



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES

Thursday, June 18, 2020 | 8 AM

Via Zoom

Board Members Present: Robert Blanchard, Sheela Dattani, Mia Davenport, John Kane, Nathan Moser, David Singleton, Mark Stellini, Tara Terry, Clint Walker, Nathan Will, Christian Willauer

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Kelly Davenport, Nate Durant, Max Matthews, Johnny Mills, Katie Pollard (Freire Charter School Wilmington Staff, Director of College Counseling), Paul Ramirez, Bill Ray, Melanie Reiser, Madeline Weckel, Henry Zheng (Freire Charter School Wilmington, Student)

8:09 AM, Meeting Start

I. Public Comment

- a) The Board takes a moment to honor George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter movement, and all those lost to police brutality. Freire Schools is actively planning ways to address both conscious and unconscious racism and white privilege within the network.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

- a) Minutes from Board Meeting on April 23, 2020
 - i. Nathan Will makes a motion to approve. David Singleton seconds.
 - ii. All in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

III. COVID Working Group

- a) 2020-21 School Calendar
 - i. The board reviews the 2020-21 School Calendar.
 - ii. Robert Blanchard asks for clarification on STAR Benchmarking. Kelly Davenport shares that STAR Benchmarking is an internal measurement that Freire Schools uses to see how students are progressing internally on the common course standards.
 - iii. Nathan Will makes a motion to approve. David Singleton seconds.
 - iv. All in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b) Emergency Delegation of Authority
 - i. Max Matthews shares that the Emergency Delegation of Authority would delegate the necessary authority to the Heads of School to take any action listed on the resolution in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, provided that all actions are approved by the CEO of Freire Schools Collaborative and the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board of Directors.
 - ii. Max also states at the last board meeting they approved the 2019-20 school year Emergency Delegation of Authority, now the board must approve another Emergency Delegation of Authority for the 2020-21 year.
 - iii. Robert Blanchard makes a motion to approve. Nathan Moser seconds.
 - iv. All in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

IV. School Report

- a) Senior Update, Henry Zheng

- i. Henry Zheng is a senior at Freire Charter School Wilmington, and he will be attending Denison University. Kelly Davenport asks how Freire has helped shape and mold him for his future.
- ii. Henry states that Denison University resembles Freire Wilmington's environment. Henry feels confident in his choice based on the close connections and warmth he felt when visiting Denison.
- iii. Nathan Moser asks how Henry believes Freire can improve for students like him and others in the future. Henry suggests offering life classes that allow students to learn how to do their taxes, teaches money management, and other necessary life skills.
- iv. David Singleton asks why Henry chose Denison University. Henry shares he fell in love with the faculty and staff at the school.

b) Staff Update

- i. Freire Wilmington College Report
 1. Katie Pollard shares that Freire Wilmington has 88% of students applying to college this year and is anticipating a 2% rise once additional seniors submit their applications. Over 79% of seniors were accepted to a 2-4-year college and Katie believes the number will rise as students hear from additional schools.
 2. Katie shares that Freire Wilmington seniors have been awarded over 5 million dollars in total scholarships. Even though Katie has not received many financial aid packets from students due to COVID-19, Katie shares students are still receiving them and are contacting her to share what their financial packet holds.
 3. Clint Walker asks what are the most common schools that students are attending in the coming school year. Katie shares most students are choosing HBCU's and major universities close to home and out of state.
 4. Nathan Will asks how the process has been this year especially with the thought of there being a virtual college experience. Katie says that students are more than willing to do what they can, especially those who must travel far out of state for school, to make the most of their college experience.
 5. Nathan Moser asks what percentage of students are graduating this year. Katie shares last year Freire Wilmington had 48 students total and 100% graduated. Overall numbers reported by the state were 85% because it included students who left the school at any point in their high school career. Lastly, Katie shares that the graduation rate for the Class of 2020 is 84%.

c) Heads Report

- i. Madeline Weckel shares some of the lessons Freire Wilmington staff have conducted over distance learning. Madeline states the beginning of the semester student participation started off low with only 50% of students completing assignments. Staff implemented a plan for the students and staff to better communicate and maintain the human touch.
- ii. Sheela Dattani asks if there is a plan for the fall where things may become more synchronized. Madeline shares that school leadership has been working on a plan for the fall semester; one option would be to live stream classes to smaller groups of students.
- iii. Nate Durant shares that graduation is still scheduled for July 28. Nate also shares that with the various things that are occurring in the world, Freire is working to help students understand and express their thoughts and feelings around social and racial injustice.
- iv. Staff from across the Freire Network will be participating in a summer book club, reading *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You: A Remix by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi*.
- v. June 2020 Data Packet

