



MINUTES

APRIL 14, 2021 | 8 AM

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL

MEETING ID: 863 6035 3165 | PASSWORD: 048467

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

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Hyniff Collins (Freire High Student), Kelly Davenport, Dawn Eubanks, Keondre Ford (TECH Freire Student), Mindy Hedgepeth (Freire Middle Staff), Sherill Hill (Freire Middle Staff), Nicole Hurt (TECH Freire Student), Thy Ly (TECH Freire Student), Max Matthews, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Teryn Thomas, Scott Solomon, Charles Ware, Chris Zagacki

Meeting start, 8:02 AM

I. Public Comment

- a. There is no public comment.

II. Resolutions

- a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on February 10, 2021
 - i. The board reviews the minutes from the February 10, 2021 board meeting.
 - ii. Raquel Leach makes a motion to approve. Lisa Hoffstein seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Shonda McCants, and Beth Packel vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b. Slate of Staff with Salaries
 - i. The board reviews the slate of staff with salaries.
 - ii. Beth Packel makes a motion to approve. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Shonda McCants, and Beth Packel vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. Teacher Equity Plan
 - i. Max Matthews shares that the teacher equity plan is required as part of receiving Title I educational funds. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that school districts are not disproportionately assigning teachers with less experience to schools that qualify for Title 1 funds or have significantly higher portions of low-income students.
 - ii. Each Freire Schools campus is classified as its own district, however, the teacher equity plan outlines what Freire Schools is doing as a network to provide the highest level of education for all students.
 - iii. Max notes that retention of effective teachers is, arguably, one of the most significant aspects of this plan.
 - iv. Raquel Leach makes a motion to approve. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
 - v. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Shonda McCants, and Beth

Packel vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

- d. Flexible Instructional Day Plan
 - i. Leigh Botwinik shares that the Flexible Instructional Day Plan (FID) would allow Freire Schools to plan flexible virtual instructional days that could replace in-person learning to accommodate repeated closures due to inclement weather, general school closures, or other circumstances that would hinder in-person learning.
 - ii. Now that all Freire Schools students can participate in 1:1 instruction, this plan can be presented to the Department of Education for approval.
 - iii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Beth Packel seconds.
 - iv. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Shonda McCants, and Beth Packel vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- e. Proposed 2021-2022 Board Schedule
 - i. The board reviews the proposed board schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.
 - ii. Scott Solomon and Beth Packel propose that each campus install the appropriate technology to allow for board members to call into meetings using Zoom.
 - iii. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
 - iv. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Shonda McCants, and Beth Packel vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

III. School Report

- a. Heads Report
 - i. April 2021 Data Packet
 - Leigh Botwinik reviews the April 2021 Data Packet and notes the network is working to determine how to best conduct standardized testing for students who have opted out of in-person learning.
 - The deadline to complete testing for the 2020-2021 school year has been extended to September 30, 2021.
 - ii. Chris Moore shares that the first two days of hybrid learning have gone well. Chris notes that the biggest concern from teachers was less related to COVID safety but rather how to simultaneously teach two separate groups of students. So far, school leadership has been impressed by how quickly students and staff have adjusted to hybrid learning.
 - iii. Shonda McCants asks if virtual instruction will suffer as more students choose in-person instruction. Freire Schools is charged with making learning dynamic for both groups of students, whether in-person or virtual.
 - iv. Chris Zagacki shares that roughly 300 students (60%) opted for in-person learning. After families saw in-person instruction in action, Freire Middle received calls from multiple families looking to move their student to in-person instruction.
 - v. Chris shares that Freire Middle is entertaining the idea of "half grades" where students would receive additional support academically, socially, or emotionally.
 - vi. Dawn Eubanks shares that the energy in the building has been amazing with both students and staff appreciating the slight return to normalcy.
 - vii. Graduation Update
 - Chris Moore shares that Freire High is still searching for a graduation venue. One challenge the school has faced is finding a venue that is willing to book such a large event with the city's current COVID guidelines.
- b. Staff Update
 - i. Mindy Hedgepeth, Director of Interventions at Freire Middle, updates the board on

the academic and enrichment programs the school has planned for the summer.

