



Freire Charter School - Response to Initial CSAC Report

November 16, 2018

The Board of Directors and leadership of Freire Charter School Wilmington sincerely appreciate the committee's time and consideration of our renewal application. At Freire, we have worked hard to build a rigorous, high-quality educational program with strong outcomes, maintain organizational compliance, and demonstrate prudent financial planning, management, and compliance. We have welcomed the opportunity to share our results with the committee and continue that conversation here.

In the initial report issued by the Charter School Accountability Committee on November 1, 2018 following its first meeting to consider the charter renewal application of Freire Charter School Wilmington on October 23, 2018, three pieces of additional information were requested to inform the committee's decision-making, which were as follows:

- A. School Climate: Provide a compliance plan for all staff to complete non-academic mandatory training.
- B. Educational Program, All Content Areas: A plan describing the school's process for reviewing and revising curriculum to ensure that instruction is aligned to the adopted state standards for the next five years.
- C. Educational Program, Science: Evidence that the curriculum is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards adopted by the State of Delaware in 2013 (i.e. a lesson from each grade level) and/or a signed Delaware Science Coalition Memorandum of Agreement.

Please find our response to each of the three requests attached here. We have created a separate appendix for each item.

Appendix A: Compliance Plan for Mandatory Non-Academic Trainings

All staff employed at Freire Charter School Wilmington will complete the necessary 12.5 hours of non-academic training every three years as mandated by 14 Del. Code § 4161 et seq. Freire Wilmington will use only DOE-provided or approved training programs when required by code, and will ask that staff take the courses in Schoology as tracked in PDMS to fulfill the course requirements unless an alternative is more practical for the school's operations.

At the beginning of each school year or upon employment, the Co-Head of School, Academic Supports is responsible for notifying all staff of the non-academic training program requirements as well as introducing them to the respective PDMS courses. Generally, we expect trainings to be completed early in the school year, with the Child Abuse and Suicide Trainings prioritized first. However, the remaining sessions can be completed during the remainder of the school year depending on individual circumstances.

The staff members themselves are asked to take responsibility for meeting training requirements and should pace the completion of all respective courses according to their own schedules. However, the Co-Head of School, Academic Supports, in conjunction with Freire's charter management organization, Build the Future, is responsible for ensuring that all staff are well supported in completing the non-academic trainings within the specified time.

The trainings required are as follows:

- Child Abuse and Child Safety Awareness, Prevention, Detection, and Reporting
 - o All staff will complete 3 hours of Child Abuse and Child Safety Awareness, Prevention, Detection, and Reporting training every 3 years (1 hour per year is generally expected).
 - o All new staff will be directed to complete at least 1 hour of this training within 30 days of employment unless the employee provides a completion certificate for the training dated no more than one year prior to the date of hire.
- School Bullying Prevention and Criminal Youth Gang Detection
 - o All staff will complete 3 hours of School Bullying Prevention and Criminal Youth Gang Detection training every 3 years (1 hour per year is generally expected).
- Suicide Prevention
 - o All staff will complete 4 ½ hours of Suicide Prevention training every 3 years. Staff will complete at least 90 minutes of training every year.
- Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault
 - o New administrators, nurses, and counselors will be required to complete 2 hours of this training within a year of employment.
 - o All other staff will complete 2 hours of Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault Training every three years to fulfill the "2 hours of additional non-academic trainings" established in §4162 (a)(4) of the Delaware Code, unless the employee takes an alternative training as described below.
- Additional training mandates may apply beyond those covered by this subchapter of the school code, such as Restraint/Seclusion Reporting Training for administrators.

The School's procedures for trainings taken outside of individual PDMS accounts are as follows:

- General Procedures:
 - o For any training conducted at the School, participants will sign in, the School will keep an attendance log, and the school will provide completion certificates.
 - o For any training conducted outside the School, employees must have the training approved in advance by the Co-Head of School, Academic Supports and provide a completion certificate afterward.

