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

September 25, 2025 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	Absent (Excused)
Ankur Dalal	Absent (Excused)
Katie Embree	Absent (Excused)
Maureen Higgins	Present
Mirlande Joachim	Present
Kristopher John	Absent (Excused)
Salone Kapur	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Lindsey Moschet	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
Jennifer Ng	Present (Virtual – Address Provided)
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 August 28th Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

- **Finance Committee**
  - *August Finance Report* - Ms. Persenaire presented the August 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. This is reflected in the staffing numbers, as four positions were not filled given the projected lower enrollment. She noted that expenses have been running a little below projections and, if enrollment reached 180, the anticipated cash surplus would be around $92,000. Unfortunately, enrollment has come in far below anticipated with the current number at 145. If this is the final enrollment on BEDS day on 10/1, it amounts to a loss of $700,000 in revenue, or a $500,000 deficit after depreciation. The Board discussed possible cuts, debating the pros and cons, particularly around operating an effective school. A number of Board members noted that, with over $3 million in the investment account and another significant amount in cash, it might be wise to operate with a deficit this year, using a portion of these funds to cover the deficit. Given the potential ramifications, the Board asked that Ms. Persenaire hold on making any cuts until the October Board meeting when more members would be present. The Board would also like to hear from

CSBM on the possible consequences of operating in the red. Ms. Persenaire noted that Mr. Daniels from CSBM will already be in attendance for the audit, so she will ask him to stay.

- *Recruitment and Enrollment* – Ms. Persenaire discussed the likely reasons for the lower enrollment this year, including that the number of migrant families in NYC is in decline, that the Bronx is now saturated with charter schools, and that, according to Underdog, Harlem is now the most challenging neighborhood for student recruitment. Ms. Persenaire presented data that showed that other middle schools in Harlem are requesting a formal decrease in their enrollment, with some requesting a decrease in the hundreds. The only schools that requested an increase are the ones adding grades to try to stabilize. She reported that she took over enrollment a little over a month ago and is personally doing all of the outreach to convert families, converting 20 digital leads over the last two weeks alone. Unfortunately, it was not enough. Underdog will provide a recruitment analysis in the coming weeks, with Ms. Persenaire adding her internal analysis – all will be reported at the October meeting.
- *2024-25 Audit* - Ms. Persenaire shared the slide deck from the auditors that discussed their process, with the auditors coming in person in October to formally present findings.

- **Accountability Committee**
  - *Charter Renewal* – Ms. Persenaire reported that the charter renewal documents required by the authorizer were all submitted on time, including the second tranche due on 9/15. She noted that the Board's recommended changes to the Executive Summary were made and she thanked the Board again for their input.
  - *NYC Survey Results* **–** Ms. Persenaire presented the 2024-25 NYC Survey results which provide data from students, parents and staff and compares results to other NYC middle schools. The Board noted that the school exceeded the results of City middle schools in the vast majority of areas, often by double-digits. Ms. Persenaire noted that the increase in perceptions of safety by students and families was particularly noteworthy, with 98% of students saying St HOPE is a safe place. She also noted that the one area where the school fell short was on supporting students with IEPs. The main reason for this is that the DOE did not provide an in-person speech therapist for the large number of students requiring speech services and parents had the right to be upset. She reported that they finally have in-person speech this year, so the issue has been resolved. The Board congratulated Ms. Persenaire on the results, including the very high percentages of families who rated her performance as top-notch.
- **Principal Update**
  - *ENL Program* – Ms. Persenaire presented information about the school's ENL program, noting that the percentage of students in the program continues to be high, coming in at 20% of the student population. Half of these students are entering the school with little to no English and the ENL Director does a phenomenal job of meeting them where they are and scaffolding support. This includes both push-in and pull-out support.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39p.m.

I, Lindsey Moschet, do hereby certify that I am duly qualified 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 25, 2025 at which quorum was present throughout. (September 26, 2025).