- ii. Sherill Hill, 8th Grade Academic Advisor at Freire Middle, shares that her goal is to offer the greatest summer programming possible for all students. Freire Middle is partnering with organizations that teach ballet, break dancing, and other physical activities to bring safe in-person experiences to the students. As much as possible, one of the goals for summer programming will be to allow students an in-person space to engage socially and grow deeper connections with fellow classmates.
 - iii. Chris Zagacki shares that summer school is being set up as a Quarter 5 for students who are ready to continue their learning over the summer and build community with one another. The intent of Quarter 5 is not to close learning gaps from virtual learning, but rather set students up for success for the 2021-2022 school year.
 - iv. Mindy Hedgepeth thanks the Freire Schools Network for the “amazing work and support for teachers during this challenging time.”
- c. Student Update
- i. Chris Moore introduces Hyniff Collins, a current 11th grade student at Freire High. Hyniff shares that hybrid learning has been great, noting that the first day of in-person instruction was like reentering 9th grade where everyone was trying to find their classrooms and navigate the new building setup. Hyniff shares that the additional class time offered by in-person instruction has been a huge benefit and allowed him to further focus on his schoolwork.
- d. Anti-Racism Update
- i. Kelly Davenport shares that there is serious momentum among the 41 Equity Driven Leaders throughout the network. Freire Schools plans to sign a second-year contract with Just Instruction to provide a series of training days for all staff members.
 - ii. The Equity Driven Leadership group has developed three working goals from the past year of training. The goals include continuing to examine and refine curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of our students and is actively anti-racist, engage in generative conflict, and reexamine the Freire Schools non-violence policy.
 - iii. Starting this summer, Freire Schools will begin an ethnographic study of the current non-violence policy. This policy was first created in 1999 with the original group of students at Freire Charter School.
 - iv. Freire Schools will begin to work with students, staff, parents, and community members to create the 2.0 version of this policy. During the interim, culture leaders from each Freire Schools campus will come together to create a non-violence policy for next school year.
- e. COVID Update
- i. Adjustments to Health and Safety Plan
 - Max Matthews reviews the adjustments to the Health and Safety Plan previously passed by the board. The State has allowed schools to adjust the Health and Safety Plan without board approval to ensure schools can take quick action when necessary.
 - ii. COVID Testing Plan
 - Max Matthews shares the COVID Testing Plan with the board. All Freire Schools campuses will use the Abbott BinaxNOW RapidAntigen Test. Testing will be provided to students and staff through Docs Health.

IV. Advancement

- a. Advancement Report
 - i. Melanie Reiser shares that Freire Schools still needs to raise roughly \$344k to meet the 2021 goal of \$525k.
 - ii. A digital appeal related to Freire Schools hybrid reopening will go out to donors today

with additional appeals over the coming weeks.

- iii. Antonio Walker, a student at Freire High, was recently lost to gun violence. Antonito's mother asked that Freire Schools work with Goldman Sachs to create a \$10k scholarship in his honor for the Class of 2024. To-date, \$8,000 has been raised.
- iv. As of April 8, board giving across the network is at 36% for the 2020-2021 academic year. Bruce Lesser makes a plea to all board members to submit their annual donations to Freire Schools as soon as possible.

b. Political Landscape Report

- i. Melanie notes little change in the political landscape since the board met in February. The Governor is adamant that changes need to be made to charter school funding, however, state-level republican leaders are not interested in cutting funds for brick-and-mortar charters at this time.

c. Talking Points

- i. The board reviews the April 2021 talking points.

V. Financials

a. Financial Report

- i. Bill Ray reviews the Financial Report and notes the new report focuses on a five-year projection for Freire Charter School.
- ii. Cash on hand as of March 31, 2021 is \$3.14M. The School is projected to end the year with \$3.21M of cash on hand.

VI. Governance

a. Evaluations

- i. Max Matthews reminds the board of two upcoming evaluations: a review of the Freire Schools Network Office and a review of the Heads of School.

VII. 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, 10:01 AM.