

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020 | 8 AM
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL

Board Members Present: William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Shonda McCants, Scott Solomon

Others Present: Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Leigh Botwinik, Dave Bryant, Kelly Davenport, Lisa Hoffstein, Ami Irvin, Nicole Jenkins, Sania Johnson (TECH Freire Student), Raquel Leach, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Blair Thoman (TECH Freire Teacher), Teryn Thomas, Ben Wainwright, Charles Ware, Lilian Wehbe, Lorraine White, Chris Zagacki

Meeting Start, 8:02 AM

I. Public Comment

- a. No public comment.

II. Resolutions

- a. Review and Approve Minutes
 - i. The board reviews the minutes from the October 14, 2020 Board Meeting.
 - ii. William Brinkman makes a motion to approve. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
 - iii. William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b. Shonda McCants Resume
 - i. Scott Solomon introduces Shonda McCants to the Board. Shonda is a parent of a current TECH Freire student and is interested in becoming a TECH Freire Board Member as a parent representative.
 - ii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to appoint Shonda McCants to the Board of Directors. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
 - iii. William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. FY 2020 Audit Report & Auditor Communication
 - i. Bill Ray reviews the Audit Report noting that the audit opinion shows no issues or findings for TECH Freire. The auditors have added standard language related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the possible impact the pandemic could have on future year audits and financial ratios.

- ii. This audit report will be submitted to both the School District of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
 - iii. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Bruce Levine seconds.
 - iv. William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Shonda McCants, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- d. 2019-2020 Form 990
- i. Bill Ray shares the board is required to approve the Form 990 annually. There are no significant changes to the Form 990's from previous years.
 - ii. The 2019-2020 Form 990 will be submitted to the IRS.
 - iii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. William Brinkman seconds.
 - iv. William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Shonda McCants, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- e. Approval of Title IX Policy
- i. Ami Irvin, Operations Coordinator at Freire Schools, reviews the Title IX Policy with the board. The policy relates to a federal law prohibiting sex-based discrimination in schools and applies to the entire TECH Freire community. The proposed updates reflect recent changes to Title IX law at the federal level.
 - ii. Ami notes that each campus is required to have a Title IX coordinator. Jamie Weiss, Director of Operations, will serve as this representative for TECH Freire.
 - iii. Kiara Allison raises concern that the policy, although meeting all operational requirements, is not accessible to families and students. Freire Schools' Operations Team will meet with Kiara Allison, and any other interested individuals, to work on a simplified version of this policy as well as ensure the policy is easily accessible online and in student handbooks.
 - iv. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Dawn Eubanks seconds.
 - v. William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Shonda McCants, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- f. Data Sharing MOU with the School District
- i. Max Matthews shares that the data sharing memorandum of understanding is required under TECH Freire's charter agreement with the school district. As of December 16, TECH Freire has not received a finalized MOU from the district. The included MOU is a copy of the finalized MOU for Freire Charter School. Max asks that the board vote to approve a substantially similar version of the included MOU when received from the school district.
 - ii. Bruce Lesser proposes a motion to approve the Data Sharing MOU in the form presented to the Freire Charter School with such changes acceptable to management. William Brinkman seconds.
 - iii. William Brinkman, Gerald Escovitz, Dawn Eubanks, Dior Fields, Bruce Lesser, Bruce Levine, Shonda McCants, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

III. School Reports

- a. 2020-2021 Network Priorities

- i. Teryn Thomas reviews the Network Priorities Dashboard with the board and asks that all members review the key domain metrics listed. The purpose of this dashboard is to provide useful, actionable data to both the school leaders and the board.
 - ii. The five key domain metrics on the dashboard include: achievement, progress, attendance, college, and teacher recruitment/retention.
 - iii. Lilian Wehbe and Teryn Thomas take time to review each of the domains in-depth with the TECH Freire Board.
 - b. Heads Report
 - i. Charles Ware shares that Freire Schools' leadership is ensuring that, year-over-year, TECH Freire is still seeing growth even in virtual learning. Charles notes that TECH Freire will continue to push teachers to ensure that the learning happening virtually is worthy of our students.
 - ii. Charles also shares that the student council allows students to feel a deeper sense of buy-in to what is happening within the school. Sania Johnson updates the board on the current work within student council. (*See Student Update, section III.d.*)
 - c. Staff Update
 - i. Charles Ware introduces Blair Thoman to the Board of Directors. Blair, 12th Grade Entrepreneurship Teacher and Team Lead, shares that TECH Freire formed a student council this year to elevate the voices of students and support students in manifesting their impact at TECH Freire.
 - ii. In October, TECH Freire voted 9 students, including Sania Johnson, onto the Student Council to represent TECH Freire's student body.
 - d. Student Update
 - i. Sania Johnson, current 11th Grader at TECH Freire, was recently elected to TECH Freire's Student Council as the 11th Grade Representative. Sania shares that she joined student council to spread mental health awareness at TECH Freire. Currently, student council is promoting mental health awareness through a 5-part curriculum design to help students achieve objectives like identifying common obstacles to mental health, implementing strategies to improve their mental health, and encourage the use of TECH's mental health support services.
 - ii. Sania shares that the student council has also created a fundraising plan to help raise additional funds that can be used to offer more services to students and improve student mental health throughout TECH Freire.
 - e. Anti-Racism Update
 - i. Kelly Davenport shares that the Freire Schools network has committed to training 40 network leaders and have completed 4 of 12 total trainings with Just Instruction. Kelly notes that the instructional leaders are examining the curriculum and expectations for students to ensure they align with the network's anti-racism efforts and the needs of Freire students.
 - f. MCSO (Merger) Update
 - i. Max Matthews explains the provision in Pennsylvania charter law that charter school networks to merger their campuses into a single entity. This merge would allow Freire Schools to receive more competitive benefits for staff and simplify record keeping, compliance operations and advancement efforts. To apply for a merger, one of the

