



TECH FREIRE

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JUNE 11, 2025 | 8 AM

Meeting ID: 835 1299 7457

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

Board Members Present: Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, Scott Solomon

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Kelly Davenport, Brian Galetto, Johnny Mills, Chris Moore, Katie Pollard, Tanza Pugliese, Paul Ramirez, Melanie Reiser, Ben Wainwright, Nathan Yufer, Andrea Zepp

Meeting Start, 8:00 AM

- I. Public Comment**
 - A. No public comment
- II. Minutes**
 - A. Review & Approve Minutes from April 9, 2025 (Attachment 1)*
 1. The board reviews the minutes from April 9, 2025.
 2. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 3. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- III. Elections**
 - A. Recommend renewal of TECH Freire Charter School Board Members & Elect Officers (Attachment 2)*
 1. The board reviews the list of TECH Freire Charter Schools Board Members whose terms are up for renewal and proposed officers; Dawn Eubanks for renewal of term through 6/11/2028 and renewal of officers include, Scott Solomon as Chair, Bruce Lesser as Vice Chair, Linda Kilpatrick as Treasurer and Dan Eubanks as Secretary.
 2. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
 3. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- IV. Resolutions**
 - A. Review & Approve FY 2026 Budget (Attachment 3A)*
 1. Paul Ramirez notes an update regarding newly received revenue information:
 - a) The School District has increased its capitation rates.
 - b) Originally, the budget was built assuming a 10% increase in funding based on consultant guidance.
 - c) Updated figures will reflect an 18% increase for General Education and a 14% increase for Special Education.
 - d) Leadership recommends proceeding to discuss the current draft budget, as it is required to be passed by the end of June. Throughout the summer, there will be meetings with Board Chairs and Treasurers to continue to refine the budget based on the newly identified revenue increases and other potential changes.
 - e) A revised and final version of the budget will be brought to the Board for approval at the September meeting.
 2. Nathan Yufer shared that the current draft assumes a 10% increase in the capitation rate for next year.
 3. Projected enrollment is 500 students, consistent with expected year-end figures.
 - a) Of these, 103 students are projected to receive Special Education services, representing approximately 20% of the student body.

4. A 5% average salary increase is included for all staff.
 5. Insurance costs are projected to increase by 12%, based on conservative estimates from the school's insurance broker.
 6. The number of students expected to attend approved private schools next year is seven, up from three this year—an upward trend the team is monitoring closely.
 7. The budget also includes funding for new Chromebooks and Chromebook carts for student use.
 8. Taking all variables into account, the draft projects a \$108,000 surplus for FY26, , which is expected to increase based on the revised capitation rate assumptions.
 9. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
 10. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- B. Review & Approve Donation Approvals (Attachment 3B)***
1. Nathan Yufer reviews the proposed Unrestricted Donation to TECH Freire Charter School from the Freire Foundation.
 2. The final amount donated will be based on the need at the end of the fiscal year. Leadership proposes approving up to \$100,000.
 3. Anthony Royster makes a motion to approve. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 4. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- C. Review & Approve Employee Handbook (Attachment 3C)***
1. Katie Pollard shares updated Employee Handbook for the upcoming school year.
 2. Minor updates and revisions were made this year, including:
 - a) Organizational Chart – Updated to reflect recent leadership changes and updated contact information.
 - b) Instructional Principles Summary – Revised to align with the school's most recent Deeper Learning Rubric.
 - c) Cultural Principles and Anti-Bullying Policy – Now included in the handbook; these policies were previously approved but had not yet been incorporated into the most recent handbook version
 - d) Appendix A was removed, with its content now integrated into the Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Form, which staff sign at the end.
 3. Additional Items Added to the Handbook:
 - a) A brief section on conflicts of interest was removed and replaced with the full Conflict of Interest Policy, now included directly in the handbook.
 - b) The Secondary Employment Disclosure Form, which was previously a separate document, is now included for convenience and streamlined sign-off.
 4. These updates aim to consolidate documents, reduce redundant signatures, and ensure staff have access to the most current policies in one place.
 5. Anthony Royster makes a motion to approve. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 6. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- D. Review & Approve Amended Title IX Policy (Attachment 3D)***
1. Tanza Pugliese shares February 19, 2025, U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor issued a decision that vacated the Department of Education's 2024 final rule for Title IX.
 - a) This ruling prevents enforcement of the 2024 Title IX revisions and reinstates the 2020 regulations.
 2. In response, the school has worked with legal counsel to propose amendments to the existing Title IX policy to reflect compliance with the reinstated 2020 rules.
 3. Key changes to the Title IX policy include:
 - a) Terminology:
 - (1) "Sex-based harassment" is now referred to as "sexual harassment."

