



## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020 | 8 AM**  
**VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL**

**Board Members Present:** Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Lorraine White

**Others Present:** Leigh Botwinik, Kelly Davenport, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Ami Irvin, Sania Johnson (TECH Freire Student), Shonda McCants, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Scott Solomon, Blair Thoman (TECH Freire Teacher), Teryn Thomas, Ben Wainwright, Charles Ware, Lilian Wehbe, Chris Zagacki

Meeting Start, 8:02 AM

### I. Public Comment

- a. No public comment.

### II. Resolutions

- a. Review and Approve Minutes
  - i. The board reviews the minutes from the October 14, 2020 Board Meeting. Review and Approve Minutes from October 14, 2020 Board Meeting
  - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
  - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b. FY 2020 Audit Report & Auditor Communication
  - i. Bill Ray reviews the Audit Report noting that the audit opinion shows no issues or findings for Freire Charter School. The auditors have added standard language related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the possible impact the pandemic could have on future year audits and financial ratios.
  - ii. This audit report will be submitted to both the School District of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
  - iii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
  - iv. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. 2019-2020 Form 990
  - i. Bill Ray shares the board is required to approve the Form 990 annually. There are no significant changes to the Form 990's from previous years.
  - ii. The 2019-2020 Form 990 will be submitted to the IRS.

- iii. Lisa Hoffstein makes a motion to approve. Paul Archibald seconds.
  - iv. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- d. Approval of Title IX Policy
- i. Ami Irvin, Operations Coordinator at Freire Schools, reviews the Title IX Policy with the board. The policy relates to a federal law prohibiting sex-based discrimination in schools and applies to the entire Freire Charter Schools community. The proposed updates reflect recent changes to Title IX law at the federal level.
  - ii. Ami notes that each campus is required to have a Title IX coordinator. Jason Falconio, Co-Head of Academics at Freire High, and Andrea Zepp, Head of Academic Supports, will serve as their campus representatives.
  - iii. Kiara Allison raises concern that the policy, although meeting all operational requirements, is not accessible to families and students. Freire Schools' Operations Team will meet with Kiara Allison, and any other interested individuals, to work on a simplified version of this policy as well as ensure the policy is easily accessible online and in student handbooks.
  - iv. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
  - v. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- e. Data Sharing MOU with the School District
- i. Max Matthews shares that the data sharing memorandum of understanding is required under Freire Charter School's charter agreement with the school district. Max asks that the board vote to approve the included MOU to be resubmitted to the school district.
  - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
  - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- f. Update to Freire Charter School Admissions Policy
- i. Max Matthews shares the proposed change to the Freire Charter School admissions policy will match the current admissions policy at TECH Freire. The proposed change adds a preference for families who "actively participate in the development of the school" which gives preference to students whose parents have contributed significantly to the life of the school.
  - ii. Johnny Mills will lead a committee that will review all applications that request this admission preference and keep details notes pertaining to any decisions or awarded preferences.
  - iii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
  - iv. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- g. Due Process Claim Against Freire Charter School  
*(Introduced during the meeting, not present on original agenda.)*

- i. Max Matthews explains a due process claim that has been filed against Freire Charter School. Freire Schools is proposing that Freire Charter School enters a settlement agreement with the family in the amount not to exceed \$15,000.
- ii. Chris Moore shares that he agrees with the school stance and believes the settlement agreement is the right course of action.
- iii. Kelly Davenport asks the board to authorize Chris Moore to negotiate the final settlement agreement with the family in an amount not to exceed \$15,000.
- iv. Gerald Escovitz makes a motion to approve. Paul Archibald seconds.
- v. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Lorraine White vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

### III. School Reports

- a. 2020-2021 Network Priorities
  - i. Teryn Thomas reviews the Network Priorities Dashboard with the board and asks that all members review the key domain metrics listed. The purpose of this dashboard is to provide useful, actionable data to both the school leaders and the board.
  - ii. The five key domain metrics on the dashboard include: achievement, progress, attendance, college, and teacher recruitment/retention.
  - iii. Lilian Wehbe and Teryn Thomas take time to review each of the domains in-depth with the Freire Charter School Board.
- b. Heads Report
  - i. Freire High School
    1. Chris Moore shares that attendance has held steady at about 96%. Benchmark data is holding strong for the first two benchmarks of the year. A third benchmark test will take place in the new year.
    2. To date, Freire High School has completed roughly 30 home visits to drop off materials and check-in on students who need additional supports.
    3. Chris shares that all 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders will soon be taking mock ACTs. The largest group of students at Freire High School to complete this mock assessment at once.
    4. In the new year, students will be coming to the building for a supply pick up, student ID photos, and health screenings. The school does not anticipate a large turn out but hopes to provide students with the materials they need while operating within the confines of the current pandemic.
    5. The board asks if graduating seniors from 2020 have followed through with college attendance amidst the pandemic. Lilian shares that the most recent data shows roughly 65% of 2020 graduates are currently enrolled in college.
  - ii. Freire Middle School
    1. Chris Zagacki shares that Freire Middle will be shifting their virtual learning model to cut down on asynchronous learning which, compared to synchronous instruction, has a significantly lower completion rate for students. In the updated virtual learning model, coined Virtual Learning 1.2, students will have additional enrichment time, less asynchronous work, and a 'YET Day' once a week. 'YET Days' are a chance for students to catch up on any missing assignments or participate in one-on-one support with teachers. For students

fully caught up on their assignments and in good academic standing, teachers can choose to dismiss students for the day.