- The Co-Head of School, Academic Supports will forward copies of all attendance logs or outside completion certificates to the Build the Future operations team, who will enter the information into a tracking spreadsheet.
- Employees Without IMS Accounts:
 - At this time, all school employees require an IMS account for business reasons. In the event that the School ever hires support staff who do not require IMS accounts, a school administrator will log in to Schoology and facilitate the training in live format.
- Training Types:
 - Child Abuse trainings must be on the DSCYF/DOE-approved list.
 - The School will contact the Office of School Climate before approving any Bullying/Youth Gang training other than that provided by DOJ/DOE, Suicide Prevention training other than that provided by DHSS/DSCYF/DOE, or Teen Dating Violence/Sexual Assault training other than that provided by DDVCC.
 - For the two hours of additional non-academic trainings, employees other than administrators, nurses, and counselors may make a request to the Co-Head of School, Academic Supports to take an alternative training in place of the Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault course. Employees must submit a written request showing that the proposed training is evidence based and related to one of the topics in 14 Del. Code, Chapter 41, Subchapter II.
- Schoolwide Trainings:
 - There may be reasons such as scheduling or identification of a suitable alternative training that meets the School's needs that the Co-Head of School, Academic Supports decides to provide live training to the entire staff or groups of staff. In this case, the School will follow the tracking procedures outlined above.

The School's procedure for tracking training completion is as follows:

- The Co-Head of School, Academics will be the designated individual responsible for trainings, however the Build the Future operations team is delegated responsibility for tracking.
- Build the Future will maintain a spreadsheet as the School's authoritative tracking spreadsheet. The initial source of data will be the Non-Academic Mandatory Training Course Progress by Employee report available in EdInsight, and the tracking spreadsheet will follow the format of that report (including use of cohorts). The tracking spreadsheet will then be supplemented with additional data as provided through the procedures described above for courses taken outside of PDMS.
- Build the Future will periodically update the tracking spreadsheet through the following procedures:
 - Obtain an employee roster highlighting new start and end dates from Human Resources
 - Run the EdInsight report
 - Compare the two reports and resolve discrepancies. This includes moving terminated employees to an archived list, adding new hires to the tracking list, and marking contractors with IMS accounts as exempt (per the definition in 14 Del. Code § 4161 (9)).
 - Update the tracking list with trainings employees have completed since the last review.
 - Update the list with any trainings taken outside PDMS using attendance rosters or completion certificates, including prior child abuse training for new hires.
- After updating the list, Build the Future will individually contact each employee with a list of any outstanding trainings for the current school year.
- Build the Future will generally update the list and contact employees at the following times:
 - Prior to the start of pre-service professional development each school year
 - Midway through pre-service professional development
 - Twenty-one days after the typical start date for staff new for the school year, specifically for the child abuse training.

- Prior to two professional development days during the school year during which the school administration will set aside time for employees to complete the trainings.
- Prior to the last week of school.

The School's actions to ensure compliance are as follows:

- The School will set aside appropriate time during professional development for staff to take the trainings.
- The training requirement will be referenced in the onboarding packet and employee handbook.
- The School will remind employees about training requirements via an email or memo at the start of each school year.
- The School will include training completion in the check-out process at the end of each school year for 10-month employees.

Appendix B: Five-Year Curriculum Alignment Plan

The hallmark of Freire Wilmington's educational model is a safe, friendly, rich, rigorous, college preparatory education for its students, built around high expectations, clearly delineated instructional and cultural principles, a nonviolent atmosphere, a data driven cycle of instruction, an emphasis on student voice, and a focus on social justice. Our curriculum is designed to reflect depth, programmatic coherence, and continuity, while fostering critical thinking and integration of reading writing, numeracy and research skills. Our approach is based on research and best practices, such as those described in the National Institute for School Leadership's course material. "Principles of Learning and Their Implications" (Hill and Burney) describes three principles of curriculum: a focus on powerful knowledge, a 'thinking curriculum,' and an aligned instructional system.

To maintain an effective curriculum, we continuously ensure that the curriculum is aligned to state standards, our mission and vision of the school, as well as the continuous innovations of the 21st century. Throughout the year, we review and analyze the curriculum through regular formal and informal professional development sessions and grade level and subject area team meetings. We use this time to better understand where and how we can adjust the curriculum to maximize effective instruction and maintain the rigor and alignment of the curriculum.

When updating the curriculum, the Co-Head of School, Academics, with support from Freire's charter management organization Build the Future, is ultimately responsible for responding to external and internal factors that require changes to the learning program from the planning stages through ensuring that these updates are carried out schoolwide. However, at the center of the Co-Head's actions are input from all members of the learning community, including other administrators, grade team leaders, special education staff, and teacher mentors. All parties collaborate in monthly all-staff professional development sessions, formal and informal small group meetings, and set aside time for department meetings.