- b) Scope of Coverage:
 - (1) Discrimination or harassment claims based on sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, and pregnancy-related conditions are no longer covered under Title IX.
- c) Definitions:
 - (1) Definitions of quid pro quo, hostile environments, sexual assault, and formal complaints have been abbreviated and generalized.
- d) Procedural Adjustments:
 - (1) The timeline to review evidence and reports has been extended from 5 to 10 days.
 - (2) The decision-maker in Title IX investigations must now be separate from both the Title IX Coordinator and the Investigator.
- 4. While these updates may appear to limit protections, the school maintains its commitment to a safe and inclusive environment, consistent with state and local law, through other board-approved policies, including:
 - a) Non-Discrimination Policy
 - b) Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students Policy
 - c) Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy
 - d) Married, Pregnant, and Parenting Student Policy
 - e) Student Code of Conduct and other related disciplinary policies
- 5. These existing policies provide a framework for addressing and responding to harassment and discrimination outside of Title IX.
- 6. Anthony Royster makes a motion to approve. Bruce Lesser seconds.
- 7. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

V. Executive Session

- A. Personnel Matter - Review Head of School Evaluation - Brian Galetto (Attachment 4A)
- B. Annual Security and Safety Report (Attachment 4B)
 - 1. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to move into Executive Session at 8:33 AM to discuss: ***II.a.ii.: 65 Pa. C.S.A. § 708 (1) "To discuss any matter involving the ... evaluation of performance ... of any specific ... current ... employee... employed ... by the agency."***, ***II.a.i.: 65 Pa. C.S. § 708 (a)(7) "To discuss, plan or review matters and records that are deemed necessary for emergency preparedness, protection of public safety and security of all property in a manner that if disclosed would be reasonably likely to jeopardize or threaten public safety or preparedness or public protection."*** Bruce Lesser seconds.
 - 2. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 - 3. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to exit Executive Session at 9:33 AM. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - 4. Doreese Bull, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

VI. Executive & Network Update

- A. FSNO CEO Transition & Vision Draft from Paul Ramirez
 - a. Paul Ramirez shares an abbreviated summary of the recent Board Retreat for members who were unable to attend.
 - b. At the retreat, the CEO presented a first draft of a multi-year vision for the organization and outlined plans to gather community input and finalize the vision for release in January 2026.
 - c. The draft vision includes four main components:
 - i. Renewed focus on core academics
 - 1. Reaffirming the importance of reading, writing, math, and critical thinking as foundational learning.

2. Acknowledges the ongoing public debate about the purpose and focus of schools.
- ii. Professional preparation and career exploration
 1. Expanding students' awareness of career pathways, in addition to college preparation.
 2. Creating a vibrant advising ecosystem that reflects the evolving job market.
 3. Aims to give students a stronger sense of purpose from grades 8–12.
- iii. Strengthening community and belonging
 1. Recognizes school as one of the last institutions where students find belonging and form social connections.
 2. Commits to fostering relationships and a sense of meaning in students' school experiences.
- iv. Preparing students for the era of Artificial Intelligence
 1. Proposes a new focus on helping students thrive in a world transformed by AI.
 2. Raises concerns about the impact of AI on critical thinking, identity, and purpose.
 3. Compares the scale of change to the impact of the internet, cell phones, and social media—but exponentially larger.
 4. Stresses the need for schools to lead—not lag—on AI integration and its psychological, academic, and ethical implications.
- d. Paul clarifies that the first three components represent renewals of long-standing values, while the fourth (AI) introduces a new, urgent focus.
- e. A roadmap to finalize and share the vision includes:
 - i. At the September board meeting, two proposed dates will be shared for small group discussions in October and November.
 - ii. These vision working groups will include board members, staff, students, and community members.
 - iii. Sessions will include readings, discussion, and critical interrogation of the draft vision.
 - iv. Feedback and insights from these groups will be brought to the CEO's Council for review and finalization.
 - v. A final version of the vision will be shared with the broader community in January 2026, supported by the communications team.

VII. School Report

A. Heads Report

1. Freire Network Dashboard (Attachment 5A)
 - a) Brian Galetto shares leadership reflections on the 2024–25 school year. Key accomplishments and areas of focus included enrollment, attendance, student behavior, academics, and staff recognition.
 - b) Enrollment was strong and effectively maintained throughout the year. New families were successfully onboarded and received the high-quality educational experience promised.
 - c) Student Attendance - Achieving over 90% average daily attendance marked a significant milestone. Strong systems and staff commitment contributed to this success
 - d) Student Behavior and Restorative Practices - Continued growth was seen in the use of restorative practices:
 - (1) Students demonstrated improved conflict-resolution and social-emotional skills.
 - (2) The number of suspensions decreased.

