



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 10, 2021

Minutes

Location: Via Zoom

Board Members Present: Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Joe Hargrave, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Beth Packel, Lorraine White

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, John Brown (Freire High School Staff), Olivia Burgess, Dawn Eubanks, Zholie Fashina-Lawrence (TECH Freire Student), Max Matthews, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Jackie Nunery, Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Anthony Royster, Scott Solomon, Ben Wainwright, Jamie Weiss, Asia Wilkerson (Freire High School Student), Chris Zagacki

Meeting start, 8:02 AM

I. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment.

II. Resolutions

- a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on December 16, 2020
 - i. The Board reviews the minutes from December 16, 2020 Board Meeting.
 - ii. Gerald Escovitz makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Joe Hargrave, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Beth Packel and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b. Approval of AP Educational Services Agreement and Trust
 - i. Max Matthews shares that the AP Educational Services Agreement and Trust has been agreed to by the family. The agreement is set at \$22,000 all in, including attorney and legal fees.
 - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Joe Hargrave, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Beth Packel and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. Authorization of JG Educational Services Agreement and Trust
 - i. Max Matthews explains that the JG Educational Services Agreement and Trust is still in negotiations with the family. Freire Schools' attorney has recommended the board approve a settlement in an amount not to exceed \$40,000.
 - ii. The board agrees to enter executive session to further discuss the logistics of the service agreement.
 - iii. Executive Session
 - Bruce Lesser makes a motion to enter Executive Session. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
 - Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Joe Hargrave, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Beth Packel and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - The Board enters Executive Session at 8:58 AM to discuss ongoing litigation.
 - The Board exits Executive Session at 9:07 AM.
 - iv. Bruce Levine makes a motion to approve the JG Educational Services Agreement and Trust with a final settlement not to exceed \$40,000. William Brinkman seconds.

- v. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Joe Hargrave, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Beth Packel and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

III. School Report

- a. Heads Report
 - i. Chris Moore shares that, starting this week, Freire High School has begun in-person instruction with a small group of students.
 - ii. Chris highlights the work that John Brown has been doing with the African American Studies course and notes the school has a number of initiatives in place to celebrate Black History Month.
 - iii. Chris Zagacki shares that he is currently planning for next year and anticipates needing to hire additional staff to support students on the “half grade.” Chris explains that a half grade is where a student has been promoted to the next grade level but needs additional supports to excel and keep up academically.
 - iv. Chris notes that the time between winter break and spring break is typically very long and hard for students and teachers. This year, with the addition of COVID, Chris sees the toll this time of year has taken on the school.
- b. January 2021 Data Packet
 - i. Leigh Botwinik reviews the January 2021 Data Packet with the board and explains each of the five key domain metrics in depth. The data packet measures school performance in the following areas: achievement, progress, attendance, college, and teacher recruitment/retention.
- c. Staff Update
 - i. John “JB” Brown, African American Studies teacher at Freire High School, introduces himself to the board and shares he has been with Freire for over 14 years. John notes that, through teaching the African American Studies course, he has seen remarkable growth in his students since September.
 - ii. In African American Studies, students expressed frustration with only learning about the oppression and trauma of the Black community. The students asked to learn about, highlight, and celebrate more Black achievement. After shifting the course to focused more on the joy of the Black experience the class has blossomed.
 - iii. Asia Wilkerson, a current senior at Freire High School, recently gave a presentation to the African American Studies class on Susie Taylor. John encourages all meeting attendees to research Taylor and her amazing contributions to our nation’s history.
- d. Student Update
 - i. Chris Moore introduces Asia Wilkerson to the board of directors. Asia, a current senior at Freire High School, transferred to Freire at the beginning of this academic year. Asia shares that the reason she came to Freire is because she was a school with a strong academic program which could challenge her and help her grow.
 - ii. Asia shares that the teachers at Freire High School are very attentive to the students and their needs. She notes that John Brown’s class, African American Studies, is her favorite. She notes that Freire is preparing her for college and teaching her the skills needed to excel outside of the classroom.
 - iii. Asia is planning to go to college to major in Juvenile Criminal Justice.
- e. Anti-Racism Update
 - i. Leigh Botwinik shares that Freire Schools network has been committed to training over 40 network leaders through Just Instruction.
 - ii. Leigh notes that the training has spurred additional work within each campus to reexamine practices that could allow for unintentional racial biases including within hiring, performance reviews, curriculum, etc.

IV. COVID Update

- a. COVID Operations and Relief Funding Summary
 - i. Jackie Nunery reviews the relief funding breakdown and how the funds have been spent by the schools. All schools in the network are beginning to transition to small group instruction specifically targeted to students with the most need.

- ii. As soon as more information about vaccines is available, the schools will update the staff and board. Jackie asks the board to share any possible connections to doctors and medical workers of color who could participate in a vaccine panel with parents across the network.
- b. COVID Testing Overview
 - i. Jackie Nunery shares that Freire Schools is still working to securing a COVID test vendor to be used when the schools reopen. In Philadelphia, if there is a positive test in a class, the entire class must be quarantined.

V. Advancement

- a. Advancement Report
 - i. Melanie Reiser shares Freire Schools has raised \$121,860 in donations and pledges toward the network-wide goal of \$525,000 in unrestricted fundraising (\$125,000 for each Philadelphia campus; \$150,000 for Wilmington), leaving \$403,140 remaining to raise by June 30, 2021. Freire Schools has received \$81,000 in EITC donations which support after school, summer programs, maker space learning.
 - ii. Melanie shares that Freire Schools will be holding a cultivation event on March 18, 2021 at 8 AM. This event will be a virtual coffee hour with students from each of the Philadelphia campuses.
- b. Political Landscape Report
 - i. Melanie Reiser shares that last week her team met with State Representative Martina White and State Representative Bullock to discuss charter school reform and how both can become stronger charter school allies.
- c. Talking Points
 - i. Melanie Reiser reviews the talking points and notes all campuses have been pushing the Cameras On initiative. The Cameras On initiative is focused on having all student faces visible during virtual learning. Before this initiative started, only 36% of students had cameras on during class and of those only 10% of students were visible in the Zoom camera frame.

VI. Financials

- a. December 2020 Financial Report
 - i. Ben Wainwright shares that Freire Charter School's cash on hand as of December 31, 2020 is \$2.6M. The school is projected to end the year with \$2.96M, representing approximately 63 days cash on hand. This exceeds both the School District of Philadelphia's days cash on hand benchmark of 45 days and the school's loan requirement of 30 days.
 - ii. Based on historical trends, Freire Charter School is projecting an average total enrollment of 1,000 students, which exceeds the budgeted enrollment of 980.
 - iii. Bill Ray notes the capitation rate from the district is expected to go down over the next few years. School leadership is discussing how to potentially offset the impact any cut to the capitation rate may have.

VII. Governance

- a. Johnny Mills reminds the board to complete and submit their 2020 Statements of Financial Interests.

VIII. Board Committee Reports

- a. Education Committee
 - i. No update at this time.
- b. Audit Committee
 - i. No update at this time.
- c. 403(b) Committee
 - i. No update at this time.
- d. Safety Committee
 - i. No update at this time.

Meeting Adjourned, 10:05 AM