



Storefront Academy Charter School
August 2023 Board Meeting
Thursday, August 24, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES

Trustees: Richard Bayles, Gretchen Pusch, Peter Low, Amanda Low, Justin Tolliver

Staff: Marcia Alexander, Taleema Chesney, Alison Davis Curry, Nidia Evangelista, Yoselyn Fernandez, Amia Fisher, Yesenia Graham, Milly Jimenez, Robert Keogh, Marie Lucas, Patricia Martinez, Nereida Morales, Sarah Panameno, Maryleidy Pimentel, Yubdeley Ricardo, Lorena Rodriguez, Mandeley Sanchez, Carol Singletary, Matthew Tiwary, Katherine Vasquez

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- [Meeting agenda](#)
- [Financial dashboard FY 2023](#)

MEETING MINUTES

1. **(00:00-00:10)** Call to order.
 - a. Richard Bayles called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. EST.
2. **(00:11-00:53)** Adoption of [June minutes](#).
 - a. Motion to approve the minutes.
 - b. June minutes were accepted and approved without changes.
3. **Financial Report (00:54-15:40)**
 - a. Robert Keogh, Financial Consultant, introduced the [financial dashboard](#), which includes year-over-year data in graph format. He explained the worksheet data.
 - i. The "Balance Sheet" graph accounts for assets (green), liabilities (red), and net equity for the schools as a whole entity (gray).
 1. Net equity is at or below zero for FYs 2019 and 2020.
 2. Assets significantly outweigh liabilities for FYs 2021-2023, creating a net equity approaching \$1.7 million (estimation) in FY 2023.
 - ii. The "Revenue vs. Expenses" graph generally anticipates growth.
 1. Net equity was positive for FYs 2019-2022 but is estimated to be slightly negative in FY 2023 due to a citywide enrollment shortage.
 - iii. Mr. Keogh noted that the school audit has yet to take place and is due to the State on November 1, 2023.
 - iv. "Current Ratio," "Days Cash," "Quick Ratio," and "Debt-to-Asset Ratio" graphs are relevant to the audit and compare SUNY benchmarks with Storefront's performance, inclusive of all liabilities and exclusive of security deposits.
 1. Mr. Keogh confirmed that Storefront is performing well and is in very good financial health.
 - v. "Enrollment" chart and summary show that actual enrollment of 302 students doesn't match budget of 420 students.
 1. Alison Davis Curry noted that there are two versions of this chart: one for total



enrollment and one divided by campus.

- vi. Richard Bayles clarified that positive equity might be invested (in opening a new school, for example).
4. **(15:41-16:14)** Hourly employees: Richard Bayles explained that issues concerning hired professionals will present at board meetings first.
 5. **Harlem Report (16:15-29:08)**
 - a. **(16:15-20:22)** Taleema Chesney, principal at the Harlem campus, presented.
 - i. Hiring:
 1. Ms. Chesney explained that the Harlem campus is hiring to fill a vacant first-grade teacher position, with an interview taking place on August 25th.
 2. They are also hiring for a specials position.
 3. Harlem staff is in discussion about other potential positions that would support special populations, specifically students with IEPs.
 - ii. Summer Institute:
 1. August 23rd marked the start of the Summer Institute. Ms. Chesney explained that it was a success in terms of networking (between new and legacy staff) and discussing goals for student success, including reviewing Storefront's Core Values.
 - b. **(20:23-26:05)** Amia Fisher, assistant principal at the Harlem campus, presented about enrollment.
 - i. Ms. Fisher expressed that the team has been working to up enrollment by increasing community awareness of Storefront's presence. She explained that they've had booths at a number of community events and have been walking around the community to talk to people and promote Storefront-branded merchandise. Additionally, the team meets with Schola biweekly.
 - ii. She said that current enrollment is at about 107 students, and the team has two big events lined up for the weekend. She noted that some returning families have enrolled and some current families have submitted positive testimonials about the community and staff.
 1. Taleema Chesney shared a few stories about returning families and Storefront's important role in the community. She took a moment to celebrate the team's efforts.
 2. She also confirmed that enrollment is at 108 students. They are awaiting a few applications and hope to reach a goal of 132 students soon.
 - iii. **(26:06-28:55)** Gretchen Pusch and Peter Low posed a few questions regarding enrollment.
 1. How many students were lost in the move from 129th Street to 115th Street?
 - a. Lorena Rodriguez answered that none were lost.
 - b. Amia Fisher explained that busing was the biggest issue in the move, and it's been sorted.
 2. How many of the matriculating students have come from Schola and how many did they promise?
 - a. Alison Davis Curry responded that it was nine matriculating students as of the prior week, and she confirmed that Schola was a good investment. Storefront is using more of their services (e.g., running ads on their



platform).