The Heads of School and Build the Future collaborate to monitor for external factors that may drive a need for curriculum changes. Shifts in state regulations or national standards, for instance, are closely watched to ensure that the school is fully aligned with curriculum expectations. The Heads of School monitor the Weekly Memo to Chiefs and Charter Directors for important announcements. The Director of Operations at Build the Future monitors legislative and regulatory changes at the federal and local levels with help from the Delaware Charter Schools Network. Finally, the CEO and Director of Learning at Build the Future are attuned to national trends in education, college, and the workforce that may drive cultural needs to adapt curriculum. When a major change occurs, all of these individuals work together along with the performance management team to craft a plan to make necessary changes as well as how to measure success. We will continue to meet the curricular requirements of 14 Del. Code §512 (4), (5), (6), and (7) and all other applicable regulations and comply to the extent the state requires. We adapt and improve in accordance with state and federal changes to features of the curriculum, keeping pulse points on these updates to respond adequately and promptly.

Internally, Staff and the Co-Head of School, Academics use an intensive review of the curricula against student data to inform their curricular updates, with an understanding too that sometimes the assessments themselves have not yet been fully updated to the latest standards. Student data analysis is also at the core of our professional development sessions and curricular updates. It is through the analysis of data that we are able to set challenging yet achievable targets for students aligned to their unique academic needs and state standards. The performance management team from Build the Future supports Freire Wilmington's school leadership and all instructors with higher-level data analysis. The Co-Head of School, Academics facilitates individual teachers reviewing student-level data with a twofold purpose. First, teachers can use

such data throughout the year to help identify and respond to struggles for particular students or classes as a whole. Second, teachers can use this data to identify where the alignment of instruction to standards could be improved. It is through this kind of analysis that we help teachers take ownership for the strength of our curriculum at a detailed level.

To determine if the curriculum is being effectively implemented, we carry out a periodic review of the scope and sequence of all courses vertically to ensure alignment to state standards as well as our internal curricular targets. We also review the teacher-made, school level, state, and national assessments and assessment schedules to ensure that our curriculum and instruction are aligned to these to produce successful student outcomes. If our review processes identify areas of improvement for curriculum alignment, the Co-Head of School, Academics will supervise a curriculum revision process in conjunction with other relevant staff. A team will review planning documents, including scope and sequences and curriculum maps, to ensure the pacing and alignment of the course is adequate. Finally, to determine if the curriculum is up to date, the school conducts periodic reviews of current technology and research on curriculum in order to expand the curriculum, amend curriculum, or find partnerships for the school to support such changes.

Appendix C: Evidence of Next Generation Science Standards Alignment

In 2013 at the time of Freire's initial charter application, Delaware had just taken steps to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards. As such, Freire Wilmington had worked during the course of our initial application to ensure that its science curriculum would be aligned to these newly adopted standards.

Indeed, after CSAC's initial meeting to consider Freire's new charter application on January 28, 2014, CSAC issued its initial report on February 24, 2014 which requested that Freire show alignment to Delaware and Next Generation Science Standards. In Freire's response to the initial report submitted March 11, 2014, within Section 1.3, Curriculum and Instructional Design, we provided an "Attachment B" to our response document, which showed how our units aligned to the high level of NGSS. This can be found on pages 27 to 33 of the compiled document on the DOE website¹.

Freire also submitted revisions to its science curriculum on March 24, 2014, which included a sample unit scope and sequence. This submission can be found on the DOE website².

In the final CSAC report, the following determination was stated on page 3: "The applicant was given the opportunity to resubmit [science] curriculum documents to demonstrate alignment, and the applicant has satisfied this requirement."

As stated at the time we submitted our renewal application, our curriculum has not changed since our original charter application in 2014 prior to the school opening. Further, the Department's charter renewal application states that curriculum resubmission "is only required if it has changed since it was last approved." Rather than show again our alignment to NGSS standards, we thus wish to refer to our original application's supplements and the committee's original approval as evidence that our curriculum demonstrates alignment to NGSS standards.

Further we have been in contact with Tonyea Mead from the curriculum workgroup referencing this original evidence of alignment and whether there is anything else Freire could submit to provide additional clarification. As of Friday, November 16, 2018 (the submission deadline for Freire's response to the initial CSAC report), the workgroup was still reviewing our material and we have not received any further requests.

¹ <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/domain/151/freirerespsacirfinal031114.pdf>

² <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/domain/151/freiresciencecurriculumaddendum.pdf>