



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 | 8 AM

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL INFO | Meeting ID: 893 5140 2100

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

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

Others Present: Kiara Allison, Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Promise Evans, Brian Galetto, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Jisu Jeong, Robert Lattanzi, Raquel Leach, Chris Moore, Kathleen O'Connell, Paul Ramirez, Melanie Reiser, Mya Reynolds, Nathan Yufer, Andrea Zepp

Meeting Start, 8:00 AM

I. Public Comment

- A. No public comment.

II. Resolutions

- A. Review & Approve Minutes from Board Meetings on June 11, 2025 (Attachment 1A)*
 1. The board reviews the minutes from the June 11, 2025 board meeting.
 2. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Anthony Royster seconds.
 3. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion.
- B. Approve Amended Conflict of Interest Policy (Attachment 1B)*
 1. Leigh Botwinik shares the purpose of this policy is to ensure TECH Freire's compliance with the Public Official & Employee Ethics Act 65 Pa.C.S. § 1101 et seq. ("Ethics Act").
 2. The Pennsylvania Department of Education communicated an additional requirement that schools establish multiple layers of reporting.
 3. The Board of Directors directed that staff annually distribute to each Board member a copy of the Policy accompanied by a plain-language summary of its key provisions to ensure all Directors understand permitted and prohibited actions.
 4. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Anthony Royster seconds.
 5. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion.
- C. Approve & Amended ELL Policy (Attachment 1C)*
 1. Leigh Botwinik shares that the previous ELL Policy used outdated terms and included procedural language that made the Policy unwieldy. The substance has not changed, but language is more up to date and the section about students who are both English Learners and have IEPs has been streamlined. Staff worked with the Charter Schools Office for guidance around compliant language.
 2. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Anthony Royster seconds.
 3. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion.
- D. Approve Admissions Policy (Attachment 1D)*
 1. Leigh Botwinik reported that Apply Philly Charter has implemented a new lottery process, referred to as the "Single Best Offer" system. Under this approach, families submit one application listing their preferred charter schools in rank order. All participating charter schools' lotteries will be conducted simultaneously, and the Apply Philly Charter system then issues a single offer to each applicant from the highest-ranked school on their list for which they were selected. The Policy has been updated to reflect this change in procedure.
 2. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to approve. Anthony Royster seconds.
 3. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion.
- E. Approve Revised FY26 Budget (Attachment 1E)*

1. Nathan Yufer shares that the capitation rate in the Revised FY26 Budget has been updated.
2. In June, the budget assumed a 10% increase in capitation. Since then, the City of Philadelphia released updated figures:
 - a) General Education capitation increased by 17.6%.
 - b) Special Education capitation increased by 12.6%.
3. For Tech, enrollment is still budgeted at 500 students as a conservative estimate, although current enrollment stands at 578 students.
4. Two additional FTEs were added to account for enrollment above 500 students.
5. With these adjustments, the revised budget projects a year-end surplus of \$790,000.
6. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve. Anthony Royster seconds.
7. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion.

III. Executive & Network Update

A. Vision Development

1. Paul Ramirez recaps his plan for stakeholder involvement in setting a vision for the Network.
2. Paul restates the four pillars:
 - a) Academics
 - b) Professional and career preparation
 - c) Sense of belonging
 - d) Addressing AI
3. Two working groups are proposed:
 - a) AI Vision Group – to meet twice (October and November)
 - b) General Vision Group – to meet twice (October and November) to focus on the other three pillars.
4. Meetings will include assigned readings to help inform and shape discussion. By the end of the sessions, each working group will provide recommendations and revisions for the vision.
5. Additional stakeholder engagement will occur with staff, students, and families.
6. By December or January, input will be presented to the CEO's Council for further review and refinement.
7. A larger virtual town hall is tentatively planned for January or February to release the vision publicly.
8. As discussed during the board retreat, the board will consider whether to undertake a formal strategic plan to carry the vision forward. Continued discussion on this topic will take place throughout the year.

IV. School Report

A. Staff & Student Update

1. Brian Galetto introduces both Jisu Jong & Mya Reynolds to the board.
2. Jisu Jeong (Head of Academics), oversees all state testing at TECH Freire along with curriculum implementation.
3. Originally was a teacher and an instructional coach at TECH Freire.
4. Jisu highlights the continued growth in student proficiency for testing and notes in the first year outperformed the School District of Philadelphia in English proficiency.
5. Mission Elements:
 - a) High-Quality Instructional Materials
 - (1) Implementation of corrective reading in 9–12 ELA courses for additional support.
 - (2) Seven standard-line curricula now in place; 67% of courses utilizing these standards-aligned curricula.
 - (3) Preparation for state standardized exams (ESOL).
 - b) Think, Build, Do
 - (1) Vertical alignment across grades 9–12.
 - (2) Students engaged in metacognition and engineering-design-inspired problem-solving.
 - (3) Emphasis on practical, real-world application and student sense of belonging.
6. Staff participation in Professional Engagement (PE) sessions to strengthen vertical touchpoints between teachers, families, and students.
7. TECH Freire's focus on fostering a supportive environment for academic and social-emotional growth.
8. Continue implementing vertically aligned curriculum and mission-driven instructional strategies.
9. Maintain active communication channels between teachers, students, and families to sustain growth and school culture momentum.

10. Mya Smith Reynolds this year she has two classes she loves Physics & English class.
11. She shares she recently engaged with a new poem, *My Last Message*, which sparked her deeper interest in poetry and creative linguistics.
12. Her and her classmates are designing and creating teacher door plates using woodwork and laser cutters in the maker space. It emphasizes hands-on learning and creative application of class concepts for her and the class.
13. She has returned to the peer mediation program to develop conflict resolution and empathy skills.
14. The upcoming overnight trip to the Poconos includes bonding exercises and training for peer mediation.
15. The program aims to equip students to serve as empathetic peer advisors.
16. Mya shares that since she is now in 11th grade, she is taking courses at Temple University.
17. Her current course: "Written Ethnicity and Cinematic Arts", involving film analysis and group discussion.
18. Experience exposes students to a college-level environment and promotes independence and preparation for post-secondary life.