- b. Ms. Curry confirmed that they have obtained four of a guaranteed 20 applicants through Schola, with the contract running from Nov. 2022 to Nov. 2023. If Storefront does not reach the promised 20 applicants, it will be refunded \$2,000 per vacancy.

6. South Bronx Report (29:09-1:00:04)

- a. **(29:14-35:34)** Carol Singletary, principal at the South Bronx campus, presented.
 - i. Ms. Singletary echoed Taleema Chesney's statements about the Summer Institute.
 - ii. She explained that she has one or two vacant positions to fill in the South Bronx school. She also has to ensure that her specials positions are filled.
 - iii. While she did not share specific enrollment numbers, she expressed excitement about the prospect of having enough students and resources for those students to do their best.
 - iv. She reiterated the South Bronx campus's data-oriented structure, including protocols that analyze year-over-year data irrespective of grade level, which holds staff accountable and supports growth.
 - v. She introduced Marcia Alexander, a new hire at the South Bronx campus.
- b. **(35:35-41:34)** Yoselyn Fernandez, assistant principal at the South Bronx campus, presented.
 - i. Ms. Fernandez explained that she's used the summer for data-driven professional development (e.g., researching, resources, training) in an effort to better support teachers, especially early elementary teachers with phonics. Noted resources included Foundations and NWEA MAP.
 - ii. She shared that she was nominated to be on the New York State School Counseling Association (NYSSCA) board, where she spent a weekend in Albany and connected with other schools facing similar challenges.
 1. There she met the internship professor at Mercy College, who will help Storefront have a counseling intern this year.
 - iii. She also represented Storefront at the NYC Student Mental Health Gathering (NYSSCA) at the Jewish Heritage Museum, where she presented about Storefront's mental health initiatives and learned about other schools' initiatives.
 - iv. She also mentioned that she and the team have been working on the Storefront Handbook, which will soon be translated into Spanish.
- c. **(41:35-56:18)** Yesenia Graham, Director of Student Support, presented about the Summer Enrichment Program.
 - i. The program includes 115 minutes of ELA, 115 minutes of math, and 60 minutes of enrichment (i.e., chess and dance). The extended day also included art enrichment for 75 minutes daily. This totals 460 minutes of instructional time weekly.
 - ii. Each class has a teacher and an assistant teacher. Intervention is embedded into the daily schedule. The classrooms use Tier 1 instruction and small-group intervention.
 - iii. Storefront exceeded its attendance goal of 70%, reaching 71.66% attendance. However, lack of busing affected the total. Storefront staff successfully combated this issue by:
 1. Consistently reaching out to parents, encouraging students, and talking with staff.
 2. Requiring parents to sign a social contract at the start of the program.



3. Advertising trips to provide an incentive for completing the work.
- iv. Ms. Graham shared graphical data showing how Storefront summer school students are exceeding learning expectations. Nidia Evangelista confirmed that 76.56% of Harlem students and 43.48% of South Bronx students were mandated attendees.
1. Rising first-graders: 71% performed on or above proficiency in ELA (Storefront average 58.04; district average 58.04); 80% performed on or above proficiency in math (Storefront average 84.13; district average 74.11).
 2. Rising second-graders: 57% performed on or above proficiency in ELA (Storefront average 40.18; district average 29.18); 87% performed on or above proficiency in math (Storefront average 79.44; district average 71.67).
 3. Rising third-graders: 65% performed on or above proficiency in ELA (Storefront average 59.38; district average 38.31); 60% performed on or above proficiency in math (Storefront average 63.33; district average 54.69).
 4. Rising fourth-graders: 73% performed on or above proficiency in ELA (Storefront average 71.67; district average 57.67); 100% performed on or above proficiency in math (Storefront average 86.90; district average 72.33).
 5. Rising fifth-graders: 69% performed on or above proficiency in ELA (Storefront average 66.67; district average 62.61); 72% performed on or above proficiency in math (Storefront average 58.97; district average 50.96).
 - a. She explained that this success is likely due to a very well-defined and intentional approach. Teachers were also able to work with small groups, and students were able to interact with their peers and feel more comfortable in their learning. The trips also acted as an enriching motivator.
 - b. She expressed an intention to apply these strategies year-round, namely for the after-school homework helper program.
 - c. She noted that math scores are generally higher than ELA scores, so they plan to focus more on ELA in the future.
 6. Carol Singletary wanted to ensure that MAP isn't compared with these Lavinia numbers. Lavinia tests on a more specific, more basic level, while MAP is adaptive.
- d. **(56:19-1:00:04)** Alison Davis Curry confirmed that enrollment in the South Bronx was targeted at 275, and they are currently at 281 with four additional families who are in the process of applying. She then took a moment to congratulate the team's efforts in actively interacting with prospective parents and planning events like the carnival, which will be held in conjunction with Sunny Pre-K on August 31st. Carol Singletary echoed her sentiments.
7. **Advancement and Board Development (1:00:05-1:14:43)**
- a. **(1:00:10-1:14:37)** Nidia Evangelista presented.
 - i. She revealed that the South Bronx was granted \$200,000 via Resolution A funding to use toward technology related to STEM. The program is for FY 2024, but the funds will likely be released in late January/early February 2024. In the case of terminations or closures, the purchased property belongs to New York State. The agreement was signed.
 1. This funding opportunity, which is related to design and construction, is available every year.



