



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

APRIL 17, 2025 | 8 AM

ZOOM: MEETING ID: 817 9511 5564

LOCATION: FREIRE CHARTER SCHOOL WILMINGTON | 201 W. 14TH ST., WILMINGTON DE 19801

Board Members Present: Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, Nathan Will

Others Present: Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Nate Durant, Katie Pollard, Tanza Pugliese, Paul Rameriz, Melanie Reiser, Nathan Yufer

Meeting Start, 8:01 AM

- I. **Public Comment**
 - A. No public comment
- II. **Executive Session**
 - A. Review Slate of Staff (Att.2)
 1. David Singleton makes a motion to move into Executive Session at 8:01 AM to discuss "Personnel matters in which the names, competency and abilities of individual employees or students are discussed, unless the employee or student requests that such a meeting be open." David Tuminaro seconds.
 2. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
 3. David Singleton makes a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:05 AM. Kate Bayard seconds.
 4. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- III. **Review & Approval of Minutes**, February 13, 2025 (Att.3) *
 - A. The board reviews the minutes from February 13, 2025.
 - B. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - C. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- IV. **School Report**
 - A. Staff & Student Update
 1. Rob Healy shared a heartwarming update highlighting the joy and positive energy currently radiating throughout the campus.
 2. One of the standout experiences was the recent Paris/London international trip, which concluded just last week. Staff and students who participated are expected to return home on Saturday, bringing with them unforgettable memories and strengthened bonds.
 3. Additionally, there's a collective sense of excitement as everyone looks forward to a well-deserved and restorative spring break next week.
 - B. Heads Report
 1. Nate proudly announced that today is Dragon Day, a beloved campus tradition filled with engaging games, spirited competitions, and community-building activities.
 2. As the final day before the spring break, Dragon Day provides a celebratory send-off for

students and staff alike, fostering school pride and joy.

3. Admissions Update

a) *See IV.4.a.*

4. Freire Network Dashboard (Att. 4A)

- a) Nate notes the dashboard revealed promising data regarding school attendance—showing a significant increase in attendance rates, reaching double-digit growth compared to the previous year.
- b) Nate extended his heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated staff for cultivating a learning environment where students feel motivated, inspired, and eager to participate.
- c) The recently received SAT testing data also reflected incremental academic progress in math and reading, underscoring the effectiveness of instructional strategies and student support
- d) There are various challenges that have come up this year but the culture team has been working diligently to ensure the campus is upholding peace.
- e) Conversations about strategic planning for the future are already underway in collaboration with school leadership and the network office.

5. Graduation Update**

- a) Graduation will be held on Wednesday, June 11th at Blue Rocks Stadium (Frawley Stadium, 801 Shipyard Dr, Wilmington, DE 19801) at 6:00PM

6. College Report (Att. 4B)

- a) 95% of the senior class has been accepted into various colleges and universities.
- b) The College Counseling Department continues to provide personalized support, ensuring each student is set up for postsecondary success.
- c) The team remains focused on reaching its ambitious goal of seeing 100% of seniors accepted into higher education institutions by the end of the academic year—a milestone that is well within reach thanks to the collective determination of staff and students alike.

V. Financials

A. February 2025 Financial Report (Att.5A)*

- 1. Nathan Yufer shares Freire Wilmington has received 99% of the expected state funding and 68% of the federal funding.
- 2. Freire Wilmington is projecting to end the year with \$9,700,000 in regard to revenue which is higher than the budget.
- 3. A total of \$9,500,000 in expenses which is also above the budget for the year
- 4. Significant expenses currently for Freire Wilmington include:
 - a) Substitute Services, This is being driven by some employees going on maternity leave, which increased our needs for substitute services. Our substitute monthly expenses increased by 66% from November to December.
 - b) Security Services, spent 91% of the security services budget through 02/28/25. Freire Wilmington has budgeted \$45,000 for Extra Duty Solutions; as of 12/31/2024, the school has incurred \$40,000 of expenses, which represents 89% of our budget for this vendor. It is imperative we ensure we have a safe learning environment for our students.
 - c) Equipment purchases are over budget due to the unexpected purchase of 100 Chromebooks to replace missing and broken Chromebooks prior to state testing. The financial team and Freire Wilmington are looking at remedying this issue next year with the possibility of computer carts.
 - d) David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - e) Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are

no votes against and no abstentions.

