



TECH FREIRE

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

APRIL 9, 2025 | 8 AM

Meeting ID: 868 5522 0923

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

Board Members Present: Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Scott Solomon

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Pam Dougherty, Promise Evans (11th Grade, FCHs), Brian Galetto, Jamillah Gibbs (Dean of Culture, TECH), Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Kate Pollard (Director of People Operations, FSNO), Tanza Pugliese, Paul Ramirez, Melanie Reiser, Mya Smith Reynolds (12th Grade, TECH), Kate Webb (Math Department Chair/Instructional Coach, FCMS), Nathan Yufer, Andrea Zepp

Meeting Start: 8:00 AM

I. Public Comment

II. Executive Session

- a. Personnel Matter - Review Slate of Staff (Attachment 1)
 - i. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to move into Executive Session at 8 AM *"To discuss any matter involving the ... evaluation of performance ...of any specific ... current ... employee... employed ... by the agency."* Bruce Lesser seconds.
 - ii. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - iii. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:10 AM. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - iv. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

III. Resolutions

- a. Review & Approve Minutes from February 5, 2025 (Attachment 2A)*
 - i. The board reviews the minutes from February 5, 2025.
 - ii. Scott Solomon requests an edit to be made to all voting sections and add the word "no" to the motion statement of "There are no votes against and **no** abstentions".
 - iii. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
 - iv. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b. Review & Approve Teacher Equity Plan (Attachment 2B)*
 - i. Katie Pollard reviews the Teacher Equity Plan with the board.
 - ii. Plan is required as part of receiving Title I/Federal educational funds. The purpose of the plan is to ensure the school districts are not disproportionately assigning teachers with less experience or credentials or assigning less effective teachers to schools that qualify for Title 1 funds or have significantly higher portions of low-income students.
 - iii. The Teacher Equity plan outlines what Freire Schools is doing as a network to recruit and retain qualified, experienced teachers.
 - iv. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - v. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c. Review & Approve Student Handbooks (Attachment 2C)*
 - i. Tanza Pugliese reviews the 2025-2026 student handbooks with the board.
 - ii. Freire Charter School decided to relocate a few policies that are less relevant to day-to-day life as a student, such as the Student Records Confidentiality Policy, to the website.

- iii. For significant but lengthy policies, such as Title IX, we included a short summary in the handbook with a link to the website for the full policy.
 - iv. Freire Charter School condensed the Emergency Procedures section into a more readable chart.
 - v. Freire Charter School proposes modifying the Chromebook/technology policy to signal that Chromebooks will either be provided 1:1, where students are assigned a personal device, or via classroom technology, where the school maintains carts of chromebooks that teachers may use when a lesson calls for it.
 - vi. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - vii. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- d. Presentation of Draft Budget for FY 2026 (Attachment 2D)**
- i. Nathan Yufer reviews the DRAFT budget for FY26 with the board.
 - ii. TECH Freire Charter School is budgeting an annual general fund surplus of approximately \$23,000 for FY26. This is based on conservative revenue assumptions and increased investment in technology and staffing.
 - iii. Freire Charter School is assuming an average enrollment of 500 students for FY26. Special education per pupil revenue is projected to increase by 5%, as is general education per pupil revenue.
 - iv. Average staff salaries are budgeted to increase by 5%. Medical insurance costs are projected to increase by 12%.
 - v. Approved Private Schools (APS) enrollment is budgeted to increase from 3 students in the current year to 6 students in FY26.
 - vi. The proposed budget includes capital investment in technology — specifically, the purchase of Chromebook carts and Chromebooks to achieve one-to-one Chromebook access for all students in all classrooms.
 - vii. The proposed budget currently projects a small surplus but will continue to be refined in the coming months. The impact of any additional revenue increases from the district is still unknown. Updated district funding projections are expected closer to the June board meeting.
 - viii. The board treasurer and Brian will continue to collaborate to ensure that the final budget meets all required loan covenants and presents a fully balanced position for board approval in June.
- e. Review & Approve 2025-2026 School Calendar (Attachment 2E)***
- i. Johnny Mills reviews the 2025-2026 School Calendar with the board.
 - ii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - iii. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- f. Adopt Foreign Exchange Student Policy (Attachment 2F)***
- i. Leigh Botwinik shares Freire Charter High School recently received interest from a foreign exchange student for the upcoming school year.
 - ii. The School proposes adopting a foreign exchange student policy because of the value that foreign exchange students could bring to the Charter School community, fostering cultural exchange and global awareness among our students. As foreign exchange students are not PA residents, the School would not receive state funding for them nor would such students count towards the enrollment cap.
 - iii. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to approve. Dawn Eubanks seconds.
 - iv. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- g. Approve Slate of Staff***
- i. The board reviews the Slate of Staff.
 - ii. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to approve. Dawn Eubanks seconds.