1. Leigh Botwinik shares that Freire had to reconceptualized how to track metrics such as attendance and participation to better represent student involvement in distance learning. Student attendance was measured by how many students turned in at least one assignment per day. During week 4 of distance learning, Freire Wilmington saw student attendance increase to 71%, over 67% in week 3.
- vi. Class of 2020 Graduation Ceremony
 1. Nate Durant shares Freire Wilmington's graduation will be held on July 28, 2020 at 6PM. A venue has been booked and safety regulations will be followed.
- d) Admissions Update
 - i. Nate Durant shares that current admissions numbers are lower than last year, but student retention is higher. Nate also shares that the virtual open house has been a hit for potential students and parents.
 - ii. Robert Blanchard asks why the other Freire Philadelphia campuses are more successful with admissions versus Freire Wilmington. Kelly Davenport shares she believes there is more hands-on communication with parents at our Philadelphia campuses versus Freire Wilmington.

V. Financials

- a) May 2020 Financial Report
 - i. Bill Ray shares the school's cash on hand as of May 31, 2020 is \$1.78 million. Freire Wilmington is currently projected to end the year with approximately \$1.32 million, representing 64 days of cash on hand. The increase is due to an increase in revenues based on the final state funding allocations and a reduction in expenses due to the building being closed.
 - ii. Freire Wilmington is projecting an annual surplus of \$330,000, which is \$256,000 over the budgeted surplus of \$74,000. Revenues exceeded the budget by \$126,000, mostly due to a supplemental funds received from the 21st Century Grant. Expenses decreased by \$130,000, mostly due to the facility being closed during the final quarter.
 - iii. Freire Wilmington is projected to pass the Financial Performance Framework for FY 2020. FY 2020 will be the 5th consecutive year of passing the framework.
 - iv. Bill shares that all revenues have been collected as of May 31, 2020.
 - v. Nathan Will makes a motion to approve. David Singleton seconds.
 - vi. All in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b) FY 2021 Preliminary Budget
 - i. Bill Ray shares Freire Wilmington's preliminary budget nets a surplus of \$2,000 (after debt service payments and capital purchases). This preliminary budget is based entirely on revenue estimates.
 - ii. Bill shares state funding is budgeted to decrease by \$188,000. State education funding levels are expected to remain flat. The budgeted decrease is due to a decrease in enrollment and the elimination of other FY 2020 one-time grants (RPL and Safety Grants).
 - iii. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - iv. All in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

VI. Advancement

- a) Advancement Update
 - i. Melanie Reiser shares that Freire Wilmington's Board giving is at 100% for both donations and pledges for FY 2020. This is a powerful indicator to prospective donors that our board believes in the work the school is doing.

- ii. Freire Wilmington received a generous donation from Midtown Brandywine Neighbors Association and are grateful to be part of an encouraging community that supports the progress and potential of our kids.
 - iii. Planning for Freire Wilmington's Bridge to Wisdom has been temporarily put on hold while Freire Schools waits to see what the restrictions on large gatherings will be in the coming seasons. When this event can be held, former Governor Jack Markell has agreed to be the honoree, and a planning committee has been assembled.
- b) Talking Points
- i. Melanie Reiser shares that Selena Castro, Recruitment Coordinator for Freire Schools, has successfully filled 94% of hiring vacancies network-wide for the upcoming school year. One major hiring goal was to increase the total number of applicants who identify as Black/POC to at least 40%. This year 61.8% of applicants identified as Black/POC.
 - ii. While engaging students in video-based therapy has been challenging, Freire's Emotional Supports Team was able to provide individual therapy to approximately 115 students during the COVID-19 closure.

VII. Governance

- a) Election of Board Members & Officers
 - i. Max Matthews reviews the proposed election of Board Officers to the Freire Wilmington Board for the coming year: Clint Walker as Chair, Christian Willauer as Vice Chair, John Kane as Treasure, and Sheela Dattani as Secretary.
 - ii. Nathan Will makes a motion to approve. David Singleton seconds.
 - iii. All in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- b) 2020-21 Board Meeting Schedule
 - i. The Board reviews the 2020-21 Board Meeting Schedule.
 - ii. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - iii. All in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- c) Freire Schools Evaluation
 - i. No comment.

VIII. Midtown Brandywine Committee Update

- a) Robert Blanchard shares that the committee said the donation to Freire Wilmington was approved unanimously and that there may be possible volunteers willing to help Katie Pollard along with the college admissions process.

Meeting Adjourned, 9:18 AM