



# MINUTES

**APRIL 14, 2021 | 8 AM**

**VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL**

**MEETING ID: 863 6035 3165 | PASSWORD: 048467**

Board Members Present: William Brinkman, Dawn Eubanks, Gerald Escovitz, Bruce Lesser, Scott Solomon

Others Present: Kiara Allison, Paul Archibald, Leigh Botwinik, David Bryant, Hyniff Collins (Freire High Student), Kelly Davenport, Keondre Ford (TECH Freire Student), Mindy Hedgepeth (Freire Middle Staff), Sherill Hill (Freire Middle Staff), Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Hurt (TECH Freire Student), Nicole Jenkins, Raquel Leach, Thy Ly (TECH Freire Student), Max Matthews, Shonda McCants, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Beth Packel, Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Teryn Thomas, Charles Ware, Chris Zagacki

Meeting start, 8:02 AM

## I. Public Comment

- a. There is no public comment.

## II. Resolutions

- a. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meeting on February 10, 2021
  - i. The board reviews the minutes from the February 10, 2021 board meeting.
  - ii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
  - iii. William Brinkman, Dawn Eubanks, Gerald Escovitz, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon are in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b. Slate of Staff with Salaries
  - i. The board reviews the slate of staff with salaries.
  - ii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Gerald Escovitz seconds.
  - iii. William Brinkman, Dawn Eubanks, Gerald Escovitz, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon are in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. Teacher Equity Plan
  - i. Max Matthews shares that the teacher equity plan is required as part of receiving Title I educational funds. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that school districts are not disproportionately assigning teachers with less experience to schools that qualify for Title 1 funds or have significantly higher portions of low-income students.
  - ii. Each Freire Schools campus is classified as its own district, however, the teacher equity plan outlines what Freire Schools is doing as a network to provide the highest level of education for all students.
  - iii. Max notes that retention of effective teachers is, arguably, one of the most significant aspects of this plan.
  - iv. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Dawn Eubanks seconds.
  - v. William Brinkman, Dawn Eubanks, Gerald Escovitz, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon are in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- d. Flexible Instructional Day Plan
  - i. Leigh Botwinik shares that the Flexible Instructional Day Plan (FID) would allow

Freire Schools to plan flexible virtual instructional days that could replace in-person learning to accommodate repeated closures due to inclement weather, general school closures, or other circumstances that would hinder in-person learning.

- ii. Now that all Freire Schools students can participate in 1:1 instruction, this plan can be presented to the Department of Education for approval.
  - iii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. William Brinkman seconds.
  - iv. William Brinkman, Dawn Eubanks, Gerald Escovitz, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon are in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- e. Proposed 2021-2022 Board Schedule
- i. The board reviews the proposed board schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.
  - ii. Scott Solomon and Beth Packel propose that each campus install the appropriate technology to allow for board members to call into meetings using Zoom.
  - iii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. William Brinkman seconds.
  - iv. William Brinkman, Dawn Eubanks, Gerald Escovitz, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon are in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

### III. School Report

#### a. Heads Report

##### i. April 2021 Data Packet

- Leigh Botwinik reviews the April 2021 Data Packet and notes the network is working to determine how to best conduct standardized testing for students who have opted out of in-person learning.
- The deadline to complete testing for the 2020-2021 school year has been extended to September 30, 2021.

ii. Charles Ware shares that the leadership of TECH Freire is very pleased with the first two days of hybrid reopening. Students and staff feel safe and are excited to be back in the building. Charles notes that teachers are already discussing ways to better facilitate hybrid instruction within the first week of being back.

iii. Shonda McCants asks if virtual instruction will suffer as more students choose in-person instruction. Freire Schools is charged with making learning dynamic for both groups of students, whether in-person or virtual.

##### iv. Graduation Update

- Charles shares that TECH Freire has booked the Del, an outdoor venue, for their 2021 graduation ceremony. The goal is to have as traditional of a graduation as possible while still adhering to the city's COVID safety guidelines.
- Dawn Eubanks shares that, as a parent of a student who graduated from TECH Freire during the 2020 school year, the graduation, although nontraditional, was very meaningful and important to the families.

#### b. Staff Update

i. There is no staff update for TECH Freire.