- c. Staff Update, TECH Freire
  - i. Charles Ware introduces Blair Thoman to the Board of Directors. Blair, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Entrepreneurship Teacher and Team Lead, shares that TECH Freire formed a student council this year to elevate the voices of students and support students in manifesting their impact at TECH Freire.
  - ii. In October, TECH Freire voted 9 students, including Sania Johnson, onto the Student Council to represent TECH Freire's student body.
- d. Student Update, TECH Freire
  - i. Sania Johnson, current 11<sup>th</sup> Grader at TECH Freire, was recently elected to TECH Freire's Student Council as the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Representative. Sania shares that she joined student council to spread mental health awareness at TECH Freire. Currently, student council is promoting mental health awareness through a 5-part curriculum design to help students achieve objectives like identifying common obstacles to mental health, implementing strategies to improve their mental health, and encourage the use of TECH's mental health support services.
  - ii. Sania shares that the student council has also created a fundraising plan to help raise additional funds that can be used to offer more services to students and improve student mental health throughout TECH Freire.
- e. Anti-Racism Update
  - i. Kelly Davenport shares that the Freire Schools network has committed to training 40 network leaders and have completed 4 of 12 total trainings with Just Instruction. Kelly notes that the instructional leaders are examining the curriculum and expectations for students to ensure they align with the network's anti-racism efforts and the needs of Freire students.
- f. MCSO (Merger) Update
  - i. Max Matthews explains the provision in Pennsylvania charter law that charter school networks to merger their campuses into a single entity. This merge would allow Freire Schools to receive more competitive benefits for staff and simplify record keeping, compliance operations and advancement efforts. To apply for a merger, one of the Freire Charter School campuses must fall within the top 25% of all charters in the state. Freire Charter High School met this requirement in 2017 and 2018.
  - ii. Freire Schools' original application was denied by the School District of Philadelphia and Freire Schools appealed this decision. During the 2019 school year, Freire High School fell out of the 25% threshold. The Charter Appeal Board recently returned from a hiatus caused by the pandemic and will meet with Freire Schools in April 2021 regarding their appeal.
  - iii. Max Matthews believes that the Commonwealth Court, currently hearing a similar case with a charter network located in Pittsburg, will reach a decision on a similar case in the spring which could set the precedence for Freire Schools' appeal.

#### IV. Financials

- a. October 2020 Financial Report

- i. Bill Ray introduces Ben Wainwright, Senior Accountant at Freire Schools, to the board. Ben Wainwright shares that school has \$2.42 million dollars of cash on hand which represents 49 days of cash on hand, above the recommended threshold of 45 days.
- ii. Currently, there are no outstanding receivables for Freire Charter School and enrollment is above the originally budgeted projection. Professional services are higher than expected in virtual learning which is being offset by the lower personnel costs this year.

## V. Advancement

- a. Advancement Report
  - i. Melanie Reiser shares that to-date the network has raised \$100,000 towards the overall goal of \$550,000.
  - ii. Melanie notes that the advancement team has welcomed a new Development Coordinator, Kelsea Johnson, the newest member of the Freire Schools team.
  - iii. Melanie shares that the Advancement Committee chose not to participate in Giving Tuesday because such efforts have not yielded much success in prior years. Instead, Freire Schools sent personalized 'thank you' postcards to the top donors in our network.
  - iv. Melanie shares that Freire Wilmington held their first virtual cultivation event on December 4. Melanie proposes holding a similar cultivation event with the Philadelphia campuses sometime in the spring.
  - v. Scott Solomon shares that Wilmington's cultivation event was phenomenal and will be in touch with Melanie about hosting an event for TECH Freire later in the winter.
  - vi. Melanie notes board giving is at 12% across the network. Melanie encourages all board members to give their annual contributions.
- b. Political Landscape Report
  - i. Melanie Reiser shares that there are three vacancies on the school board. The Mayor will meet with his nominating committee this week and will submit his recommendations to City Council by December 21. Leigh Botwinik has worked with parents in the Freire Network to submit recommendations for more charter representation in the school board.
  - ii. Freire Schools has met with Minor Leader McClinton, a democrat in support of charter schools, who recommended Freire Schools have parents connect with local legislators sharing their support for charters overall. Johnny Mills has been working with parents in the network to connect with local representatives.
- c. Talking Points
  - i. In lieu of talking points this month, Freire Schools is sharing the 'Make Joy Annual Appeal'. A hard copy of this appeal was sent to key donors earlier in December and a digital copy will be circulated within the next two weeks.
  - ii. The Advancement Committee will meet in the new year.

## VI. Board Committees

- a. Education Committee
  - i. No update at this time.
- b. Audit Committee
  - i. See Attachment 2B.
- c. 403(b) Committee
  - i. No update at this time.

- d. Safety Committee
  - i. No update at this time.

Meeting Adjourned, 10:33 AM