



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2020 | 8 AM
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL

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

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Kelly Davenport, Dawn Eubanks, Tammy Khieu, Max Matthews, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Lauren Plaxa, Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Anthony Royster, Scott Solomon, Teryn Thomas, Charles Ware, Lilian Wehbe, Chris Zagacki, Andrea Zepp

8:04 AM, Meeting Start

1. **Public Comment**

- a. No public comment.

2. **Our Response to COVID-19**

a. **Student Chromebooks and Hotspots**

- i. Charles Ware shares that network leadership has been working on at-home learning plans over the past few weeks. Freire Middle and High School were able to provide students with learning materials as they left school the weekend before the official closure. TECH Freire was on spring break when schools were officially closed and was unable to provide students with additional materials to take home.
- ii. In moving to a digital learning space, Freire's number one priority is student equity. An initial survey sent to families showed that Freire families primarily had access to cell phones but not a computer for robust digital learning. Freire Schools moved quickly to secure 2000 laptops and began verifying student addresses and WIFI connectivity. To date, over 90% of families have been contacted with just over 100 outstanding.
- iii. Freire has worked directly with Comcast to ensure our families are able to receive reliable internet services.

b. **Emotional Supports**

- i. Chris Moore shares that with the help of Max Matthews and Melanie Reiser, Freire has been able to move all emotional support programs online. Students and families who were previously receiving emotional support services were given initial priority with the hope of expanding the program to additional students as we continue to stay at home.

c. **At Home Student Resources**

- i. Chris Zagacki shares the main challenge of digital education is supporting special education and ELL students. Every week families receive a resource guide which

includes activities and enrichment focused on each content area. These resource guides are not graded, and completion is optional. Staff are available to support students via phone, email, and through zoom conference calls.

- ii. Freire is working to keep students engaged socially and emotionally through a network-wide Virtual Spirit Week, tik-tok challenges, and an online talent show.
 - iii. With all students receiving a Chromebook and access to the internet, Freire's plan is to shift to Quarter 3 make-up work in the coming weeks. During this time, students will not be introduced to new material, the focus will be on review and enrichment. On May 4, Freire will begin Quarter 4 with the assumption that all schools will stay closed through the end of the year. Using Google Classroom, students will be able to complete required weekly lessons in all content areas.
 - iv. Dawn Eubanks shares that she sat in on her son's online English class last week noting that the students were engaged and actively participating.
- d. Scott Solomon asks the Heads of School where we feel most vulnerable. Chris Moore shares that a major concern for the high school students is the second half of their year, specifically the seniors who are looking forward to prom, senior trip, and making final memories before going off to college. Charles Ware echoes these concerns.
 - e. Teryn Thomas shares that the hiring team is working diligently and is hosting a virtual hiring fair in the next few weeks with the support of 15 other charters in the area. Freire is leading the fair.
 - f. The Board further discusses Freire's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. COVID-19 Budget Reforecast & Financials

- a. Bill Ray shares that Freire Charter School is fully funded through the end of the school year. The largest expense the school has incurred since the temporary closure is the purchase of Chromebooks for every student. This cost is covered through additional funds the school has on hand due to higher than projected special education enrollment. The total cost of the Chromebooks for Freire Charter School is approximately \$300,000, broken down to \$150,000 per campus.
- b. Each Freire campus will receive roughly \$300,000 in federal relief funds, totaling \$600,000 for Freire Charter School. These funds will be used to help offset any changes to the school's capitation rate in the coming years.
- c. 21st Century funds, which help support all of Freire's afterschool programs, will potentially be disrupted. The grant application, which was supposed to be released this month, has been delayed until the fall.

4. Advancement During COVID-19

- a. Melanie Reiser shares that on April 7 all donors who had previously donated over \$1000 were asked to continue to donate and support Freire Schools. Freire Schools will continue moving ahead with a robust fundraising plan.
- b. The Advancement Committee is meeting in the coming weeks to discuss the logistics of the upcoming non-event which will take the place of Bridge to Wisdom.
- c. Talking Points
 - i. The Board reviews the advancement talking points.
- d. Political Climate

- i. Melanie shares that all the Governor's charter school reform efforts are on the back burner until further notice. The online charter schools, who were facing funding cuts, were one of the only sectors not immediately affected by COVID-19.
- ii. Freire Schools recently met with Representative Jordan Harris who pushed Freire, a successful brick-and-mortar school, to learn how to do online learning better than the online charter schools.

