



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FEBRUARY 9, 2022 | 8 AM

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL

MEETING ID: 848 5309 1404 | PASSWORD: 582803

- I.** Public Comment
- II.** Resolutions
 - a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on December 15, 2021 (*Attachment 1A*)*
 - b. FY 2021 Form 990 (*Attachment 1B*)*
 - c. Proposal to Change Mission Statement (*Attachment 1C*)*
- III.** School Report
 - a. Staff Update
 - b. Student Update
 - c. Heads Report
 - i. Freire Network Dashboard (*Attachment 2*)
- IV.** Advancement
 - a. Advancement Report (*Attachment 3A*)
 - b. Political Landscape Report
 - c. Talking Points (*Attachment 3B*)
- V.** Financials
 - a. December 2021 Financial Report (*Attachment 4*)
- VI.** Governance
 - a. Statement of Financial Interest
 - b. Clearances & Trainings for Board Members
 - c. Sylvia Spivey Resume, New Parent Representative (*Attachment 5A*)*
 - d. Resignation of Lorraine White (*Attachment 5B*)
- VII.** Board Committee Reports
 - a. Education Committee
 - b. Audit Committee
 - c. 403(b) Committee
 - d. Safety Committee

**Requires Vote*

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 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.

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FEBRUARY 9, 2022 | 8 AM

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

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Dawn Eubanks, Cynthia Leonard, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Alexis Prince (Freire High teacher), Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Anthony Royster, Scott Solomon, Alanna Walker-Kegler (Freire High student), Charles Ware, Lilian Wehbe, Chris Zagacki

Meeting Start, 8:03 AM

I. Public Comment

- a. No public comment.

II. Resolutions

- a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on December 15, 2021 (*Attachment 1A*)*
 - i. The board reviews the minutes from the Board Meeting on December 15, 2021.
 - ii. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Paul Archibald seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Beth Packel all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions. The motion passes.
- b. FY 2021 Form 990 (*Attachment 1B*)*
 - i. Form 990 is an information return that Freire Charter School is required to submit annually to the IRS due to their status as a non-profit. This document will be available to the public.
 - ii. Bill Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Beth Packel all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions. The motion passes.
- c. Proposal to Change Mission Statement (*Attachment 1C*)*
 - i. Melanie Reiser reviews the proposed mission statement and outlines the context of the proposed changes.
 - ii. The board discusses the pros and cons of changing the mission statement.
 - iii. Kelly Davenport, after hearing the opinions of the board, proposes holding on a vote to update the mission statement until the summer months when there is more bandwidth from all stakeholders to entertain a thoughtful conversation around the mission.
- d. Sylvia Spivey Resume, New Parent Representative (*Attachment 5A*)*
 - i. Bruce Lesser introduces Sylvia Spivey to the board and proposes electing Sylvia to the Board of Directors.
 - ii. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Beth Packel all vote in favor of the motion.

III. School Report

a. Staff Update

- i. Chris Moore introduces Alexis Prince, Class of 2014 alumni and current Algebra teacher at Freire High School. Alexis shares that she has seen steeper learning curve for students this year compared to previous years. However, students are beginning to get back into the swing of things both academically and socially.

b. Student Update

- i. Alanna Walker-Kegler, a current 10th grade student at Freire High School, agrees with Alexis, noting that the student body is starting to understand the expectations of the school and is beginning to adjust to the expectations of being back in the building. Alanna also shares that the basketball team at Freire High is doing well this season.

c. Heads Report

- i. Chris Moore shares things are going well and that this time of year is very busy for the school. Freire High School is focused on supporting the high number of students who are failing at least one class. To help address this issue, Freire High School has started a robust credit recovery program for students on Wednesday mornings, coupled with a delayed opening for the rest of the student body.
- ii. COVID cases and difficulties have dropped significantly, with no positive cases in the building in over a week.
- iii. Freire High School has a robust plan to celebrate Black History Month including pop-up shops, speakers, spirit weeks, and other events and festivities. Chris shares that a committee, of both students and staff, was formed in December and has had great success with planning events and increasing student buy-in.
- iv. Chris Zagacki shares students are being held to the same expectations that were in place before COVID, but students are failing at higher rates than before. The challenge Freire Middle School is now facing is how to maintain the high expectations while meeting students where they currently are.
- v. Freire Network Dashboard (*Attachment 2*)
 - Chris Zagacki shares students are growing from quarter to quarter and proficiency rates are rising. Currently, Freire Middle School is thinking about how to speed track increasing student proficiency.
 - Councilmember Squilla met with Chris Zagacki a few weeks ago to discuss dismissal procedures. Without the use of yellow-bus services, dismissal has been more challenging for the school and Center City has notoriously been a gathering place for students from other campuses - which complicates Freire Middle's dismissal procedures and increases the number of students in the area during the afternoon.

IV. Advancement

a. Advancement Report (*Attachment 3A*)

- i. Melanie Reiser shares that Freire Schools has raised roughly \$200,000 of the \$400,000 FY 2022 goal, running slightly ahead of last year. Melanie attributes some of this increase in funds to the change in the deadline for board members to submit their annual pledge. Freire Schools has raised \$80,000 in EITC funds to-date.
- ii. The Advancement Committee will meet on March 9, 2022, to discuss a possible spring event.
- iii. The Freire Foundation has secured a P.O. box for all future checks and advancement mail.

b. Update on the Retention Committee

- i. Lilian Wehbe shares that a retention committee met earlier this year to discuss how to retain staff and teachers across the network. The committee discussed a myriad of ideas including an increase to staff base salary of 5%, retention bonuses, hiring additional para-professional and co-teachers to increase the time full-time teachers have to prep, offering additional scholarship money for staff, etc.
- c. Political Landscape Report
 - i. Melanie shares that Freire Schools is paying close attention to the state's proposed redistricting, governors' race, and proposed charter school budget cuts.
- d. Talking Points (*Attachment 3B*)
 - i. Melanie Reiser reviews the talking points noting that therapy services across the network are being utilized by students at the same or greater levels than they were pre-pandemic.

V. Financials

- a. December 2021 Financial Report (*Attachment 4*)
 - i. Bill Ray reviews the December 2021 Financial Report noting Freire One currently has a lower enrollment than was originally budgeted. Including capital purchases and other expenses, the school is running at a slight deficit this year, however, nothing of major concern. With the completion of numerous one-time capital purchases, the school will be in a stronger financial position next school year.

VI. Governance

- a. Statement of Financial Interest
 - i. Olivia Burgess informs the board that she will email digital versions of each member's Statement of Financial Interest later today. The deadline to submit these forms is March 31, 2022.
- b. Clearances & Trainings for Board Members
 - i. Olivia Burgess reminds all board members to complete all outstanding trainings and submit any overdue clearances.
- c. Resignation of Lorraine White (*Attachment 5B*)
 - i. Bruce Lesser acknowledges that Lorraine White has resigned from the Board of Freire Charter 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. Paul Archibald shares that Freire Charter High School has several upcoming safety drills. Freire High School does not have an intercom system but can alert all classrooms through the speaker phones, however, the speaker phone alerts are not loud enough to overcome a loud classroom. The school is looking into other solutions.

VIII. Freire Charter School Newark Public Hearing

- a. Kelly Davenport shares there will be a public hearing for Freire Charter School Newark on February 16 at 5 PM and encourages all board members to attend this virtual meeting in support of Freire Schools.