FREIRE
CHARTER WILMINGTON

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025 | 8 AM

ZOOM: MEETING ID: 810 5220 3737

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

Board Members Present: Brad Crouch, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Clint Walker, Khaliah Walker, Nathan Will

Others Present: Eldron Blackwell (Board Chair, Freire Schools Collaborative), Leigh Botwinik, Olivia Burgess, Tanza Pugliese, Paul Ramirez, Melanie Reiser, Nathan Yufer

Meeting Start, 8:02 AM

I. **Public Comment**
   A. No public comment.
II. **Review & Approval of Minutes**, June 12, 2025 (Att. 2)*
   A. The board reviews the minutes from the June 12, 2025 board meeting.
   B. Sheela Dattani makes a motion to approve. Robert Healy seconds.
   C. Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Clint Walker, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.
III. **Governance**
   A. Review & Approve Resume of Brad Crouch - Midtown Brandywine Committee (Att. 3)*
      1. The board reviews the resume of Brad Crouch to represent Midtown Brandywine Committee.
      2. Sheela Dattani makes a motion to approve. Khaliah Walker seconds.
      3. Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Clint Walker, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.
   B. Annual Board Visitation Day | October 15, 2025 at 9am
      1. Olivia Burgess reminds the board of the upcoming annual board visitation day on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at FCSW 9am -12pm
IV. **Policies & Agreements**
   A. Approve Amended Conflict of Interest Policy (Att. 4)*
      1. Leigh Botwinik shares the purpose of this policy is to set clear standards to ensure that personal interests never interfere with the Board's responsibility to act in the best interests of the School and its students.
      2. The Department of Education has communicated an additional requirement that schools' Conflict of Interest Policies include multiple layers of reporting. To align with this guidance, we are proposing to add the Network Office as an additional avenue for reporting potential conflicts.
      3. Sheela Datani makes a motion to approve. Brad Crouch seconds.
      4. Brad Crouch, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Clint Walker, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.
V. **Executive Sessionт**
   A. Personnel Matter
      1. Sheela Dattani makes a motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:08 AM to discuss "*29 Del Code § 10004(b)(9) "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."* Brad Crouch seconds.
      2. Brad Crouch, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Clint Walker, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.
      3. Brad Crouch makes a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:24 AM. Sheela Dattani seconds.
      4. Brad Crouch, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Clint Walker, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.

VI. Executive & Network Update

A. Vision Development
  1. Paul Ramirez recaps his vision plan from the June 11th board meeting.
  2. Paul restates his four pillars:
     a) Academics
     b) Professional preparation 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) to focus specifically on developing the vision for AI.
     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.

B. Freire Network Academic Plan 2025-2026 (Att. 6)
  1. Paul Ramirez shares a few highlights from the Freire Network Academic Plan 2025-2026:
     a) Quick-Win Initiatives (from May)
        (1) Peer Mediation: Earliest network-wide launch to date; implementation underway on most campuses to promote a peaceful school environment.
        (2) Special Education: The schools have been collaborating on professional development sessions to improve instruction and support for students with IEPs
     b) Network Initiatives
        (1) 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.
        (2) Teaching & Learning team is working across schools on a cross-subject literacy initiative.
     c) Data and Strategies
        (1) 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.
     d) ELA Performance
        (1) Significant growth in several schools; continued analysis of middle-school data to sustain gains.
     e) Math Performance
        (1) Middle school proficiency improved but performance among most groups of high school students remained flat.
        (2) Paul has been evaluating our math curriculum, observing math classes, and speaking to math teachers to inform how to best move forward.
     f) Attendance
        (1) Network-wide attendance growth, with notable gains at the high schools.
     g) Next Steps
        (1) Continued data analysis and strategy refinement will be in the works for the remainder of the year.

VII. School Report

A. Staff & Student Update
  1. Rob Healy shares how much positivity is evident in the school and in the classrooms.
  2. Students are excited about the new sports options. Also a fully equipped weight room has been donated to the school, with both students and staff benefiting.
  3. Kenya Beach (12th grade) is thankful to be a part of the meeting today.
  4. She has participated in many sports/extracurricular activities and clubs for all four years of her

academic career at Freire Wilmington.
5. She is very interested in being in Student Government before she graduates.
6. Ms. Beach hopes to attend college outside of the State of Delaware and study architecture.

B. Heads Report
1. Nate Durant echoes Rob's statement and thanks him for his support and tenacity.
2. Crystal Tumnirao is the new Director of Curriculum and has hit the ground running, excelling with the staff and her work with the English department.
3. A Schoolwide reading assignment took place this summer which was spearheaded by Mindy Hedgepeth and Crystal Tuminaro.
4. Delaware implemented a new school information system called Infinite Campus and the transition from Eschool to Infinite Campus has presented some challenges.
5. After school activities have begun with good attendance.

C. Admissions Update
1. Nate shares that enrollment is lower than projected in the original budget. In October the newly revised budget will be proposed to the Board.

VIII. Financials

A. June 2025 Financial Report (Att. 8)*
1. Nathan Yufer shares Freire Wilmington closed out FY25 with a $9,900,000 in revenue which is approximately $247,000 above the original budget.
2. As of June 30, 2025 Freire Wilmington received 102% of expected state funding, 100% of local funding, and 105% of federal funding.
3. Freire Wilmington ended the year with a $42,000 surplus which was front loaded toward several FY26 technology costs. The surplus is unaudited but the school does not expect any material changes.
4. Nathan Will makes a motion to approve. Brad Crouch seconds.
5. Brad Crouch, Sheela Dattani, Rob Healy, Jilian Mackenzie, Clint Walker, Khaliah Walker, and Nathan Will vote in favor of the motion. There are no votes against or abstentions.

B. CBOC Update
1. There is no update at this time.

C. Audit Update
1. Nathan shares the audit will be finalized soon and presented to the board at the next board meeting.

IX. Advancement

A. Advancement Report (Att. 9)
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).

X. Midtown Brandywine Committee Update

A. Brad Crouch shares his thanks and appreciation for being voted on the board.
B. Brad shares the last meeting was 9/9.25 and a few items came up about the School in regard to parking, traffic light/camera, and upcoming block party on October 11th.

Meeting Adjourned, 9:01 AM