Freire Schools campuses must fall within the top 25% of all charters in the state. Freire Charter High School met this requirement in 2017 and 2018.

- ii. Freire Schools original application was denied by the School District of Philadelphia and Freire Schools appealed this decision. During the 2019 school year, Freire High School fell out of the 25% threshold. The Charter Appeal Board recently returned from a hiatus caused by the pandemic and will meet with Freire Schools in April 2021 regarding their appeal.
 - iii. Max Matthews believes that the Commonwealth Court, currently hearing a similar case with a charter network located in Pittsburg, will reach a decision on a similar case in the spring which could set the precedence for Freire Schools' appeal.
- g. Renewal Update
- i. TECH Freire has received preliminary findings on all compliance and operational aspects of the charter renewal framework. With the completion of TECH Freire's audit, the school district will now review the audit and see if TECH meets all financial ratios. Freire is confident that TECH will meet all financial ratios.
 - ii. Currently, Freire Schools is waiting to see how the school district will measure academic achievement during the pandemic, the final framework related to charter renewal.
- h. Façade/Building Update
- i. Max Matthews shares that the contractors were not able to deliver all materials in time to complete TECH's front façade brick repointing before the first snow of the season. If the weather gets too cold, work will be postponed until the spring.
 - ii. Freire Schools has reached an agreement with the contractors to keep overall costs low.

IV. Financials

- a. October 2020 Financial Report
 - i. Bill Ray introduces Ben Wainwright, Senior Accountant at Freire Schools, to the board of directors. Ben Wainwright shares that TECH Freire has \$1.7 million dollars of cash on hand which represents 48 days of cash on hand, above the recommended threshold of 45 days.
 - ii. Currently, there are no outstanding receivables for TECH Freire. Current enrollment rests at 515, above the originally budgeted projection.
 - iii. Regarding charter renewal, TECH Freire was required to meet 9 financial ratios during the 2019-2020 school year. TECH Freire has met 11 of those ratios. For the 2020-2021 school year, TECH Freire is on track to meet 21 renewal ratios, proving a strong financial standing.

V. Advancement

- a. Advancement Report
 - i. Melanie Reiser shares that to-date the network has raised \$100,000 towards the overall goal of \$550,000.
 - ii. Melanie notes that the advancement team has welcomed a new Development Coordinator, Kelsea Johnson, the newest member of the Freire Schools team.
 - iii. Melanie shares that the Advancement Committee chose not to participate in Giving Tuesday because such efforts have not yielded much success in prior years. Instead, Freire Schools sent personalized 'thank you' postcards to the top donors in our network.

- iv. Melanie shares that Freire Wilmington held their first virtual cultivation event on December 4. Melanie proposes holding a similar cultivation event with the Philadelphia campuses sometime in the spring.
 - v. Scott Solomon shares that Wilmington's cultivation event was phenomenal and will be in touch with Melanie about hosting an event for TECH Freire later in the winter.
 - vi. Melanie notes board giving is at 12% across the network. Melanie encourages all board members to give their annual contributions.
- b. Political Landscape Report
- i. Melanie Reiser shares that there are three vacancies on the school board. The Mayor will meet with his nominating committee this week and will submit his recommendations to City Council by December 21. Leigh Botwinik has worked with parents in the Freire Network to submit recommendations for more charter representation in the school board.
 - ii. Freire Schools has met with Minor Leader McClinton, a democrat in support of charter schools, who recommended Freire Schools have parents connect with local legislators sharing their support for charters overall. Johnny Mills has been working with parents in the network to connect with local representatives.
- c. Talking Points
- i. In lieu of talking points this month, Freire Schools is sharing the 'Make Joy Annual Appeal'. A hard copy of this appeal was sent to key donors earlier in December and a digital copy will be circulated within the next two weeks.
 - ii. The Advancement Committee will meet in the new year.

VI. Board Committees

- a. Education Committee
 - i. No update at this time.
- b. Audit Committee
 - i. See Attachment 2B.

Meeting Adjourned, 10:33 AM