- ii. Because Storefront met its attendance goal, a Summer Boost payment was released in June in the amount of \$168,000. The remaining \$72,000 is expected in late September.
- iii. She reported that they are currently working on a three-year grant aimed at promoting safer and stronger schools in NYS.
 - 1. The grant is broad, and Storefront's idea is to bring in Equity Designs, which is affiliated with city schools and well-versed in policies and disparities when it comes to physical and mental health.
 - 2. Sessions have begun, with Ms. Evangelista and Ms. Singletary in attendance. Students, parents, and staff have been surveyed to determine community needs. As of now, a specific program is yet to be designed.
 - 3. The grant allows for \$2,000 per pupil based on the best 2022 data, meaning that Storefront can apply for a maximum of \$570,000 in the South Bronx and \$156,000 in Harlem.
 - 4. There will be a separate application for each school based on each community's needs.
 - 5. Applications are due by 4 p.m. on September 15th, 2023.
- iv. Community outreach: Ms. Evangelista will visit the parish at Saint Anne's (an Episcopal church) to collaborate more closely with Father Matthew regarding a gardening program and the nutritional program for students in the South Bronx. Gretchen Pusch elaborated that the grounds also include a basketball court, a playground, and a large kitchen.
- v. Ms. Evangelista is working with Amanda Low to potentially make some changes at Storefront regarding nutrition. She already visited Harlem, and she will visit the South Bronx campus soon.
- vi. She also attended a forum by Ghetto Gastro, an organization made up of Michelin Star-rated chefs. Ms. Evangelista is in contact with their manager, and they will be doing programming for Storefront students.
- vii. Through the backpack drive at Orrick, 170 backpacks were donated to Storefront for students in kindergarten through grade two. An additional 40 backpacks were provided for older students. These backpacks will be distributed between the campuses.

8. HR and Compliance (1:14:45-1:20:22)

- a. **(1:14:45-1:20:22)** Marie Lucas presented about operations, HR, and compliance matters.
 - i. Operations: Ms. Lucas took a moment to praise the operations team (which is currently serving both campuses) Andre Kelly, Ms. Lorena, and the enrollment team for their dedication and teamwork.
 - ii. HR: Ms. Lucas took a moment to praise her HR colleagues as they work to ensure that HR is up to compliance standards, files are up to date and digitized, and positions are filled. She noted that there are a few positions yet to be filled.
 - 1. She mentioned that Storefront is partnering with Teach for America this year. Three Teach for America candidates have been hired at the South Bronx campus and start this week. They will be working at Storefront for at least two years.
 - iii. Compliance: Ms. Lucas stated that the team has been busy with the Harlem renewal. They're now working on the accountability progress reports, which are due on September 15th, 2023.

9. Open Comments (1:20:24-1:23:38)

- a. Richard Bayles added that Storefront is understaffed at the board level (it currently has seven



members out of its allotted 13+), so Mr. Bayles invited enthusiastic candidates from the community to apply. He asked that each board member find someone.

- i. Specifically, the board is in search of one or two lawyers, community members, a member of the building industry (e.g., an architect or engineer), and an educator. It's important for board members to live nearby.
- ii. Peter Low noted that there's a document that outlines key requirements for prospective board members.
 1. Action item: Peter Low will reach out to the person who owns that document.
- iii. Mr. Bayles stated that Alison Davis Curry has a packet of materials for prospective board members to familiarize themselves with Storefront

10. Motion to Adjourn (1:23:39-1:23:58)

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m. EST.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

1. Peter Low will reach out to Jonathan to obtain documents regarding prospective board member requirements.