



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DECEMBER 10 , 2025 | 8 AM

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL INFO | Meeting ID: 878 7603 3211

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

Board Members Present: Kiara Allison, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Linda Kilpatrick, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Kathleen O'Connell

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Dorese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Promise Evans (12th Grade Student at Freire Charter High School), Brian Galetto, Lilian Wehbe Kobeissi, Chris Moore, Paul Ramirez, Melanie Reiser, Scott Solomon, Nathan Yufer, Ben Wainwright, Madeline, Weckel, Andrea Zepp

Meeting Start, 8:05 AM

I. Public Comment

- A.** No public comment.

II. Resolutions

- A.** Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on November 12, 2025 (Attachment 2A)*
 - 1. The board reviews the minutes from the November 12, 2025 board meeting.
 - 2. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Nicole Jenkins seconds.
 - 3. Kiara Allison, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Linda Kilpatrick, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser and Kathleen O'Connell vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.
- B.** Review & Approve Audit Report (Attachment 2B)*
 - 1. The board reviews the Audit Report.
 - 2. Kiara Allison makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
 - 3. Kiara Allison, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Linda Kilpatrick, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser and Kathleen O'Connell vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.
- C.** Review & Approve Donation to Samaritan Fund*
 - 1. Leigh explains the Samaritan Fund and the purpose of the donation.
 - 2. Raquel Leach makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
 - 3. Kiara Allison, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Linda Kilpatrick, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser and Kathleen O'Connell vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.

III. School Report

- A.** Staff & Student Report
 - 1. Chris Moore introduces Promise Evans to the board.
 - 2. Promise shares that she has submitted all of her college applications and is now applying for additional scholarships. She is also working on her Senior Project and looks forward to the Freire Panama trip happening this Spring.
 - 3. Promise shared that overall the school year has been great, though the commute has been unpredictable due to Septa.
- B.** Heads Report
 - 1. Chris Moore shares that FCHS is continuing to have fantastic year. Attendance is up, enrollment is up, and suspensions and disciplinary incidents are down. Overall, the building is calm.
 - 2. He notes that one staff member resigned early in the year and that position has already been filled. Overall, Chris notes that this staff is the strongest in recent history of the school.
 - 3. This week, students are taking the Keystone exam and participation has been strong.
 - 4. This year, we made the decision as a network to move away from one-to-one laptops for



students and Chris believes this shift has been positive—students are more engaged in class without the distraction of laptops. In class assignments are more intentional. When assignments require laptops, teachers are able to reserve them without issue.

5. Lisa Hoffstein asks how students are completing homework assignments without computers. Chris explained that homework assignments are being designed to be completed without laptops and that seniors do get laptops to work on college applications.
6. Chris adds that students and staff are experiencing hardship due to Septa.
7. Andrea Zepp shares that preliminary benchmark data looks promising and that attendance is up by 12% YOY, with over 90% of students attending every day. 5th grade consistently has the highest attendance among all grades. Andrea attributes the increases to their decision to provide bus transportation and their later start time this year.
8. Andrea explains that suspensions are up from this time last year due to a few physical altercations between students this fall. She adds that to address behavior incidents, the MS staff are reemphasizing handbook expectations with students and they partnered with an outside organization to lead sessions for students and parents related to Anti-bullying. Additionally, leading up to Winter Break, the Middle School is holding several events and initiatives aimed at increasing joy and belonging for students.
9. Andrea explained that the Middle School recently purchased three new copiers, which should help operations run more smoothly for teachers and staff.

