment strategy, including transitioning the work from Ms. Persenaire to other staff. Ms. Persenaire added that she had followed-up with community-based organizations that indicated they would support the work, including in-person meetings with the Police Athletic League and the African Services Center.

- **Finance Committee**

- *August Finance Report* – Dr. Bond reviewed the August Finance Report, noting that spending has been as projected.
- *Audit* – Dr. Bond reported that the audit is wrapping up and PKF O'Connor will attend the October meeting for the final presentation.

- *Vanguard Account Next Steps*– Ms. Persenaire reported that the account access issues with Vanguard have finally been fixed and she now has full access to the account. When the Board makes a final decision on where to move the funds, she will be able to facilitate the process. Mr. John reported that he had attempted to convene the Finance Committee to discuss where to move the investment funds but the group could not settle on a date. Mr. John asked that the date be set now, with Mr. Crawford agreeing. Finance Committee meeting was set for 9/29 at 5 pm EST.
- *Recruitment and Enrollment* – Ms. Persenaire updated the Board on recruitment as of the date of the meeting. She reviewed in depth the conversion rates for each type of application and compared data with last year. In FY 26, she converted 32% of applications to butts in seats compared to FY25 where 22% were converted. This broke out to 5 of 6 "in person" applicants (83%), 5 of 39 "Schoolmint" applicants (13%), 21 of 40 "St HOPE Website" applicants (53%) and 21 of 79 "Underdog" applicants (27%). Last year's numbers were 2 of 2 "Family Referrals" (100%), 19 of 34 "in person" applicants (56%), 0 of 3 "schola" applicants (0%), 2 of 53 "Schoolmint applicants (4%), 13 of 42 "St HOPE Website" applicants (31%), and 6 of 56 "Underdog" applicants (11%). Despite the higher conversion rate, enrollment this year is down, with 129 students enrolled as of the date of the meeting. The Board discussed the data in depth, asking questions around the significant difference in in person applicants and what Ms. Persenaire did differently to convert so many Underdog applicants. Ms. Persenaire then reviewed the enrollment data, reporting that ten students did not return (four moved out of state/borough or were deported, two moved to a school in walking distance, two are school-hoppers, one convinced parent to return to former school to be with friends). Ten did not attend despite being fully-enrolled and fully invested (three parent job changed so enrolled in school closer to home, three felt intense pressure (threats) from other charter schools, one was a child custody issue, one succumbed to child pressure to be with their friends, one had been home-schooled for years and parent panicked, and one was a parent communication issue.) An additional 15 were in constant communication and indicating that they would attend St HOPE but ultimately did not (five child custody issues and three moved states/deported, with the rest giving a variety of reasons why they chose a different school at the last minute.) Ms. Persenaire detailed the Hunger Games feel of the current recruitment landscape with some schools resorting to drastic tactics to boost their enrollment. Dr. Bond discussed the challenges with DOE schools telling their students that they cannot enroll at charter schools, which is erroneous. But they also feel the pressure of possible school closures.
- Dr. Bond discussed the impact on the budget, reporting that an enrollment of 125 results in a projected deficit of approximately \$608,000. This includes a slight increase in SpED revenue, as enrollment of students with IEPs remains high, along with savings associated with suspending the scholarship program and not filling a recently-vacated administrative position (HR/Compliance), with this work absorbed by her role. An additional \$100,000 in savings might be realized with cuts to other lines. The Board discussed the finances in depth, including other potential cuts. Ms. Persenaire reported that she was able to condense three 8th grade sections to two, which will save money as less coverages will be required. She added that additional staffing cuts would be very difficult as all remaining sections are ICT and require two teachers. The Board agreed that delivering a high-quality student program for those that are enrolled is their priority. Dr. Bond discussed next steps and indicated that she and Ms. Persenaire are currently looking at both the short-term and long-term and will come to the October meeting with recommendations.

- **Accountability Committee**

- *Principal Update* – Ms. Persenaire reported that the Family Fair was a great success with over 90 families attending, despite the very hot weather. Unfortunately, some of the new families who attended were the very ones who eventually selected a different school, which was a genuine surprise.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 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 September 24, 2026 at which quorum was present throughout. (September 25, 2026).