- (3) Leadership emphasized the importance of guiding students through natural challenges in adolescent development.
- e) Academic Focus and Keystone Preparation - The school leaned into its 50-20-20 Keystone initiative to drive academic performance.
 - (1) Preliminary STAR data from spring suggests progress.
 - (2) Final Keystone results, expected July 14, will provide further insight into academic gains.
- f) Staff Acknowledgement - Leadership expressed deep gratitude for staff dedication:
 - (1) The team demonstrated resilience, talent, and an unwavering commitment to student success.
 - (2) Despite the year's challenges, strong collaboration and shared purpose led to positive outcomes.
2. College Report (Attachment 5B)
 - a) TECH Freire had 88 seniors who met all the criteria to become TECH Freire graduates in the Class of 2025. 89% of seniors have applied to at least one 2-year or 4-year college. To date, TECH Freire Seniors have been awarded \$9,400,000 in scholarships and grants.

VIII. Financials

A. April 2025 Financial Report (Attachment 6)

1. Ben Wainwright shares that TECH Freire has a current surplus of \$597,000.
2. As of April 30, 2025, TECH Freire has an enrollment of 469 and is forecasting to end the year with an average daily membership of 500.
3. If enrollment remains at or above 500 through year-end, TECH Freire is projected to close the fiscal year with a \$150,000 surplus. TECH Freire plans to use surplus to frontload expenses for FY26.

IX. Advancement

A. Advancement Report (Attachment 7)

1. Melanie Reiser shares that the FY25 unrestricted fundraising target is set to \$775,000 which is \$150,000 per Freire campus.
2. Currently, the Advancement Team has raised \$538,079 in donations and pledges toward the goal.
3. FY25 fundraising progress surrounds the following:
 - a) The success of holding the Bridge to Wisdom event which honored Kelly Davenport and the 25 years of Freire Schools on May 13, 2025 at the Independence Visitor Center.
 - b) The Advancement Team notes that they raised approximately \$195,000 as part of the Bridge to Wisdom campaign, which included sponsorships and sponsor-level gifts to the Kelly Fund, which includes:
 - (1) \$180,000 in event sponsorships and sponsor-level gifts to the Kelly Fund.
 - (2) \$5,182 in ticket sales.
 - c) The event cost approximately \$62,000 to produce, about \$4,000 more than last year's event.
 - d) There were over 217 people in attendance which included 112 guests, 19 board members, 56 staff/staff volunteers, 4 parents, and 26 students. They also had 30 no shows.
4. Other advancement updates include:
 - a) The Advancement Team is finishing out the year with additional personal donor solicitation.
 - b) Recently, the advancement team received \$58,000 in EITC donation, which supports innovative and educational programming at our Philadelphia campuses,

namely our professional preparation programs. This brings our EITC to nearly \$117,000 for the fiscal year of 2025, which is then to be spent in fiscal year 2026.

- c) There is a \$30,000 grant request under consideration with the Laffey-McHugh Foundation to support student interventions at Freire Wilmington. A decision will be made by the end of June.
- d) Also, the Advancement Team is preparing to do a “Meet the Grads” Class of 2025 donor update, which will then go out in late June/early July.
- e) Melanie notes her team is nearing the end of a multi month transition to a new donor database and communications platform.

B. Political Landscape

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

X. Governance

A. Annual Evaluation of Freire Network (Attachment 8A)

1. Leigh Botwinik shares that each year, both board members and Heads of School are asked to complete surveys evaluating the support provided by the Network Office to schools.
2. This feedback informs efforts to strengthen internal services and responsiveness.
3. The Finance and Business Operations team, led by Nathan, received notably high marks for the quality of service and support provided to schools. Appreciation was expressed for the team’s professionalism and consistency.
4. Areas for Improvement:
 - a) Special Education Compliance
 - (1) Cited as an area needing enhanced support; steps are already being taken to address it.
 - (2) The network is in the process of hiring a new position to be housed in the Network Office specifically to strengthen special education programming and compliance across schools.
 - b) External Affairs:
 - (1) Feedback pointed to the desire for increased visibility and relationship-building with local political figures and key community stakeholders.
 - (2) Leadership acknowledged this and committed to exploring ways to strengthen external engagement.
 - c) IT Communication:
 - (1) From Heads of School: a need for improved coordination between the Network IT team and school-based IT teams.
 - (2) The team will evaluate structures and processes to better align communication and support systems.

B. Board Member Self Evaluation (Attachment 8B)

1. Leigh Botwinik notes that this year’s board self evaluation results were shared at the recent Board retreat.
2. Paul Ramirez notes one key takeaway from the evaluation and retreat discussion:
 - a) The board’s most important governance priority moving forward is building and sustaining a strong, diverse pipeline of future board members.
 - b) All board members are encouraged to identify and recommend strong candidates as we seek to expand and strengthen the board.

Meeting Adjourned, 10:21 AM