



MINUTES

JUNE 29, 2021 | 8 AM

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL

MEETING ID: 864 7664 2211 | PASSWORD: 775593

Board Members Present: Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Joseph Hargrave, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Beth Packel

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Scott Solomon, Melanie Reiser, Anthony Royster, Ben Moore, Chris Zagacki, Heather Schafer, Charles Ware, Bill Ray, Kelly Davenport, Adam Antonioli, Olivia Burgess, Malcolm Eleby (Director of Culture), Max Matthews, Lynn McGinley (Dean of Students), Ben Moore (Dean of Students/Cultural Leader), Beth Packel, Bill Ray, Heather Schaffer (Student Services Teacher), Charles Ware, Chris Zagacki

Meeting Start, 8:06 AM

I. Resolutions

a. Interim Non-Violence Policy (*Attachment 3F*)*

- i. The board recognizes the importance of the commitment to peace in the educational program and strives to offer all students an educational environment free from violence. Violence of any kind deprives students and staff of a safe environment for learning. This policy is designed to preserve the unique history of the formation of Freire's Nonviolence requirements and to outline how nonviolence and a commitment to peace intersect with other Board policies.
- ii. Kiara Allison challenges the board to amend the proposed policy to involve school leadership in school discipline before the board is involved. Kiara notes that, with Freire Schools' commitment to anti-racism, the non-violence policy needs to assume the students are in the school to learn, not assume that the students will inherently be violent.
- iii. Malcolm Eleby, Ben Moore, and Lynn McGinley all agree that there needs to be flexibility with revisiting the Interim Non-Violence Policy at each board meeting.
- iv. David Bryant proposes that the board approve the updated Interim Non-Violence Policy subject to the approval of council. Raquel Leach makes a motion to approve. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
- v. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Dave Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Joseph Hargrave, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Beth Packel all vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

II. School Report

a. Lead Water Testing Results (*Attachment 4A*)

- i. Max Matthews shares that the Indoor Environmental Concepts LLC was retained by Freire Schools to perform lead testing of the drinking water outlets servicing both Freire Charter High and Freire Charter Middle School. The lead water testing was performed pursuant to the regulations and guidance documents from the Bureau of Safe Drinking Water of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection having principal responsibility to

administer the programs and activities of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

- ii. Both Freire Charter High and Freire Charter Middle School had elevated levels of lead present in some of the bathroom sinks. Both campuses are replacing the water fixtures in the bathrooms and will retest the water outlets once the replacements are complete.

b. Heads Report

- i. Chris Zagacki shares that Freire Middle School is currently in the midst of summer programs, called Summer H.E.A.T. Students attend the school Monday – Thursday, participating in academic work during the morning and enrichment activities in the afternoon. There are almost 200 students participating in summer programs.
- ii. Chris notes that he does not see any major changes in student performance because of virtual learning. Those who struggled with virtual learning are participating in summer programs.
- iii. Adam Antonioli shares that Freire Charter High School has met the challenge of the pandemic and provided the necessary support for the students. Adam notes that the benchmark scores from recent student testing show that there has not been any significant learning loss for students over the past year.
- iv. There are currently 20+ summer field trips and opportunities for students to participate in both academic and extracurricular experiences.

c. June 2021 Data Packet (*Attachment 4B*)

- i. Leigh Botwinik reviews the data packet with the board, noting that attendance is very strong compared to last year. Attendance, although measured differently because of virtual learning, was strong for both Freire High School and Freire Middle School.
- ii. Leigh notes that the average scores from STAR Benchmarks show that there has not been any significant drops in learning loss.

d. Staff Update

- i. Adam Antonioli is working with an outside group to provide additional ACT math support to those students who are interested in boosting their ACT math performance.
- ii. Adam shares that some teachers are participating in summer trainings to better sharpen their skills related to AP (advanced placement) courses.

e. Anti-Racism Update

- i. Anti-Racism Overview (*Attachment 4D*)
 - 1. Max Matthews shares a road-block worksheet that explores roadblocks of racism that are present within our world and at Freire. The worksheet works to explore how to break down those roadblocks and the potential within each of our students.
 - 2. Max Matthews shares that during the collaboration with Rethic (formerly known as Just Instruction) over 40 leadership staff were given the opportunity to be trained and challenged on topics such as race, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- ii. Freire Summer Work (*Attachment 4E*)
 - 1. Kelly Davenport shares that during the summer, over 250 staff members will be doing anti-racism homework. Kelly invites the board to participate in learning with the staff during the summer, even though it is not a requirement.

f. COVID Update

- i. Kelly Davenport shares that all Freire Schools campuses will return to in-person learning in the fall at full capacity. There will be a continuation of the mask mandate inside all Freire Schools campuses and there will be health checkpoints to ensure no outbreak has/will occur.
- ii. Freire Charter High School and Freire Wilmington both recently held vaccination events for both Freire students/staff and the wider community.

III. Advancement

a. Advancement Report (*Attachment 5A*)

- i. Melanie Reiser shares Freire Schools' has raised \$433,000 in unrestricted fundraising and within \$2,000 of matching funds raised last year. The Advancement Committee is meeting on July 12 to discuss the possibility of having an in-person event in the fall.
 - b. Political Landscape Report
 - i. Melanie shares that the General Assembly passed their budget on Friday which included a \$416 million increase in education funding. Governor Wolf shared that he would not rest until the state fixed the charter school law, however no charter school reform made it into the current legislation and will likely be revisited in the fall.
 - ii. The State Senate recently approved new members to the Charter Review Board, two of them are likely sympathetic to charters and the other two are likely anti-charter. There are still two open spots on the Charter Review Board.
 - iii. Melanie notes that Freire Schools has terminated the contract with Triad.
 - c. Talking Points
 - i. Melanie Reiser reviews the Talking Points with the board.
- IV. Financials
 - a. Financial Report (*Attachment 6*)
 - i. Bill Ray reviews the financial report with the board, noting that Freire Charter School has roughly 55 days of cash on hand. The school anticipates a \$500,000 deficit in 2025 and will use the next few years to build up a reserve if that deficit occurs.
- V. Governance
 - a. Freire Schools Annual Performance Evaluation (*Attachment 7*)
 - i. Leigh Botwinik shares that at the end of each year the Freire Schools Network Office asks all board members to participate in an annual performance evaluation survey.
 - ii. Leigh reviews the results of the evaluation and shares how the network team plans to address the feedback.
 - b. Board Trainings & Clearances Reminder
 - i. Olivia Burgess notifies the board the deadline to turn in all clearance will be on June 30, 2021.

Meeting Adjourned, 9:41 AM