#### c. Student Update

i. Charles Ware introduces Keondre Ford, a senior and the Student Council President at TECH Freire. Keondre shares that, as a senior, he is glad to be able to spend his last two months of high school in the building with his fellow classmates. While in the building, Keondre has more energy and excitement for his schooling.

ii. Thy Ly, a senior and Student Council Treasurer at TECH Freire, shares that she is very excited to be back in the building and learning alongside her peers.

iii. Nicole Hurt, a senior at TECH Freire, shares that coming back to the building has helped her feel stronger in her work. Personally, Nicole was beginning to struggle with fully virtual instruction. Nicole notes the energy throughout the building is overwhelmingly positive and the school has done a wonderful job of making sure

everyone is safe and following COVID procedures.

- d. Anti-Racism Update
  - i. Kelly Davenport shares that there is serious momentum among the 41 Equity Driven Leaders throughout the network. Freire Schools plans to sign a second-year contract with Just Instruction to provide a series of training days for all staff members.
  - ii. The Equity Driven Leadership group has developed three working goals from the past year of training. The goals include continuing to examine and refine curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of our students and is actively anti-racist, engage in generative conflict, and reexamine the Freire Schools non-violence policy.
  - iii. Starting this summer, Freire Schools will begin an ethnographic study of the current non-violence policy. This policy was first created in 1999 with the original group of students at Freire Charter School.
  - iv. Freire Schools will begin to work with students, staff, parents, and community members to create the 2.0 version of this policy. During the interim, culture leaders from each Freire Schools campus will come together to create a non-violence policy for next school year.
- e. COVID Update
  - i. Adjustments to Health and Safety Plan
    - Max Matthews reviews the adjustments to the Health and Safety Plan previously passed by the board. The State has allowed schools to adjust the Health and Safety Plan without board approval to ensure schools can take quick action when necessary.
  - ii. COVID Testing Plan
    - Max Matthews shares the COVID Testing Plan with the board. All Freire Schools campuses will use the Abbott BinaxNOW RapidAntigen Test. Testing will be provided to students and staff through Docs Health.
- f. Façade/Building Update
  - i. As of today, all the scaffolding has been taken down from the front façade of TECH Freire. The remaining scaffolding will be removed from the back of the building in the coming weeks.
  - ii. Max Matthews shares that, before TECH Freire became the owner of the building, SEPTA had proposed plans to add a third stairwell to the Susquehanna-Dauphin station immediately in front of the school entrance. TECH Freire has met with SEPTA and confirmed that they will preserve access to the building throughout construction. One major concern the new stairwell will introduce is congestion during arrival and dismissal.
- g. Charter Renewal Update
  - i. Max Matthews shares that Freire Schools has received a very promising draft report from the Charter Schools Office (CSO) regarding TECH Freire's charter renewal. The School Board will meet in two weeks to review the CSO's recommendations.

#### IV. Advancement

- a. Advancement Report
  - i. Melanie Reiser shares that Freire Schools still needs to raise roughly \$344k to meet the 2021 goal of \$525k.
  - ii. A digital appeal related to Freire Schools hybrid reopening will go out to donors today with additional appeals over the coming weeks.
  - iii. Antonio Walker, a student at Freire High, was recently lost to gun violence. Antonio's mother asked that Freire Schools work with Goldman Sachs to create a \$10k scholarship in his honor for the Class of 2024. To-date, \$8,000 has been raised.
  - iv. As of April 8, board giving across the network is at 36% for the 2020-2021 academic

year. Bruce Lesser makes a plea to all board members to submit their annual donations to Freire Schools as soon as possible.

- b. Political Landscape Report
  - i. Melanie notes little change in the political landscape since the board met in February. The Governor is adamant that changes need to be made to charter school funding, however, state-level republican leaders are not interested in cutting funds for brick-and-mortar charters at this time.
- c. Talking Points
  - i. The board reviews the April 2021 talking points.

#### V. Financials

- a. Financial Report
  - i. Bill Ray reviews the Financial Report and notes the new report focuses on a five-year projection for TECH Freire.
  - ii. The School's cash on hand as of March 31, 2021 is \$1.85M. The School is projected to end the year with \$1.35M.

#### VI. Governance

- a. Evaluations
  - i. Max Matthews reminds the board of the two upcoming evaluations they will receive in the coming weeks. The first is an evaluation of the Freire Schools Network Office and its performance. The second is a reminder of the upcoming Heads of School evaluations.

#### VII. Board Committee Reports

- a. Education Committee
  - i. There is no update at this time.
- b. Audit Committee
  - i. There is no update at the time.
- c. 403(b) Committee
  - i. There is no update at this time.
- d. Safety Committee
  - i. There is no update at this time.

Meeting adjourned, 10:01 AM.