- iii. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

IV. School Report

a. Staff & Student Report

- i. Brian Galetto introduces Mya Smith Reynolds to the board.
- ii. Maya shared that when she first enrolled in the school, it was not her first choice. However, after completing 9th grade, she decided that she wanted to remain at TECH Freire, as she had grown to enjoy the school community and learning environment.
- iii. Maya enjoys her classes and teachers, noting that each teacher brings a unique personality and makes learning engaging and accessible.
- iv. She has been actively involved in extracurricular activities, including: Cheer Team (9th and 10th grade), Music Club (current), Participation in News Club, Cooking Club, and Dance Club earlier in the year.
- v. Maya successfully passed all three Keystone exams on her first attempt during 9th grade (English, Algebra, and Biology), resulting in her senior dues being waived.
- vi. She is a member of the National Honor Society and currently serves as the President of the Student Council. Through this leadership role, Maya has gained valuable leadership experience and has been involved in planning school events.
- vii. Maya is preparing to participate in dual enrollment with Temple University in the fall. She plans to take courses in Race & Ethnicity, Cinematic Arts, and International Communications to support her career goal of becoming an actress.
- viii. Jamillah Gibbs (Head of Culture) shares TECH Freire is currently averaging 90% or higher monthly attendance.
- ix. Increasing student presence in the building was a strategic focus this year. Efforts to address tardiness are ongoing.
- x. The attendance data and monitoring systems implemented this year were built upon work that began in February and March of the prior year and were expanded with leadership support.
- xi. Notably, even on lower-attendance days, the school has been able to recover attendance levels quickly in subsequent days.
- xii. There has been a reduction in large behavioral incidents this year, attributed to strong implementation of restorative practices and the development of peer mediators.
- xiii. The school has decreased out-of-school suspensions, aligning with the goal of keeping students in the building and engaged in learning.
- xiv. The school has built strong staff culture and consistency, with both staff and students demonstrating commitment through regular attendance and engagement.
- xv. The leadership team has focused on building sustainable systems and structures that can maintain positive outcomes even during challenging periods.
- xvi. Brian Galetto shares her leadership has directly impacted improvements in both student climate and attendance. Along with her efforts to develop systems and structures that amplify school joy, promote restorative practices, and improve the overall student experience.

b. Heads Report

- i. Brian Galetto shared that March was the school's second-highest month for student attendance outside of September, and the highest spring attendance in the school's history — a milestone to be proud of.
- ii. He also highlighted that the leadership team is targeting Keystone proficiency rates of 50/20/20 and is working intentionally to build on last year's success, where the school outperformed all similar schools in Algebra, Biology, and Literature. Targeted small group instruction and intervention supports continue to be a priority as the school approaches the upcoming Keystone exams.

