Board of Trustees
Gabrielle Apollon (Vice President)
Lord Crawford
Ankur Dalal
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Maureen Higgins (President)
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Kristopher John (Treasurer)
Salone Kapur
Lindsey Moschet (Secretary)
Jennifer Ng
Elizabeth Pernick

St HOPE Leadership Academy Board of Trustees

Board Meeting

MINUTES

March 28, 2025 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
Ankur Dalal	Absent (Excused)
Katie Embree	Present
Maureen Higgins	Present (Virtual Address Provided)
Mirlande Joachim	Present
Kristopher John	Present
Salone Kapur	Present (Virtual Address Provided)
Lindsey Moschet	Absent (Excused)
Jennifer Ng	Absent (Excused)
Elizabeth Pernick	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)

Also present at the meeting: Meghann Persenaire, Principal and Constance Bond, former Executive Director.

- **Public Comment**
  No requests for public comment were received.

- **Consent Agenda**
  Minutes from the February 27th Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

- **Finance Committee**
  - *HARLEM and Journey Scholarships* – Ms. Persenaire presented the recommendation of the Scholarship Interview Committee that convened on March 22nd to interview the HARLEM and Journey scholarship finalists. The members of the committee, including two Board members, conveyed that five of the HARLEM finalists are very strong and asked the Board to consider awarding five scholarships this year. The Board engaged in a lengthy discussion of the financial ramifications given current budget constraints, knowing that whatever the Board chooses to award would be accounted for as an expense even though the funds would come directly from the investment account that currently has a balance of more than $3 million. $45,000 was already allocated in the FY25 budget, but the additional $10,000 would be an extra expense. Ms. Persenaire discussed a few additional savings that might cover this, with the Board expressing both a strong desire to award the additional scholarship, noting that this is what the investment account is for, and concern that the cash surplus would still be tight. **The Board voted unanimously to award four $10,000 HARLEM Scholarships, one $5,000 Journey scholarship and an additional $5,000 2-year HARLEM scholarship, with this $50,000 to be pulled from the investment account.** The Board also asked Ms. Persenaire to convey to the 2-year winner that this recipient could apply for the Journey scholarship as a rising junior**.** The

Board continued the discussion of what this means long-term and wondered if a written policy could be developed that would separate scholarship funds from the operating budget for authorizer reporting purposes. Such a policy could be included with authorizer and state financial reports should the cash surplus be negative due to scholarship awards. The Board will continue this discussion next month.

- *February Finance Report* – Ms. Persenaire presented the February Finance Report, noting that the projected cash surplus was approximately $3,500 with revenue and expenses updated to reflect current projections. This included the $16,000 the Board approved in February for field trips and an additional expense of $4,000 to conduct a staff search. Most expenses continue to run at or under budget.
- *Investment Account and Underdog Proposal* – Ms. Persenaire presented a proposal from Underdog to substantially increase their recruitment efforts in light of current enrollment difficulties. She reported that two middle schools in the neighborhood were closing and this prompted her to ask Underdog what there "everything but the kitchen sink" budget might look like to better drive applications for the 2025/26 school year. The Board discussed the proposal which increased marketing and canvassing efforts for a total of $375,000, approximately $200,000 than the school currently spends. Members questioned the efficacy of simply increasing efforts already underway, particularly expensive strategies like canvassing, wondering if it would result in substantially more applications. Members also wanted more information on the proposed targeted marketing campaign, wondering if Underdog could share what channels have worked well for other schools and what media our audience consumes. Ms. Persenaire will meet with Underdog and will report back to the board.
- *Recruitment and Enrollment* – Ms. Persenaire reported current recruitment numbers for the 2025/26 school year. 6th grade is 79, 7th is 16 and 8th is 9 for a total of 104 applications. The current 6th grade class is 60. Of the applications, 16 are from PS92, 32 are from Underdog and 24 are from the website, which could also be from Underdog and 32 from the common application. The lottery will be conducted on April 4th.

- **Accountability Committee**
  - *State Test Projections* –.Ms. Persenaire presented performance projections for the upcoming state exams, noting that numbers were based on data to date and a student-by-student analysis. ELA – 6th grade 23%, 7th grade 37%, and 8th grade 50%. Math – 6th grade 24%, 7th grade 39% and 8th grade 34%. The ELA exam is coming up the second week of April and the math exam will be after spring break. Scholars have completed computer-based practice exams so are ready for the second year of computer-based implementation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

I, Katie Embree, do hereby certify that I am 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 March 28, 2025 at which quorum was present throughout. (March 29, 2025).