B. Presentation of Draft Budget for FY 2026 (Att. 5B)

1. Nathan shared there are 3 different versions of this budget.
 - a) The Best Case Scenario which shows the FY26 draft budget generating a surplus of \$130,000. The Stronger Connection federal grant ends in FY25 which is a reduction in revenue of \$316,000 for FY26. This budget assumes an 8% increase in State Funding and a 3% increase in local funding.
 - b) The Middle Case Scenario which shows the FY26 draft budget generating a deficit of \$129,000. The Stronger Connection federal grant ends in FY25 which is a reduction in revenue of \$316,000 for FY26. This budget assumes a 4% increase in State Funding and a 2% increase in local funding.
 - c) The Worst Case Scenario which shows the FY26 draft budget generating a surplus of \$190,000. The Stronger Connection federal grant ends in FY25 which is a reduction in revenue of \$316,000 for FY26. This budget assumes a 3% increase in State Funding and a 1% increase in local funding.
2. For enrollment it would be:
 - a) The School's FY26 enrollment is budgeted at 430 students. Special Education enrollment is budgeted at 30% of enrollment (127 students) which is in line with FY25 actuals
 - b) The School's FY26 enrollment is budgeted at 420 students. Special Education enrollment is budgeted at 30% of enrollment (126 students) which is in line with FY25 actuals
 - c) The School's FY26 enrollment is budgeted at 410 students. Special Education enrollment is budgeted at 30% of enrollment (125 students) which is in line with FY25 actuals.
3. Additional funding sources that will be included in the governor's budget:
 - a) Over \$120,000 toward substitute teacher funding & \$177,000 toward mental health funding.

C. CBOC Report

1. Nathan Yufer notes the CBOC is in full compliance.

VI. Advancement

A. Advancement Report (Att. 6A)

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 \$438,911 in donations and pledges toward the goal.
3. FY25 Fundraising progress surrounds the following:
 - a) Bridge to Wisdom honoring Kelly Davenport will be held on Tuesday, May 13th at the Independence Visitor Center at 5:30pm.
 - b) Our Valentine "thank you" cards to donors went out in February
 - c) 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 (Att. 6B)

1. Melanie reviews the Bridge to Wisdom Sponsor Packet with the board.

VII. Policies & Agreements

A. Review & Approve 2025-2026 School Calendar (Att. 7A)*

1. Leigh Botwinik reviews the school calendar with the board.
2. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
3. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton,

David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

- B. Review & Approve Teacher Equity Plan (Att.7B)***
 - 1. Katie Pollard reviews the Teacher Equity Plan with the board.
 - 2. 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.
 - 3. The Teacher Equity plan outlines what Freire Schools is doing as a network to recruit and retain qualified, experienced teachers.
 - 4. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - 5. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- C. Review & Approve Amended Anti-Bullying Policy #204 (Att. 7C)***
 - 1. Leigh Botwinik reviews the Amended Anti-Bullying Policy with the board
 - 2. In February the policy was introduced to the board and the board asked the policy to be revised.
 - 3. The improvements are to make it easier for anyone to report bullying acts.
 - 4. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - 5. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- D. Review & Approve the Schoolwide Plan (Att. 7D)***
 - 1. Leigh Botwinik shares the Schoolwide Plan with the board.
 - 2. The plan is a Federal programs requirement and holds all the same data from the academic plan shared in September.
 - 3. Attendance was heavily noted in the plan, along with the educational interventions to help fill gaps in foundational skills.
 - 4. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - 5. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- E. Approve Slate of Staff***
 - 1. The board reviews the Slate of Staff.
 - 2. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. Nathan Will seconds.
 - 3. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.

VIII. Governance

- A. Review & Approve 2025-2026 Board Meeting Schedule (Att.8)***
 - 1. The board reviews the board meeting schedule for 2025-2026.
 - 2. David Singleton makes a motion to approve. David Tuminro seconds.
 - 3. Kate Bayard, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Robert Mansell, David Singleton, David Tuminaro, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor. There are no votes against and no abstentions.
- B. Annual evaluation of Freire Schools Collaborative and Board self evaluation**
 - 1. 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.

2. A survey will be sent out in the coming weeks.

IX. Midtown Brandywine Committee Update

- A. Kate Bayard shares spring clean up has been ongoing lately in the neighborhood and has been a smooth transition into the spring season.

Meeting Adjourned, 9:09 AM