C. November Freire Dashboard (Attachment 3)

1. Lilian explained the 2025 PVAAS (Growth) Summary: PVAAS outcomes can help us interrogate the effectiveness of our instructional strategies. Results offer insight into strengths and identify areas for improvement. More explicitly, PVAAS helps us answer questions like: is there a pattern of growth across content areas? Are all students being served adequately and equitably?
2. Freire campuses in Philadelphia are evaluated on growth in our Annual Charter Evaluation (ACE). Schools earn full credit for overall and lowest performing Average Growth Indexes (AGIs) at or above -1, the minimum score reflecting evidence that the school met the growth standard, and no credit for AGIs below -1, which indicates that there was evidence that the school did not meet the growth standard.
3. FCHS will earn full credit for all students in Algebra and Biology but not in Literature (where they did not meet the standard for growth). FCHS will earn full credit for lowest performing students in Algebra and Biology but not in Literature. Although we're not evaluated on growth for students with IEPs, it's important to note that students with IEPs met or exceeded the growth standard in Algebra and Biology but were well below in Literature
4. Unlike in past years, where the Middle School used to receive a school-level Average Growth Index, PA has released PSSA AGI scores by grade level only this year. In 2025:
 - a) In grade 5, FCMS performed in the 16th percentile among Philadelphia charter schools in ELA and 48th percentile in Math.
 - b) In grade 6, FCMS outperformed 88% of Philadelphia charters in ELA and 89% in Math.
 - c) In grade 7, FCMS outperformed 74% of Philadelphia charters in ELA, and only 32% in Math.
 - d) And in 8th grade, FCMS outperformed 98% of Philadelphia charters in ELA and 97% in Math -- FCMS performed 7th in the State in 8th grade ELA.
5. In 2025, FCHS ranked at the 71st percentile among Philadelphia charter schools in Algebra and the 23rd percentile in Literature.
6. Leigh Botwinik highlighted and celebrated our 8th grade students and teachers at FCMS.

IV. Financials

A. October 2025 Financial Report (Attachment 4)

1. Ben Wainwright shares that Freire Charter has a surplus of \$1.07M and is projected to close the year with a total surplus of \$577K.



2. The budgeted revenue for the year is expected to be \$24.4M. We will be monitoring expenses all year and will make adjustments as needed.
 - a) Pennsylvania has now passed a state budget, allowing all federal grant payments to resume. The School was previously informed that 21st Century Grant Payments were on hold pending the passage of the budget. With the budget approved, these payments will now be paid out.

V. Advancement

A. Advancement Report (Attachment 5)

1. Melanie Reiser shares that the network-wide unrestricted fundraising target for FY26 is \$675k – \$125k per Philadelphia campus and \$300k for Freire Wilmington. To date, we have raised \$241,300 in donations and pledges toward that goal, leaving us approximately \$434k to raise by June 30th.
2. The Freire Schools holiday appeal will be hitting mailboxes the week of 12/8.
3. The network-wide Advancement Committee met on October 14th to develop a fundraising plan for FY26. The committee decided not to host a Bridge to Wisdom fundraising event this year, but potentially one in fall 2026. Focus instead will be on smaller Board-led fundraising/friendraising events this winter and spring, plus increased grant writing, a second print appeal in the spring, and active personal solicitation of donors.
4. In addition to our unrestricted fundraising, we have received \$91k in smaller restricted gifts to fund an 8th grade academy (FCSW), EITC funding for the Experienceship program, peer mediation training (all three high schools), and athletic uniforms and truancy home visits at FCSW.
5. We are awaiting more information from the State, but it looks like Freire Charter and TECH Freire will be eligible for additional school safety grant funding this year as part of the new PA budget.
6. Board giving for FY26 is currently at 23%.
7. Melanie requests board presence at the upcoming Student Ambassador Training for those interested and available.

B. Political Landscape

1. Melanie notes that Freire Schools continues to pay close attention to any proposed charter regulation, budget cuts or proposed changes to the charter school renewal process.

VI. Governance

A. Statement of Financial Interest

1. Leigh Botwinik shares that board members can expect to receive outreach from Freire Schools in January regarding Statements of Financial Interest. The deadline is typically in early March.

B. Updating of Files Next Year

1. Leigh shares that some board members may also be required to complete Governance training.

Meeting Adjourned, 8:47 AM