



Thursday, October 22, 2020 @6:00 p.m.
Board Meeting via Zoom

Meeting ID: 923 2591 6606

Password: 5DX\$8?

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of August Minutes
3. Committee Reports
4. School Report
5. Adjournment

Trustees Present

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

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. Reby Gulcan, Board Member Candidate
- Ms. Taleema Chesney, Harlem Principal
- Ms. Dignorlyn Poweriet, Director of Development
- Ms. Nidia Evangelista, Director of Operations

1. Call to Order

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

2. Adoption of August Minutes

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

3. Board Committee Reports

Governance Committee

- Mr. Stearns notified the board members that Ms. Gulcan had been properly assessed, interviewed, qualified, and thereafter recommended as a board member for the StoreFront Academy.
 - Ms. Gulcan stated that she had been previously involved with the StoreFront - Harlem for 8 years, and that education had always been an important factor in her life.
 - Mr. Stearns called for any board member to publicly question or interview Ms. Gulcan.
 - Mr. Bayles requested that Dr. Garcia, who had previously interacted and communicated with Ms. Gulcan, express her comments and/or opinions regarding her candidacy.
 - Dr. Garcia stated that every reference regarding Ms. Gulcan had been positive; that she would be a great asset to the board; and that her background, abilities, forward-thinking, and cultural background will greatly assist the institution and the students move forward.
 - Mr. Bayles called to a vote to allow Ms. Gulcan as a board member. After unanimous consent, Ms. Reby Gulcan was accepted as a board member.
 - Ms. Stearns stated that the vetting process for other potential members was still ongoing.

Finance Committee:

- Mr. Bayles stated that, by applicable regulations, the institution was required to form an Audit Committee; an audit was due to SUNY on November 1st, 2020; which was an important step in the charter's reauthorization.
- Mr. Tolliver was established as the Chair of the Audit Committee.
- To date, the auditors had the same findings as they've had before; no new findings or issues had been reported.
- Mr. Tolliver reported that enrollment was down the previous month, likely because families moved out of State and out of the country. However, the projection would not affect the overall budget.
- The Institution received a special \$70,000 assessment, and Morgan Stanley provided their annual \$15,000 assessment.

Academic Committee:

- Ms. Low informed the board that attendance at both Harlem and South Bronx campuses was of 93-94%, book bags had been picked up and/or delivered, and Chromebooks were still pending due to country-wide demand; that the Google platform was well utilized, and students were more used to small groupwork and remote learning.
- Banners had been provided to all students to minimize impact of home/shelter background on the students.
- The nurse station had appropriate barriers, a part-time technology associate had been hired to assist with the remote learning processes, and two new English Language teachers were needed.
- The NY Department of Education was a very active recruiter of teachers; therefore it was hard to hire and keep personnel; incentives and appreciation would help retain teachers.
- Dr. Garcia stated that the leadership team had performed very well in providing the schoolbooks, supplies, and other consumables to the students, to include personal deliveries to those who had not retrieved their supplies.
- Teachers had instituted individual incentives for the students for participation, such as a school store, point system, and such incentives.
- Ms. Chesney stated that attendance in the Harlem campus had been incentivized by recognizing meritorious students, daily flow included social screen

time, and that every grade was different and had to be addressed with different methods. Further, that teachers who were worried about presenting a complete course material have surpassed any issues and have been able to present the material in an efficient way.

- Ms. Singletary stated that both students and teachers have grown into the technologies utilized, and now students are more willing to take risks and speak up and participate in class.

4. School Reports

- ___ Currently, six students had tested positive for COVID from three households in the South Bronx; the students were sick and symptomatic, unable to log on and proceed with instruction, and the parents notified the institution.

- ___ The State Department of Health requires a daily report for positive COVID tests among the students.

- ___ The initial early November target date for reassessment of virtual instruction must be extended due to COVID infection rates; SUNY must be notified of any such change.

- ___ Parents did not even feel comfortable picking up materials at the school, therefore the leadership implemented delivery methods.

- Turkeys and other grocery items donated for the holidays would be divided between and provided to the students of both campuses.

- ___ Teacher recruitment was paramount; two English Language and two Kindergarten teachers are needed at the time. Two teachers left the institution for Department of Education jobs, which provide better benefits such as union, retirement, and medical options.

- ___ Remote learning is more intensive than in-person education, which also includes after-hour instruction and tutoring and extra preparations.

- ___ Dr. Garcia proposed providing a \$100 grocery gift card to every teacher and staff member for the Thanksgiving holiday, along with a Christmas holiday bonus.

- ___ Mr. Bayles called for a motion to approve the short-term expenditure of \$25,000 towards a holiday morale booster package to all employees. Mr. Low moved to do so, and Ms. Pusch seconded the motion; the motion was thereafter granted without opposition.

- ___ The board will consider other long-term ideas to retain personnel

and improve the morale of all personnel.

● _____ Mr. Bayles called for a motion to approve the move of the start of the blended instruction method to January 4th due to COVID measures, therefore remaining solely virtual. Ms. Pusch moved to do so, and Mr. Low seconded the motion; the motion was thereafter granted without opposition.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.