



Thursday, February 25, 2021 @6:04 p.m.
Board Meeting via Zoom

Meeting ID: 996 0629 0319
Password: jC@g2K

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of January Minutes
3. Board Committee Reports
4. Key Metrics
5. School Report
6. Executive Session
7. Adjournment

Trustees Present

Richard Bayles
Gretchen Pusch
Justin Tolliver
Noel Acey
Peter Low
Amanda Low
Tanya Hoffler-Moore
Susan Reid
Jonathan Stearns
Reby Gulcan

Storefront Academy Staff:

Dr. Nicole Garcia, CEO
Ms. Carol Singletary, South Bronx Principal
Ms. Amia Fisher, Dean of Harlem
Mr. Stuart Wolf, Director of Finance
Ms. Maria Ruiz, CEO Executive Assistant
Ms. Elizabeth Ruiz, Harlem Registrar
Ms. Natalia Perez, Director of Communications
Ms. Taleema Chesney, Harlem Principal
Ms. Nidia Evangelista, Director of Operations
Ms. Lorena Rodriguez, South Bronx Registrar
Ms. Yoselyn Fernandez, South Bronx Assistant Principal
Mr. Matthew Tiwary, Director of Technology

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bayles called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. Adoption of January Minutes

Mr. Bayles moved to adopt the minutes from the previous board meeting. All members agreed, and the minutes from the previous meeting were adopted without objection.

3. Board Committee Reports

Finance Committee:

- The lump sum payment deadline to the 501(c)(3) corporation had been extended through June.
- Expenses like plexiglass, masks, air purifiers, and additional COVID testing would likely reach \$75K, and it would be received by the end of the week in order to prepare for school.
- About 400 Chromebooks had been delivered, after switching companies due to failure to ship the product in a timely fashion. The initial company still held the deposit, although it was expected to be returned soon.
- A science coordinator was contracted from John Hopkins for \$70K in lieu of textbooks, in order to produce and keep an individualized curriculum. The position would likely not be continued the following academic year.
- An additional counselor was contracted due to the increase of special education population and students requiring counseling due to COVID.
- An additional tutoring program manager was contracted for \$70K.

Development Committee

- There were no meetings.

Academic Committee:

- The number of children who will return to school physically is being compiled, given that many parents are changing their minds as to whether they will send them. This number must be very well balanced to ensure there are not too many children present simultaneously, as well as balancing students' presence with deep-cleaning efforts.

- In the Harlem School, every building floor would house a different grade with enough room to safely enter, exit, and maintain proper distancing.

- Springboard would remain the after-school tutoring program.

- An approximate 325 students are expected to return to the South Bronx School in the Fall, and the Harlem School would receive approximately 100 students.

- After-school enrichment programs would need to be further supplemented.

- The City had been providing free COVID testing for schools, but they tried making charter schools pay for tests. After the charter schools sued the City and won the suit, the City would thereafter provide equal COVID testing for charter schools.

- The CDC and the Department of Education require the school to test 20 percent of the students.

4. Key Metrics

- The key metrics remained the same as from the last meeting.
- New metrics will be available at the next board meeting.

5. School Report

- There are not many open seats for the following year in the South Bronx School. A lottery will be held for students, but there also was a sibling preference so siblings attending the school together continue to do so, if possible.

- Children who do not get selected for attendance will be placed on a waiting list.

- It would help the community if the COVID mobile test units returned to the schools' areas.

- A recent parent meeting, with about 100 parents attending, allowed the Academy to inform them of the current and future plans for safe reopening.
- Some children had reported anxiety about being tested. If parents choose not to enroll their children in hybrid learning, they can relinquish their seats to other families that wish their children's physical attendance.
- Students will be held to an attendance standard in hybrid school; missing 5 days of school might require them to withdraw and allow another child to attend hybrid school.
- Schedules and plans were being worked out to minimize contact between children of different grades of both schools and to allow deep cleaning between groups.
- Staff and parents were kept informed at every step to ensure good communication and execution.
- Staff personnel will have handheld communication devices to ensure good communication and planning, avoiding unnecessary contact.
- The government would not issue a waiver for the State-mandated testing, even if testing has to be split for the students.
- The staff was anxious and nervous about returning to in-person classes, given that the vaccine did not provide enough certainty against infection or reinfection.
- The following day, there would be a staff-wide online session with medical experts to answer the staff's questions regarding COVID, school reopening, and any related subjects.

6. Executive Session

- The purpose of the session was to discuss the physical location of the Harlem School, in Building 70.
- There were various plans by the owners of the building, but there were no specific plans yet. This would affect the school, depending on what the specific plans would be.
- The previous church property next to the Harlem School had been purchased by Promise Academy.
- The previous rectory portion of the church property would likely be converted to an apartment building.
- A market study of the area would be contracted soon, after which a

conversation regarding whether to move the school could begin.

- The discussion should include the convenience of the current students to move to any new location, in order to minimize discomfort and improve satisfaction.
- The market analysis and moving decision should include a strategic review of the societal and demographic changes in the area.
- Dissolving the charter would not be a good option, given that it is hard to obtain charters from the State. In order to move the charter to a new location, a potentially substantial amendment to the charter might be required.
- The expected enrollment for the school was 100 students in 3 years from the establishment of the charter. The current enrollment was of 64 students. Another grade, kindergarten, would soon be added with 25 or more students, and with two more, the enrollment quota would be satisfied.
- A real estate study would be required after the market study.
- Adding a subcommittee for this issue would be a good idea in order to expedite and streamline the process, and then bring the issues and recommendations to the board.
- The market study group would be comprised of Mr. Low, Ms. Hoffler-Moore, and Mr. Tolliver; and Ms. Stearns and Ms. Gulcan as partial attendees and collaborators.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.