



Storefront Academy Charter School
January 2024 Board Meeting
Thursday, January 25, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES

Trustees: Richard Bayles, Gretchen Pusch, Amanda Low, Peter Low, Justin Toliver **Staff:** Tim Brown, Rebeca Brunies, Taleema Chesney, Brian Class, Grace Dinunzi, Julissa Fernandez, Yoselyn Fernandez, Amia Fisher, Maurissa Hankey, Debbie Khelewan, Charisse Lewis, Lashawn Lewis, Marie Lucas, Nereida Morales, Stephanie Reeder, Yubdeley Ricardo, Lorena Rodriguez, Madeley Sanchez, Carol Singletary, Mercedes Soto, Desiree Soulet, Matthew Tiwary **Other Attendees:** Angela Applewhite, Nicole Brown, Michelle, Mishalene Thomas, Liza Veto

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- Meeting agenda
- NYSED Finding_Storefront Academy Charter School Response Update, 10.2.2023
- Dev Board Report Jan 2024

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to order (00:00-00:45)

- a. Richard Bayles called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. EST.
- b. Adoption of December minutes was postponed due to board members' absence.
- c. Robert Keogh will send an updated financial report with his commentary at a later date.

2. Harlem report (1:11-33:29)

- a. **(2:07-19:55)** Taleema Chesney and Amia Fisher, principal and assistant principal at the Harlem campus, presented about enrollment, attendance, Exact Path skills mastery, and hiring.
 - i. Enrollment currently sits at 94 students, which is below the 120-student goal. Enrollment initiatives are active.
 1. SpEd enrollment sits at 24 students, comprising 30% of the student body.
 - ii. Monthly attendance sits at 85%, just short of the 90% schoolwide goal. Creative attendance incentives are active. (E.g., daily: treasure chest; monthly: Perfect Attendance Award; 37-day: field trip; weekly: Fun Friday).
 1. Attendance is trending up overall.
 - iii. Exact Path skills mastered (12/16-1/18): 66 lang.; 116 reading; 249 math schoolwide.
 1. Schoolwide, students mastered 52 language skills between Nov. and Dec. and 66 skills between Dec. and Jan. due to increased usage of the program.
 2. Schoolwide, students mastered 204 math skills between Nov. and Dec. and 249 skills between Dec. and Jan. due to increased usage of the program.
 - a. Students' math skills are trending down overall. Incentives are active.
 3. Schoolwide, students mastered 144 reading skills between Nov. and Dec. and 116 skills between Dec. and Jan. due to incentivizing math skills mastery and students' lack of enthusiasm for the program.
 4. Ms. Chesney noted that next month's skills mastered will likely be lower because students (mainly fourth and fifth grades) are focusing on state testing.
 5. Harlem students are currently taking NWEA Map and ELA tests online. Fifth graders liked the online version; fourth graders need more support. Harlem



administration will continue to ensure students are supported in the transition to online state testing.

- iv. Ms. Chesney shared examples of Harlem’s tightknit community — teambuilding exercises, volunteering opportunities, celebrating student achievements, Exact Path leaders of the week, etc. Ms. Singletary also mentioned this about South Bronx.
 - 1. She emphasized school communication to parents, which is crucial to student success — weekly newsletter on Dojo, Family Engagement Day (included testimonials about why families choose Storefront).
 - v. Two positions (first and second grade) have been filled at Harlem through Teach for America. The fifth-grade position is still open, but important shifts are happening.
 - b. **(19:56-33:29)** Among other questions, an attendee asked about uniforms. Ms. Singletary answered that, while the Care Closet ensures all students have clean uniforms to wear, it’s Storefront’s goal to provide uniforms to students for free at the start of the year through donations and grants. Amanda Low asked to find out how much that would cost because she might know of a person who would be interested in making that donation to the school.
3. **South Bronx report (33:30-1:25:17)**
- a. **(33:30-44:56)** Carol Singletary and Yoselyn Fernandez, principal and assistant principal at the South Bronx campus, presented about enrollment, attendance, Storefront South Bronx’s test performance, Exact Path skills mastery, and Storefront culture.
 - i. Enrollment currently sits at 270 students, including 53 students with disabilities and 61 English language learners.
 - 1. There has been some expected attrition due to relocations and an IEP recommendation. More disenrollments are expected due to Covid and temporary housing (37 students).
 - 2. Enrollment opportunities: new housing partnership, enrollment team development, marketing, canvassing, etc.
 - ii. Monthly attendance sits at about 84.5% for the first half of the year, short of the 93% schoolwide goal. This is largely due to the cold weather and illnesses. Creative attendance incentives are active. (E.g., New Attendance Committee Dean Charisse Lewis, C.O.R.E. Attendance Initiative message to students/families, home-school partnership meetings, organization meeting: parents aligned with P.A.W.S.)
 - iii. Ms. Singletary noted that charter schools are in competition with each other, and Storefront performs higher (63% proficiency in math state test) than two other charters with similar populations (Brilla: 51%; Choice: 29%) and NYC DOE and NYS. Results are similar for the ELA state test (Storefront: 58%; Brilla: 45%; Choice: 30%).
 - 1. Action item: The board and staff will discuss potential initiatives to meet with parents in small-group settings to encourage attendance. This will include a mindset shift from “finger-wagging” to healthy competition with other charters.
 - iv. Exact Path skills mastery:
 - 1. **October:** 252 math; 90 reading; 8 ELA. **November:** 510 math; 479 reading; 173 ELA. **December:** 476 math; 229 reading; 88 ELA. **January:** 486 math; 195 reading; 133 ELA.
 - a. An initiative resulted in the uptick in reading skills mastered in November.
 - 2. Action plan focused on reading & ELA. Closely monitored classroom push in Jan.
 - v. School culture:
 - 1. Fifth-grade advisory is a safe space where students can share thoughts, ideas, feelings, and concerns — soft skills like communication and problem solving.
 - 2. Home-school partnership meetings took place in early January.



3. P.A.W.S. officially relaunched on January 19th.
 - b. **(44:57-49:32)** Charisse Lewis presented South Bronx's tiered attendance plan, which reaches out to students and families dynamically based on the tier.
4. **Academic Committee and Governance Committee reports (1:25:18-1:27:00)**
 - a. All points were previously covered.
5. **NYSED audit Corrective Action Plan (1:27:01-1:29:25)**
 - a. Marie Lucas explained that NYSED conducted a fiscal policies and procedures audit on Storefront last year. NYSED requires some corrective action within 90 days. Storefront has drafted a corrective action plan that must be approved by the board.
 - b. Motion: Richard Bayles moved to approve NYSED Audit 90-day corrective action plan. Motion was seconded and carried without dissent.
6. **Development Board report (1:29:26-1:30:48)**
 - a. Richard Bayles acknowledged donations to Storefront with thanks.
 - b. A number of grant applications have been submitted to the Bronx borough president, and the Development Board is in the process of researching more grant opportunities.
7. **Website compliance (1:30:49-01:34:02)**
 - a. Matthew Tiwary requested that the board approve the website compliance policy, which ensures that every platform Storefront works with will protect students' data (i.e., will not sell student data) and will notify Storefront in the event of a data breach. This is mandated by NYS.
 - b. Motion: Richard Bayles moved to approve the website compliance policy. Motion seconded and carried without dissent.
8. **SUNY leadership (1:34:03-1:41:27)**
 - a. A trustee meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 30th. Academic performance, teacher certification, school suspensions, finances, and enrollment will be discussed.
9. **Motion to adjourn (1:41:28-1:41:45)**
 - a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m. EST.