



## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**DECEMBER 15, 2021 | 8 AM**

**VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL**

**MEETING ID: 876 9921 0895 | PASSWORD: 226831**

- I. Public Comment
- II. Executive Session<sup>†</sup>
  - a. The Good Samaritan Fund
- III. Resolutions
  - a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on October 13, 2021 (*Attachment 1A*)<sup>\*</sup>
  - b. Updated Health and Safety Plan (*Attachment 1B*)<sup>\*</sup>
  - c. Audit Report (*Attachment 1C*)<sup>\*</sup>
  - d. Auditor Communication (*Attachment 1D*)
  - e. Restricted Donation Approval (*Attachment 1E*)<sup>\*</sup>
- IV. School Report
  - a. Staff Update
  - b. Student Update
  - c. Heads Report
    - i. Freire Network Dashboard (*Attachment 2A*)
  - d. Proposal to Change Mission Statement (*Attachment 2B*)
- V. Financials
  - a. October 2021 Financial Report (*Attachment 3A*)
- VI. Governance
  - a. Clearances & Trainings for Board Members
- VII. Board Committee Reports
  - a. Education Committee
  - b. Audit Committee
  - c. 403(b) Committee
  - d. Safety Committee

*\*Requires Vote*

<sup>†</sup>Citation of reason for executive session: II.a: 65 Pa. C.S.A. §708 (a)(5) "To review and discuss agency business which, if conducted in public, would violate a lawful privilege or lead to the disclosure of information or confidentiality protected by law, including matters related to the initiation and conduct of investigations of possible or certain violations of the law and quasi-judicial deliberations.

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 8:00 AM via Zoom Conference Call

*Freire Charter School provides a college-preparatory learning experience with a focus on individual freedom, critical thinking, and problem solving in an environment that emphasizes the values of community, teamwork, and commitment to peace.*



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

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Kelly Davenport, Dawn Eubanks, Jacob Greenbaum, Lilian Wehbe Kobeissi, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Bill Ray, Anthony Royster, Scott Solomon, Emily Torres, Charles Ware, Chris Zagacki

Meeting Start: 8:07 AM

### I. Public Comment

- a. There is no public comment.

### II. Executive Session\*

- a. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss The Good Samaritan Fund. Raquel Leach seconds.
- b. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Beth Packel, and Lorraine White vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. The Board enters Executive Session at 8:09 AM.
- d. The Board exits Executive Session at 8:20 AM.
- e. The Good Samaritan Fund
  - i. The Freire Charter School Board of Directors proposes a movement of \$50,000 into the Good Samaritan Fund. Paul Archibald makes a motion to approve. Beth Packel seconds.
  - ii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Beth Packel, and Lorraine White vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions. The motion passes.

### III. Resolutions

- a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on October 13, 2021 (Attachment 1A)\*
  - i. Paul Archibald makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
  - ii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Beth Packel, and Lorraine White vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions. The motion passes.
- b. Updated Health and Safety Plan (Attachment 1B)\*
  - i. As part of the conditions for accepting federally granted ESSER funds, the Board is required to approve a Health and Safety Plan that outlines mitigation strategies to address the spread of covid.
  - ii. The updated policy includes changes to the vaccination requirements for athletes to align with new guidelines from the City of Philadelphia. Athletes and coaches that participate in winter and spring sports must be fully vaccinated.

- iii. Athletes have the option to submit either a medical or religious exemption request form. All exemption requests will be reviewed by Freire Charter School's attorney for approval.
  - iv. If a student's exemption is approved, they are required to received twice weekly covid testing while participating in a school sponsored sport.
  - v. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Lisa Hoffstein seconds.
  - vi. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Beth Packel, and Lorraine White vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions. The motion passes.
- c. Audit Report (Attachment 1C)\*
- i. Bill Ray reviews the completed Audit Report for Freire Charter School. Noting that, as expected, there were no significant findings.
  - ii. Beth Packel makes a motion to accept the audit report. Lisa Hoffstein seconds.
  - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Beth Packel, and Lorraine White vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions. The motion passes.
- d. Auditor Communication (Attachment 1D)
- i. *Review bullet III.c.*
- e. Restricted Donation Approval (Attachment 1E)\*
- i. The Board is asked to approve a restricted donation of \$10,000 (ten-thousand dollars) from the Freire Foundation to Freire Charter Middle School. These funds were received through a restricted donation to support the summer school programs at Freire Charter Middle School during the summer of 2021.
  - ii. Gerald Escovitz makes a motion to approve. Beth Packel seconds.
  - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Beth Packel, and Lorraine White vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions. The motion passes.

