MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FEBRUARY 4, 2026 | 8 AM
MEETING ID: 898 1692 3854
LOCATION: TECH FREIRE CHARTER SCHOOL (2221 N. BROAD STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19132)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Archibald, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Linda Kilpatrick, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, Chris Moore, Kathleen O'Connell

OTHERS PRESENT: Jabree Belcher, Leigh Botwinik, Kelly DeLeon, Dawn Eubanks, James Evans, Promise Evans, Brian Galetto, Kelsey Gavigan, Paul Ramirez, Melanie Reiser, Mya Smith Reynolds, Scott Solomon, Ben Wainwright, Madeline Weckel, Nathan Yufer

MEETING START, 8:04 AM

I. **Public Comment**
   - **A.** No public comment.

II. **Resolutions**
   - **A.** Review & Approve Minutes from December 10, 2025 *(Attachment 2A)**
     1. The board reviews the minutes from the December 10, 2025 board meeting.
     2. Bruce Lesser makes a motion to approve. Raquel Leach seconds.
     3. Paul Archibald, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Linda Kilpatrick, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Kathleen O'Connell vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.
   - **B.** Review & Approve FY25 Draft 990 *(Attachment 2B)**
     1. The board reviews the FY25 Draft 990.
     2. Linda Kilpatrick makes a motion to approve. Paul Archibald seconds.
     3. Paul Archibald, Lisa Hoffstein, Nicole Jenkins, Linda Kilpatrick, Raquel Leach, Bruce Lesser, and Kathleen O'Connell vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.

III. **Network Update**
   - **A.** Freire Schools Vision *(Attachment 3)*
     a. Paul Ramirez updates the board on the vision process. He shares that he has met with over 100 stakeholders from across the Freire Schools network including students, staff members, parents, and board members to elicit feedback and discussion. Last month, board leadership approved the final version of the vision which includes the following components: College Preparatory Learning, Professional Prep, Culture of Belonging, and Thriving with AI.
     b. Paul shares that in the coming months we will form focus groups for each component of the vision to set goals, strategies, and initiatives.
   - **B.** FCHS Head of School Search
     a. Paul shares that he is excited to have Chris Moore join the network office team at the completion of the school year. At the request of the board, Paul has been working with a search firm to better understand the Head of School selection process. At this time, we have several promising internal and external candidates and aim to complete the hiring process by mid-March.

IV. **School Report**
   - **A.** Staff & Student Report
     1. Promise Evans, Class of 2026, shares that students are continuing to experience challenges in commuting to school due to inconsistent service by Septa. Promise says that all of her college applications have been submitted and she is currently awaiting decisions from all schools. In the meantime, she is looking forward to the Panama trip in March, for which she

and other student participants have been holding fundraisers. At this time, they have raised close to $1000 to offset costs associated with the trip. Additionally, Promise explains she is very focused on her AP classes and preparing for AP tests. She notes that AP US History with Mr. Brian has been her favorite class this year.

B. Heads Report

1. Andrea Zepp reports on the Middle School. She shares that across the board, data remains strong. Enrollment is up from last year. Attendance continues to be better than last year, even with the snow and winter illness. She feels attendance is finally getting back to pre-pandemic levels, where over 90% of students are in the building each day. Andrea commends Brian Galetto, Head of School at TECH, for championing to keep our doors open following the snow storm. Andrea notes that school culture has improved since the fall and that the building feels good. STAR benchmarks results were good and based on the data, we have decided to pilot a new reading intervention program called STARI, which is focused on comprehension, as opposed to fluency. February kicked off our Black History Month celebrations, focusing this year on unsung heroes. One challenge she notes is coordinating coverage and providing continuity for students with nine staff members on parental or medical leave during the 2025-26 school year.
2. Chris Moore reports on the High School. He notes that trends across the board are positive. Chris notes that the Intent to Return survey given to staff indicates a much higher anticipated retention rate than in previous years. He also highlights recent student events including Senior Nights for both the boys and girls basketball teams, and an upcoming school dance being held from 4:00-7:00pm. He also reminds the board that twenty students and several staff members will travel to Panama during Spring Break.
3. January Freire Dashboard *(Attachment 4)*
    a) Schoolwide Plan/TSI Improvement Plan Progress Update
        (1) Kelsey Gavigan reports on our progress related to the TSI designation. The first glow has been the establishment of network wide infrastructure–the first thing we did was build sustainable systems that support our special education students. We've also established data tracking and progress monitoring related to culture, attendance and academics. Next we're focusing on cross campus coherence. On the dashboard, you can see attendance for special education students has increased across all campuses. This shows that the systems and routines we put in place to ensure students can access their education, including providing transportation, are helping students. You'll also see the proactive supports we've put in place around climate are having positive impacts as our students with zero out of school suspensions has increased. This shows we are reducing exclusionary discipline across the board. Further, we are working on strengthening our family partnerships.

C. Admissions Update

1. Leigh Botwinik shares that today is the lottery and students will be notified about acceptances on Friday. During the next board meeting, we'll have more to share related to early trends.

V. Financials

A. December 2025 Financial Report *(Attachment 5)*

1. Ben Wainwright reviews the December 2025 Financial Report. He explains that as of December 31, 2025, Freire Charter has a surplus of $1.59M and is projected to close the year with a total surplus of $404k. Enrollment stands at 517 students in the High School and 492 students in the Middle School, for a total of 1009 students. The average enrollment as of December 31, 2025 was 545 students at the High School and 505 at the Middle School, for a

total of 1,050. The budgeted revenue for the year is expected to be $24.4M. Ben makes three notes related to expenses:

a) We budgeted $1.6M for APS costs based on 32 students. Currently, the High School has 18 students enrolled in APS and the Middle School has 4 students enrolled in APS. This is 11 students less than we originally budgeted. We will hold this budgeted at $1.6M in case additional students require APS placement. This expense will be monitored closely throughout the year.
b) The Supplies category is at 61% of the yearly budget. This expense is mostly frontloaded in the beginning of the year as the School is getting ready to begin the school year.
c) The Capital Infrastructure and Improvements category has exceeded the original budget by $51K due to delays in the High School elevator construction project. Although this project was planned and budgeted for completion in FY25, the delay resulted in some of these expenses carrying over into FY26. We have updated our projections to reflect this change.

2. Bruce Lesser notes the decline in benchmark scores and reminds the board of their responsibility to ensure the school's spending is in line with advancing student outcomes.

VI. Advancement

A. Advancement Report *(Attachment 6)*

1. Melanie Reiser reports that the network-wide unrestricted fundraising target for FY26 is $675k – $125k per Philadelphia campus and $300k for Freire Wilmington. As a network, we have raised $296k, leaving us $379k to raise to meet our fundraising target. This spring, we'll hold board member-led fundraisers. Currently Freire Charter is at 100% board giving.

B. Political Landscape

1. Melanie notes that 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. Statement of Financial Interests 2025

1. Madeline Weckel reminds board members about the process for Statements of Financial Interests and requests that they submit the forms by Friday, February 27.

Meeting adjourned, 9:42 AM

**Requires Vote*

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 8:00 AM** at 1026 Market St.

Freire Charter School provides a college-preparatory learning experience with a focus on individual freedom, critical thinking, and problem solving in an environment that emphasizes the values of community, teamwork, equity, and commitment to peace.