5. Executive Session

- a. The Board did not enter Executive Session.

6. Resolutions

- a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on February 12, 2020
 - i. The Board reviews the minutes from the Board meeting on February 12, 2020.
 - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b. Emergency Delegation of Authority
 - i. Max Matthews explains that approving emergency delegation of authority would empower the Heads of School to make purchases of up to \$500,000 at Freire Charter School during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ii. The Board agrees that this resolution will allow the schools to provide the highest level of support and education for the students, staff, and families of Freire.
 - iii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
 - iv. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. Retroactive Approval of Schoolwide Chromebook Order
 - i. Raquel Leach makes a motion to approve the recent order of 2000 Chromebooks, 1000 for Freire Charter School, to be distributed to all students as Freire moves to a digital learning platform. William Brinkman seconds.
 - ii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- d. Continuity of Education Plan
 - i. Max Matthews shares that the Governor recently signed a requirement for all schools to create a continuity of education plan that must be posted to the school's website. Freire is currently posting optional resource guides on its website and working with the appropriate teams to accommodate special education, ELL, and homeless students. The Board is asked to approve this plan before it is made public.
 - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Lorraine White seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- e. Restricted Donation Approval – EITC

- i. Bill Ray explains that this donation funds a portion of the costs of various EITC approved programs, including Live Connections, Play on Philly and Robotics. The Freire Foundation Board has already approved this donation.
 - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - f. Restricted Donation Approval – Science Content Coach Donation
 - i. Bill Ray explains that this \$5000 donation, received from the Brinkman Family Foundation, is restricted for Freire Charter Middle School’s science teacher coaching program.
 - ii. Lorraine White makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - g. Restricted Donation Approval – Leadership Development
 - i. Bill Ray explains that this \$25,000 donation, received from Thomas Caramanico, is restricted to leadership development at Freire Charter High School.
 - ii. Lorraine White makes a motion to approve. William Brinkman seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - h. Slate of Staff with Salaries
 - i. Max Matthews reviews the Slate of Staff with Salaries.
 - ii. Lorraine White makes a motion. William Brinkman seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - i. ZM Settlement Agreement
 - i. Max Matthews shares that this is a proposed settlement agreement for student ZM. This agreement has been executed by the parent. The Board is asked to pass a motion of approval for the agreement as written. This agreement is below the retention amount for Freire’s insurance.
 - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
 - iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - j. ND Settlement Agreement
 - i. This agreement is pending until student ND enrolls full time at another school. This agreement is below the retention amount for Freire’s insurance. The Board is asked to pass a motion of approval for the terms as attached.
 - ii. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve the motion substantially on the terms attached. Raquel Leach seconds.

- iii. Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Lorraine White all vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

7. Governance

a. Statement of Financial Interest

- i. The Board is reminded to complete and submit their annual Statement of Financial Interest forms before the due date of May 1, 2020.

8. School Report

a. Heads Report

- i. Chris Moore shares that Winter Keystone preliminary results were received. The school was pleased with the initial results and are saddened that the next round of tests were canceled. Chris will share official numbers with the Board in the coming days.

b. Staff Member Update

- i. Chris Moore introduces Lauren Plaxa to the Board. Lauren is the Director of College Counseling at Freire High School and a teacher. Lauren shares that Freire Charter School has moved quickly and engaged with families at a remarkable rate. College counseling is taking place remotely and is focused on conducting senior exit interviews, collecting college admissions information, and supporting families with financial aid.
- ii. Chris Zagacki thanks Andrea Zepp for leading the charge in verifying student addresses and having all Freire Middle School students complete the Freire Chromebook Contract.

c. Student Update

- i. No student update at this time.

Meeting adjourned, 10:07 AM.