



# MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SEPTEMBER 14, 2022 | 8 AM

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL INFO | MEETING ID: 834 6581 2309 | PASSWORD: 814774

MEETING LOCATION: FREIRE CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL (1026 MARKET ST., PHILADELPHIA PA 19107)

- I. Public Comment
- II. Executive Session
  - a. Health Insurance Renewal
- III. Remembering Gerald Escovitz
- IV. Resolutions
  - a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on June 15, 2022 (*Attachment 1A*)\*
  - b. Approve Children's Internet Protection Act Policy (*Attachment 1B*)\*
  - c. Approve Emergency Instructional Time (*Attachment 1C*)\*
  - d. Approve Health & Safety Plan 2022-2023 (*Attachment 1D*)\*
  - e. Approve Student & Family Handbook 2022-2023 (*Attachment 1E*)\*
  - f. Approve Staff Handbook (*Attachment 1F*)\*
  - g. Approve Admissions Policy 2023-2024 (*Attachment 1G*)\*
- V. School Report
  - a. Staff Update
  - b. Student Update
  - c. Heads Report
    - i. Freire Charter School - School Plan (*Attachment 2A*)
  - d. September Data Packet (*Attachment 2B*)
- VI. Financials
  - a. June 2022 Financial Report (*Attachment 3*)
  - b. Audit Update
- VII. Advancement
  - a. Advancement Report (*Attachment 4A*)
  - b. Talking Points (*Attachment 4B*)
  - c. Political Landscape Report
- VIII. Governance
  - a. Board Clearance Update
  - b. Board Contact Sheet (*Attachment 5*)
  - c. Board Visitation Day
    - i. FCHS – September 19<sup>th</sup>
    - ii. FCMS – September 29<sup>th</sup>

*\*Requires Vote*

*Citation of reason for executive session: II.a.ii.: 65 Pa. C.S.A. § 708 (2) "To hold information, strategy and negotiation sessions related to the negotiation or arbitration of a collective bargaining agreement or, in the absence of a collective bargaining unit, related to labor relations and arbitration."*

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 8:00 AM at 1026 Market St.

*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, equity, and commitment to peace.*



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**SEPTEMBER 14, 2022 | 8 AM**

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MEETING LOCATION: FREIRE MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Board Members Present:** Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser

**Others Present:** Evageline Berube (SDP Charter Schools Office), Leigh Botwinik, Nate Durant, Dawn Eubanks, Jamilah Gibbs (TECH Freire Staff), Mindy Hedgepeth (Freire Middle School Staff), Nyaka Johnson (Freire High School Staff), Chris Moore, Bobby Panchoo (TECH Freire Student), Tanza Pugliese, Sierra Reddy (Freire High School Student), Melanie Reiser, Anthony Royster, Jada Smith (Freire Middle School Student), Scott Solomon, Cameron Voss (SDP Charter Schools Office), Lilian Wehbe, Joann Wszolek, Andrea Zepp

Meeting start, 8:00 AM

## I. Public Comment

- A. There was no public comment.

## II. Executive Session

- A. Health Insurance Renewal
  1. The board did not enter into Executive Session.

## III. Remembering Gerald Escovitz

- A. Kelly Davenport and the board take a moment to remember Gerald Escovitz. This is the first board meeting that has taken place in-person since his passing.
- B. Melanie Reiser notes that, to date, the Gerald Escovitz Memorial Fund has raised \$30,000 in donations.

## IV. Resolutions

- A. Election of Joann Wszolek to TECH Freire Board of Directors
  1. Joann Wszolek introduces herself to both the TECH Freire and Freire Charter School Board of Directors.
  2. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to elect Joann to the TECH Freire Board of Directors. William Brinkman seconds.
  3. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- B. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on June 15, 2022 (Attachment 1A)
  1. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Lisa Hoffstein seconds.
  2. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- C. Approve Children's Internet Protection Act Policy (Attachment 1B)
  1. Leigh Botwinik reviews the Children's Internet Protection Act Policy (CIPA), which requires schools to have the appropriate software installed on all computers to prohibit students from accessing inappropriate material online. The board must approve this policy annually.
  2. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Lisa Hoffstein seconds.

3. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- D. Approve Emergency Instructional Time (Attachment 1C)
1. Leigh Botwinik shares that the Department of Education requires that, if the School needs to shift to virtual learning mid-year, the School should have a board-approved plan for emergency instructional time. The board approved a similar policy for the 2021-2022 school year.
  2. Freire Charter School has been approved for up to 5 virtual instructional days in addition to emergency instructional time. Each year the School must report the total number of virtual hours to the State.
  3. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
  4. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- E. Approve Health & Safety Plan 2022-2023 (Attachment 1D)
1. The Board approved an updated version of the Health & Safety Plan during the June 2022 Board Meeting. Since then, the CDC has updated the COVID-19 guidance for schools and the new Health & Safety Plan reflects these updated guidelines.
  2. Changes to this plan include the termination of contact tracing, surveillance testing, and social distancing. Masks are now optional for members of the school community and a supply of rapid tests are available at the school.
  3. Paul Archibald makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
  4. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- F. Approve Student & Family Handbook 2022-2023 (Attachment 1E)
1. Leigh Botwinik reviews the updated Student & Family Handbook, including updates to COVID information, cell phone policies, and staff contact information.
  2. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
  3. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- G. Approve Staff Handbook (Attachment 1F)
1. Leigh Botwinik reviews the updates to the Nondiscrimination Policy, Title 9 Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Anti-Hazing Policy.
  2. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Paul Archibald seconds.
  3. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- H. Approve Admissions Policy 2023-2024 (Attachment 1G)
1. Johnny Mills reviews the updated 2023-2024 Admissions Policy. The proposed policy shifts from accepting applications through the city-wide system, Apply Philly Charter, to a school-based platform, PowerSchool Enrollment.
  2. Paul Archibald makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
  3. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, David Bryant, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, and Bruce Lesser all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

## V. School Report

## A. Student & Staff Update

### 1. Freire Charter High School

- a) Chris Moore introduces Nyaka Johnson, who is filling in as the lead of the Student Services Department while Pam is away on maternity leave.
- b) Nyaka shares that the building feels fantastic and is beautiful. She notes the new floors and wall murals are bringing the building to life. Staff feel supported this year and it feels like the staff are in control versus the reactionary response the school had to take throughout the pandemic.
- c) Every classroom has an "I Can..." statement on display and there is more open transparency and sense of community within the building.
- d) Sierra Reddy started at Freire Middle School in 6th grade and is currently an 11th grader at Freire Charter High School. Sierra shares that her experience at Freire has been fun and fulfilling because of the connections she has made with students and staff. Staff have made her feel safe, which has allowed her to be herself.
- e) Sierra gives a few staff shout outs but specifically mentions Mr. Mike at Freire High School who makes teaching fun and engages students in a meaningful way. Mr. Mike's teaching style excites students and motivates them to engage.

### 2. Freire Charter Middle School

- a) Mindy Hedgepeth shares the new MTSS (Multi-tiered Support System) approach that Freire Middle is using to support students this school year. Students receive rewards for positive behavior and meeting expectations. When areas of behavior begin to become challenging, the school increases incentives.
- b) Freire Middle is using an online learning tool, ExactPath, to help students receive support in challenging skill areas. ExactPath gives students a skills assessment, followed by targeted support lessons to address learning gaps early and consistently throughout the year.
- c) Branching Minds is a platform that will allow for the entire network to utilize the MTSS system and see where students need support across the network.
- d) Jada Smith, 8th grader at Freire Middle School, shares that she was a part of the team that revamped the non-violence policy last year with support from parents, students, and staff. Jayda led interviews with stakeholders to learn what they thought of the non-violence policy and how to improve it going forward to make it more accessible, fair, and equitable.
- e) Jada particularly enjoyed the conversations around instigation, consequences, and implementation.

## B. Heads Report

### 1. Freire Charter High School

- a) Chris Moore shares that even with the staffing changes in the building there is still significant continuity. Freire High School has hired two new academic leads in addition to Mr. Adam.
- b) The biggest change for the year has been the Yonder pouch. Students are required to lock their cell phone in the pouch before school begins, which has caused a major culture shift within the building. Chris notes, "early return on this investment has been exceptional. Students are focused, attentive, and engaged."
- c) The building feels brighter, in part, due to the beautification projects that took place over the summer, including new floors and wall decals.