- iii. Benchmark testing is currently underway. The Science benchmark was administered today, and ACT testing took place the previous day on a fully digital platform. While overall successful, minor Chromebook performance issues were observed, which are being monitored in preparation for full online Keystone testing next year.
 - iv. TECH Freire hosted a record-breaking Admitted Students Day three weeks ago, with a line of prospective families extending down Broad Street. The event was well-supported by student ambassadors and reflected the school's positive reputation and community engagement.
 - v. In regard to joy, Track and Flag Football seasons are off to a strong start, with the largest track team in school history participating in meets. Students also recently visited Penn State Abington for the 9th-grade college trip.
 - vi. Preparations are underway for National Decision Day on May 1st. This year's celebration will feature an expanded program, including a drumline performance and a more festive atmosphere for students and families.
 - vii. Two certified teachers (Math and ELA) have already been hired for next year. The leadership team continues to work intentionally to secure high-quality staff for the upcoming year.
 - viii. He also noted that the school is monitoring behavior trends and remaining attentive to student needs as temperatures rise. Maintaining a safe, positive, and supportive school environment continues to be a key focus in the weeks leading up to Keystone testing and the end of the school year.
 - ix. Freire Network Dashboard (Attachment 3A)
 - *See IV.a.i.-xvi & See IV.b.i-vvii*
 - x. Lead Water Testing Update (Attachment 3B)
 - Johnny Mills shares that Freire Charter School last conducted lead water testing in Spring 2024, with results publicly posted to the school's website and shared with all parents/guardians through the school's bi-weekly newsletter. The test results are included in the board packet for review.
 - In accordance with Act 39 of 2018, if the school does not test for lead levels in a given year, the School must discuss lead at a public meeting. This discussion and report review serves as Freire Charter School's annual public discussion of lead.
 - In an effort to ensure a lead-free learning environment for all members of our school community, Freire Charter School will re-test for lead in the water again in Spring 2029.
- c. Graduation Update**
- i. Monday, June 9th, at The Dell Music Center (2400 Strawberry Mansion Dr., Philadelphia PA 19132) at 10:00AM

V. Financials

- a. February 2025 Financial Report (Attachment 4)
 - i. Nathan Yufer shares that TECH Freire currently has a surplus of \$665,000.
 - ii. As of February 28, the school has an average enrollment of 526 students, and is forecasting to end the year with an average enrollment of 500 students. Enrollment will continue to be monitored, and adjustments to the year-end forecast will be made as needed.
 - iii. Significant expenses currently for TECH Freire include:
 - Approved Private School (APS) costs for three students. The budget originally included two students; there is a potential for a fourth, but with less than a 20% likelihood.
 - Fees and audit costs—the Fees and Fees category is currently at 99% of the annual budget, largely due to a bill received from the School District of

Philadelphia for an enrollment audit conducted during the charter renewal process.

- Facilities repair costs—a water valve repair under the building’s front steps was completed at a cost of just over \$4,000, which was less than anticipated.
- iv. The school is projected to end the year with a surplus of over \$100,000, which will likely be used to front-load expenses for the FY26 budget.

VI. Advancement

- a.** Advancement Report (Attachment 5A)
- i. Melanie Reiser shares that the F25 unrestricted fundraising target is set to \$775,000 which is \$150,000 per Freire campus.
 - ii. Currently the Advancement Team has raised \$359,431 in donations and pledges toward the goal.
 - iii. FY25 Fundraising progress surrounds the following:
 - Bridge to Wisdom honoring Kelly Davenport will be held on Tuesday, May 13th at the Independence Visitor Center at 5:30pm.
 - Our Valentine “thank you” cards to donors went out in February
 - Foundations in Delaware and Pennsylvania are starting to communicate to past grant recipients a desire to help navigate the uncertain financial landscape, including uncertainty about future Federal funds for our campuses.
- b.** Bridge to Wisdom Sponsor Packet (Attachment 5B)
- i. Melanie reviews the Bridge to Wisdom Sponsor Packet with the board.
- c.** Political Landscape
- i. Freire Schools continues to pay close attention to any proposed charter regulation, budget cuts or proposed changes to the charter school renewal process.

VII. Governance

- a.** Review & Approve Board Meeting 2025-2026 Schedule (Attachment 6)*
- i. The board reviews the board meeting schedule for 2025-2026.
 - ii. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - iii. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, and Scott Solomon vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b.** Annual evaluation of Freire Schools Collaborative and Board self evaluation
- i. Leigh Botwinik and Paul Ramirez share that the school board annually receives the opportunity to evaluate the services received from the network office along with a self evaluation survey.
 - ii. A survey will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Meeting Adjourned, 9:46 AM