



Thursday, December 17, 2020 @6:00 p.m.
Board Meeting via Zoom

Meeting ID: 959 7792 8392
Password: 9Y*rnY

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of November Minutes
3. COVID-19 Update
4. Advisory Board Discussion
5. Board Committee Reports
6. School Report
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
Ms. Jennifer Johnson, Director of Student Support
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. Dignorlyn Poweriet, Director of Development
Ms. Nidia Evangelista, Director of Operations
Ms. Lorena Rodriguez, South Bronx Registrar
Ms. Yoselyn Fernandez, South Bronx Assistant Principal

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bayles called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Adoption of November 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. COVID-19 Update

- Dr. Garcia stated that the executive committee met before the instant meeting and discussed returning to virtual instruction on January 4th, continue through the Martin Luther King Day, then return to in-person or hybrid instruction in January 19th, 2021. This would give any students who traveled during the holidays enough time for a proper quarantine.

- The infection rate in the Bronx was relatively high. Three staff members who worked in the building in recent days tested positive for COVID.

- If students returned on January 19th, hybrid instruction could continue. Registrars would survey the families who elected hybrid in September. Some families have already stated that, if taking the COVID vaccine was a requirement to attend in-person school, they would elect virtual education only. For grade K, 19 families would not mind continuing virtual instruction through the year, 10 would not mind the hybrid model of two days in person and three days online, and 14 families were undecided because the staff could not ascertain and provide information regarding whether children were required to be vaccinated. If the 14 families chose hybrid instruction, another classroom and set of teachers would be required. Under any scenario, the grades would require at least one teacher for online instruction and one for in-person classes.

- Vaccination for children is not currently mandatory; however, mandatory vaccination without regard to religious objections have occurred in the past. The subject of vaccinations was not directly addressed; the inquiries were parent-driven.

- Parent education regarding vaccines must be State-driven.
- Other schools planned to stay with online education until spring

break.

- Mr. Bayles moved the board to allow Dr. Garcia, Ms. Singletary, and Ms. Chesney to approve any upcoming decisions regarding virtual vs in-person student attendance, given that the decision might be required before any scheduled board meeting. After discussion by board members, specifically clarification regarding the decision to be made, protocols to be used, State regulations to be considered, and data to be used for such decision, the motion was passed with no objections.

4. Advisory Board Discussion

- Mr. Stearns had previously provided to the board an advisory board by-laws document in order to create this entity in order to involve the community at large in the processes of the Storefront Academy. Not all members had examined the document at the time of the board meeting.

- Mr. Bayles requested that the board discuss the subject at the next meeting, since all board members had not had an opportunity to fully review the document. There were no objections, and the matter was tabled.

5. Board Committee Reports

Real Estate Committee:

- Mr. Tolliver stated that construction had already begun on the new building.

- Enrollment was down on both campuses, which brings the Academy to \$275K below budget per pupil, a total of 16 students between both campuses; however, Special Education was above budget by \$60K.

- Mr. Stearns stated that the temporary budget drop was covered by the previous surplus, therefore the Academy was in no financial difficulty.

- Mr. Tolliver stated that the issue with the previous month's audit update had been corrected, where a date and some wording in a document needed to be corrected.

Compensation Committee:

- Given the new membership of the committee and that her participation was temporary, Ms. Pusch requested to be allowed to withdraw from the committee. There being no objections, the withdrawal was accepted.

Academic Committee:

- Ms. Low stated that the staff conducted thorough outreach to ensure the students properly attended and remained in class.
- Holiday programs were in effect, such as gifting holiday food boxes for needy families, awards grants, family holiday adoptions, among others.

Development Committee:

- Ms. Acey reminded the board of the annual goal of \$250K, which needed to be revisited at a later time. The current amount collected since November was \$24,330.
- Additional committee members were required, to include a parent and a member of the school.
- A holiday thank-you video was in progress, geared toward donating partners, family, and friends for their support and to encourage them to donate further. Further, board members were encouraged to record a short message to be included in the video.
- The Academy had been included in the Amazon Smile program, where 5 percent of the sales by people subscribing to the Academy on such program would benefit the Academy. Everyone was encouraged to participate and share this information with other potential participants.
- Ms. Poweriet stated that the 7th District Foundation \$10K grant had been received, the Thanksgiving Food Drive received donations totaling over \$5K, and another foundation sponsored families for the holidays. The families prepared Amazon wish lists, and the Templeton Fiduciary Trust could purchase the gift directly, which could be sent to the family's home automatically. Approximately 70 gifts had been obtained through this program between the two campuses.
- Smaller donations had also been received.

6. School Report

- Dr. Garcia stated that the Sachs report needed to be added as an agenda line item, which includes attendance and other school data, in order to ensure the board properly considered the information therein.
- Meetings with parents were ongoing, where personal and educational difficulties and situations were discussed and mitigated, such as providing headsets to children in loud daycare locations or who lacked privacy.
- Attendance remained above 89.5 percent, although the goal is of 93 percent attendance, which did not take COVID into account. To ensure attendance is taken well, Ms. Rodriguez would take it in the various classrooms thrice daily. If children failed attendance, the parents would be contacted.
- Teachers are better prepared to answer questions and make on-the-spot adjustments if and when issues arise, to include responding to questions or challenges from parents on the spot.
- The technologies and processes implemented during this period will likely and should remain in use during regular school year, when in-person school resumes, given that parents understand the Exact Path and Zoom platforms better.
- Tests are now called "challenges," which has motivated the students to excel and outperform each other.
- The utilization of the Exact Path platform began approximately a month before, therefore, the only performance base was taken at the beginning of the school year with the MAP testing, and overall improvement should be assessed when the upcoming MAP test is taken and analyzed.
- Ms. Singletary stated that the MAP scores in the Bronx campus, compared between 2019 and 2020, increased 3 percent in reading, potentially due to the multiple reading requirements; decreased 7 percent in math, potentially due to changing the order and amount, testing environment, equipment unfamiliarity, and COVID stressors.
- Ms. Chesney stated that the MAP scores in the Harlem campus, compared between 2019 and 2020, increased 22 percent increase in math, and a 24 percent increase in ELA.
- Dr. Garcia stated that SpringBoard had been provided to the Academy at a reduced price initially, \$10K, given the timeline and the trial nature

of the platform. If a long-term agreement is reached with the company, then Dr. Garcia negotiated an additional payment of \$5K for the next quarter; and, if satisfied with the platform, an extra \$5K would be provided at the end of the year. On the contrary, if results were not as expected, no further payments would be provided.

- Ms. Poweriet stated that another factor leading for improvement was the teachers' ability to utilize the available platforms.

- Regarding Exact Path, Ms. Chesney stated this platform would identify how many skills had been tested and mastered per grade level, and each grade can be assessed individually. In the past week, every grade showed many skills mastered, therefore marked improvement in a short period of time. This would help assess individual children in order to manage their education.

- Ms. Pusch stated that the Academy should look for an entity that helps students live and eat healthy during the COVID period, given that some staff has noticed that some children have gained weight in a concerning manner. There were no disagreements.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.