### 2. Freire Charter Middle School

- a) Andrea Zepp shares that Freire Middle School's theme for the year is "Reclaim the Flame." Andrea thanks her team of leaders who are helping build culture and keep the school on the right track.
  - b) Andrea thanks Olivia Burgess for her work to beautify the building over the summer.
  - c) Some of the challenges the school is currently facing include lower enrollment, a handful of staff vacancies, and the lack of yellow bus service. The start time is earlier this year which gives students the benefit of an earlier dismissal, reducing the number of after-school incidents typically seen at the end of the day.
  - d) The school is excited to enter its second year of EngageNY where there is an increased focus on literature written by and for people of color.
3. Freire Charter School - School Plan (Attachment 2A)
- a) Freire Charter School will be focusing on two mindsets for the 2022-2023 academic year, Joy & Growth.
  - b) Joy will be intentionally cultivated throughout the school year with the staff, community, and students. The outcomes behind this mindset are to have students eager to show up everyday and full retention of the staff over the next school year.
  - c) Growth has been a continual mindset within the Freire Charter School community but will be amplified going forward, including celebration of goals and small wins throughout the community.
4. September Data Packet (Attachment 2B)
- a) Lilian Wehbe reviews the September Data Packet, noting that Freire Charter School saw an increase in state assessment scores for 2021-2022 in math, ELA, and biology. This increase is the beginning of a recovery from the significant drop in test scores seen across all campuses and grade levels from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 due to the pandemic.
  - b) Bruce Lesser asks Lilian to present growth data to the Board when it becomes available.
- C. Health Insurance Update
- 1. Kelly Davenport shares that Freire Schools is working closely with our broker to find a new health insurance solution for Freire Charter School. Freire Charter School can expect a board report on health insurance in October.

## VI. Financials

- A. June 2022 Financial Report (Attachment 3)
- 1. Freire Charter School ended the fiscal year with \$3,200,000 cash on hand (59 days), which is an improvement of \$800,00 over June 20, 2021. Approximately \$1,600,000 is needed to meet the School's 30 days cash-on-hand loan covenant.
  - 2. Freire Charter School ended the year with an annual surplus of \$240,000, which exceeded the budgeted annual surplus of \$28,000 by \$212,000. Total revenues exceeded the budget by \$789,000, total operating expenses exceeded the budget by \$698,000, and total capital purchases were under budget by \$122,000.
  - 3. There was a deliberate choice last year to not enroll students after the first day of school which caused overall enrollment revenues to drop for 2022.
- B. Audit Update
- 1. David Bryant shares that he expects to receive a draft audit report by late October.
  - 2. Kelly Davenport shares that the Freire Schools team prepared the financials, with Charter Choice, an outside accounting firm that supports charters throughout the state, managing all accounting.
  - 3. There are currently 3 candidates being considered for the CFO position with a goal of hiring someone within 60-days.

**VII. Advancement**

- A. Advancement Report (Attachment 4A)
  - 1. Melanie Resier shares that Freire Schools raised \$455,757 in donations and pledges in unrestricted funding, exceeding our \$400,000 obligation to the schools by \$55,757.
  - 2. Freire Schools matched their EITC funds raised last year with \$124,000 in donations, which will help run maker education, drama, robotics, and career programming at the Philadelphia schools.
  - 3. The network received \$65,000 to fund the Purple Dragon Scholarship at the Philadelphia schools, an expenditure that would have been incurred even without the gift.
- B. Talking Points (Attachment 4B)
  - 1. Melanie Reiser reviews the talking points with the board, with specific focus on a renewed dedication to the values of joy and growth within the network.
  - 2. The board is invited to participate in a mission statement workshop via zoom on Wednesday, September 28. This workshop will provide an opportunity for Freire stakeholders to discuss if the value of “love” should be added to the mission statement for each Freire campus.
- C. Political Landscape Report
  - 1. Melanie Reiser briefs the board on the current political landscape and where Freire Schools is intersecting with the larger charter sector.

**VIII. Governance**

- A. Board Clearance Update
  - 1. Olivia Burgess updates the Board on outstanding training or clearances.
- B. Board Contact Sheet (Attachment 5)
  - 1. Olivia Burgess encourages the Board to review the Board Contact Sheet and request any necessary changes.
- C. Board Visitation Day
  - 1. FCHS – September 19
    - a) The Board of Directors is invited to attend the upcoming Freire Charter High School visitation day on Monday, September 19, 2022.
  - 2. FCMS – September 29
    - a) The Board of Directors is invited to attend the upcoming Freire Charter Middle School visitation day on Thursday, September 29, 2022.

Meeting adjourned, 10:27 AM