B. Heads Report

1. Brian Galetto shares that TECH Freire is celebrating its 10th year anniversary this year.
2. Currently enrollment is at 578, near capacity. He recognizes Jisu Jeong and Jamillah Gibbs for creating effective systems and maintaining school safety.
3. Freire Network Academic Plan 2025-2026 (Attachment 2)
 - (1) Paul Ramirez shares a few highlights from the Freire Network Academic Plan 2025-2026.
 - (2) Quick-Win Initiatives (from May)
 - (a) Peer Mediation: Earliest network-wide launch to date; implementation underway on most campuses to promote a peaceful school environment.
 - (b) Special Education: The schools have been collaborating on professional development sessions to improve instruction and support for students with IEPs
 - (3) Network Initiatives
 - (a) The Network office Hired a Director of Student Services to support the Directors of Special Education at each Freire school, with a goal of improved academic outcomes for students with IEPs.
 - (b) Teaching & Learning team is working across schools on a cross-subject literacy initiative.
 - (4) Data and Strategies
 - (a) We will be scheduling an informational meeting for any Board members who wish to dig deeper into the performance data and strategies that inform our Schoolwide/Comprehensive Plans.
 - (5) ELA Performance
 - (a) Significant growth in several schools; continued analysis of middle-school data to sustain gains.
 - (6) Math Performance
 - (a) Middle school proficiency improved but performance among most groups of high school students remained flat.
 - (b) Paul has been evaluating our math curriculum, observing math classes, and speaking to math teachers to inform how to best move forward.
 - (7) Science
 - (a) We are monitoring the new assessments aligned to STEELS standards and reviewing curriculum alignment.
 - (8) Attendance
 - (a) Network-wide attendance growth, with notable gains at the high schools.
 - (9) Next Steps
 - (a) Continued data analysis and strategy refinement will be in the works for the remainder of the year.

4. Enrollment Update

a) See Heads Report

C. Health Insurance Renewal

1. Leigh Botwinik shares the following on the Health Insurance Renewal
 - a) Staff
 - (1) Last year, staff representatives provided feedback on benefits decisions.

- (2) Plan to repeat this process, convening staff representatives in the next month
- b) Board
 - (1) In October, after receive price quotes from the Broker, we can share with interested Board members. Last year Bruce, Kathleen, Linda, Scott participated in this early review. If anyone else is interested please let me know.
- c) Timeline & Next Steps
 - (1) Renewal options and costs from the broker likely won't be available for the October board meeting.
 - (2) Decisions must be finalized before the December board meeting.
 - (3) Proposal to schedule a November board meeting, potentially as a special Zoom meeting focused solely on benefits/insurance.
 - (4) Suggestion to incorporate a November meeting into future annual board meeting schedules for better planning.

V. Financials

- A. June 2025 Financial Report (Attachment 3)
 - 1. Ben Wainwright shares that TECH Freire has a current surplus of \$ 378,000.
 - 2. As of June 30, 2025, TECH Freire has average enrollment of 509 which is higher than the 490 budgeted.
 - 3. Total revenue for the year was \$10,600,000 due to the higher count for enrollment.
- B. Audit Update
 - 1. Nathan shares the audits are almost complete and will be presented at the next meeting.

VI. Advancement

- A. Advancement Report (Attachment 4)
 - 1. Melanie Reiser shares that the FY25 unrestricted fundraising target was set at a very ambitious \$775,000.
 - 2. While the goal was not met, we did raise \$549,396 in donations and pledges.
 - 3. Here are a few FY25 fundraising honorable mentions:
 - a) Across the Freire Network, 100% of board members, Network and School Leadership donated.
 - b) Majority of the FY25 pledges have been fulfilled.
 - c) Bridge to Wisdom was a huge success, celebrating 25 years of Freire Schools and honoring Kelly Davenport.
 - d) Joe Hennelly and the Advancement Team also had much success in raising additional funds to support the Experienceship program, in which students interned with companies across the city and earned a stipend.
 - e) The Advancement Team provided ongoing grant writing and management support with state grants, including PCCD Safety and Mental Health Grants (PA) and Stronger Connections (DE).
- 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.

VII. Governance

- A. Annual Board Visitation Day | October 15, 2025 at 9am
 - 1. Olivia Burgess reminds the board of the upcoming annual board visit day at FCSW on October 15, 2025 at 9am.

VIII. Executive Session

- A. Settlement & Release for CD (Attachment 5)
 - 1. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to move into Executive Session at 8:01 AM to discuss ***II.a.ii.: 65 Pa. C.S.A. § 708(a) (5): "To review and discuss agency business which, if conducted in public, would violate a lawful privilege or lead to the disclosure of information or confidentiality protected by law, including matters related to the initiation and conduct of investigations of possible or certain violations of the law and quasi-judicial deliberations."*** Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - 2. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion.
 - 3. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to exit Executive Session 8:10 AM. Linda Kilpatrick seconds.
 - 4. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in favor of the motion.

IX. Approve Settlement & Release for CD*

- A. Dawn Eubanks makes a motion to approve the Settlement and Release for CD. Anthony Royster seconds.
- B. Doreese Bull, Dawn Eubanks, Linda Kilpatrick, Bruce Lesser, Anthony Royster, and Scott Solomon vote in

favor of the motion.

Meeting Adjourned, 10:10 AM