#### IV. School Report

- a. Staff Update
- i. Chris Zagacki introduces Dr. Jacob "Jake" Greenbaum, the emotional psychologist at Freire Charter Middle School.
  - ii. Jake introduces himself to the Board and shares that he has served at Freire Middle School for four years. Jake notes that the return to school, after a full year virtual, was a culture shock for both students and teachers. The last uninterrupted year for the current 8<sup>th</sup> grade class was when they were in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. There is a learning curve that is noticed throughout the school.
  - iii. Currently there are roughly 90 students involved in therapy at Freire Charter Middle School. The school is looking to outsource some trauma-informed therapy for students who have been victims of violence at home.
  - iv. Bruce Lesser asks if there has been a substantial increase in student participation in therapy and other programs. Jake notes that there was a drop in participation over the pandemic, likely caused by technology-related issues, but student participation this year has reached pre-pandemic levels.
  - v. Freire Charter Middle School is looking to onboard additional therapy interns to support demand. Currently, Freire Schools partners with programs at Temple University and LaSalle University to find interns to participate in the emotional supports program.
- b. Student Update
- i. There is no student update.

## c. Heads Report

- i. Chris Moore shares that the struggles have evolved as the year progresses. At the start of the school year, the school community was focused on covid mitigation exclusively. Now the school is moving into more traditional challenges like college and behavioral issues with students and covid has become an accepted 'fact of life.'
- ii. There has been an increase in students calling out of school for a myriad of reasons with a significant number of teachers resigning due to external hardships and responsibilities. Chris notes that the school is addressing these issues in stride.
- iii. The students recently completed Keystone testing and are excited to plan field trips and other events now that covid restrictions are beginning to lift.
- iv. Chris Zagacki shares that Freire Middle School has found its rhythm over the past few weeks. Chris has set the intention that he no longer expects joyful things to 'just happen,' but rather, he will make them happen.
- v. Chris notes the ebb and flow of this school year. Some weeks things are normal while other weeks it feels like everything is happening at once. Instructionally, things feel normal and on track. While culturally, there has been a real adjustment for students learning virtually verses in-person alongside their fellow peers.
- vi. Enrollment has been an issue for Freire Middle School this year with several families moving out of the city and withdrawing their student.
- vii. Freire Network Dashboard (Attachment 2A)
  1. Chris Moore notes that there has been an increase in suspensions and attendance issues. Covid has played a significant role in attendance because of all the precautions set in place, specifically, "close contact" quarantines and students and staff staying home if they experience any symptoms that could be linked to covid. Charles Ware echoes these challenges for TECH Freire.
  2. Chris Zagacki shares that despite all the challenges, there are many moments of joy and excitement that should not go unnoticed.
- viii. Kelly Davenport asks the Board to provide a representative to support the schools' efforts in over-hiring next school year at all campuses. With "the great resignation" taking place in many industries, Freire Schools has been protected from the increase in resignations due to over-hiring last summer.
- ix. Looking into next year, Freire Schools needs to think creatively about how to finance supporting a larger group of staff members. To start, Kelly asks the Board to reach out to their respective Board Chair if they are interested in joining the group of leaders who will tackle this challenge.

## d. Proposal to Change Mission Statement (Attachment 2B)

- i. Kelly Davenport shares that Freire Schools is finalizing the application for Freire Newark, a new charter school in Newark, DE that would be a replication of Freire Wilmington.
- ii. Throughout this process, Freire Schools realized that words within the mission statement seem out-of-date and some elements of our true mission are not reflected in the current mission statement.
- iii. The proposed change would update the mission statement to the following: *Freire Charter School (pronounced "free-AIR-ee") provides a college- preparatory learning experience with a focus on individual freedom, critical thinking, and problem solving in an environment that emphasizes the values of love, community, equity, and commitment to peace.*

- iv. The board discusses the proposed changes, with a consensus that the word 'love' should be further defined and the word 'teamwork' should stay within the mission statement.

V. Financials

- a. October 2021 Financial Report (Attachment 3A)
  - i. The Board agrees that the financial report was covered along with the audit report.  
*Review bullet III.c.*

VI. Governance

- a. Clearances & Trainings for Board Members
  - i. Olivia Burgess reviews the required clearances and trainings and reminds the Board to complete any outstanding trainings.

VII. Board Committee Reports

- a. Education Committee
  - i. No report at this time.
- b. Audit Committee
  - i. *Review bullet III.c.*
- c. 403(b) Committee
  - i. No report at this time.
- d. Safety Committee
  - i. Paul Archibald notes there is some concern with students congregating on Market Street after dismissal. The school is working on ways to address this with current Freire Middle School students but there is little the school can do in relation to non-Freire students who travel downtown after dismissal.

- VIII. Kelly Davenport reminds all Board Members to submit their annual pledges to Melanie Reiser before the end of the calendar year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 AM.