



## 1. Overview

### FREIRE CHARTER SCHOOL WILMINGTON



#### 1.1. School Profile

Review the following information for accuracy.

##### Q1. Name of School

- Freire Charter School Wilmington
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

##### Q2. 2015

- Year School Opened
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

##### Q3. Fill in the school's "Current Enrollment" at the time of application submission.

445 enrolled with a unit count of 410

##### Q4. Approved Enrollment



- 500
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q5.School Address**

- 201 W. 14th Street | Wilmington, DE 19801
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q6.District(s) of Residence**

- Red Clay Consolidated School District
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q7.Website Address**

- <https://www.freirewilmington.org/>
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q8.Name of School Leader**

- Madeline Weckel
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q9.School Leader Email**

- [Madeline.weckel@freirecharterschool.org](mailto:Madeline.weckel@freirecharterschool.org)
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q10.School Leader Phone Number**

- (302) 407-4800
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q11.Name of Board President**

- Clint Walker
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Q12.Board President Email**

- [clintwalker52@gmail.com](mailto:clintwalker52@gmail.com)
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]



**Applicant Comments :**

clint.walker@freirewilmington.org

**Q13.Mission Statement:** Freire Charter School Wilmington 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, and nonviolence.

- Correct; this is our Mission Statement
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

**Applicant Comments :**

Freire Charter School Wilmington 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.

**Q14.The table lists any approved minor and/or major modifications over the course of the school's current charter term.**

Date	Modification Request	Outcome
10/1/18	Decrease enrollment from 560 to 500, beginning in school year 2019-20.	Approved

- Correct
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]




## 2. Student Demographics

Q15. Review the Student Demographics table (see Resources), complete the last column, and upload the revised document.


Upload Required File Type: pdf, excel Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 1

### Resources



FREIRE\_Student Demograp...

### Applicant Evidence :



Q15FCSWRenewal (1).pdf

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
students enrolled at 9/30	479	487	501	503	450
grades served	8-12	8-12	8-12	8-12	8-12
Native American	0.40%	0.20%	0.40%	0.00%	0.00%
Asian	1.30%	1.00%	0.20%	0.20%	0.44
Black	71.00%	74.70%	75.90%	78.30%	81.80%
Hispanic	13.40%	11.70%	12.40%	11.70%	8.00%
Multi Racial	4.20%	3.30%	2.40%	2.40%	1.60%
Pacific Islander	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
White	9.60%	9.00%	8.80%	7.40%	8.20%
ELL	1.90%	2.30%	2.40%	3.00%	3.80%
low income	43%	39%	39%	39%	47%
sped	15%	21%	20%	22%	27%



### 3. School Enrollment Trends

SCHOOL YEAR	AUTHORIZED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	PERCENT ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2019-20	500	487	97%	8-12
2020-21	500	501	102%	8-12
2021-22	500	503	106%	8-12
2022-23	500	450	90%	8-12

#### Q16. Explain successes or challenges of implementing the school's recruitment plan.

Enrollment was strong during the first three years of our charter term. However, despite utilizing the same recruitment efforts last year, we did not meet our enrollment target. Strategies that have worked for us in the past include hosting open house events at the school, print advertising, social media advertising, and maintaining a web presence on our social media accounts. Our strategies have also included tabling in the Christiana Mall to reach families in the community.

It's unclear what exactly has changed since COVID that has led to different results, but we are seeing more no-shows for open houses and less consistent communication from prospective families. In response, we are trying new ways of advertising, including movie theater ads, advertising with local neighborhood associations, and targeted digital advertising. We have also added more opportunities for families to learn about the school, including virtual lunch hour open houses and instant decision dinners. Additionally, we are trying to increase our presence in new spaces by tabling at movie theaters and various community events. Lastly, we are in the process of revamping our website and adding more digital content to tell our story in a more compelling way to the families visiting our website. We will also begin a conversation internally examining our mission/programmatic elements to ensure they are the most salient and relevant to the community we seek to serve.



#### 4. School Reenrollment Trends

SCHOOL YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS REENROLLED	PERCENT OF STUDENTS REENROLLED
2019-20	318	73.95%
2020-21	353	88.03%
2021-22	338	85.14%
2022-23	276	75.42%

Q17. Explain successes or challenges of implementing the school's retention plan.



Freire Wilmington serves grades 8-12. Since 8th grade is a natural exit point for many students seeking a fresh start at a new high school, we typically see the lowest re-enrollment in the transition from 8th to 9th grade. (2021-22 was an exception to this pattern.)

STUDENT RETENTION RATES - From Charter School Annual Reports				
Grade	18-19	19-20	2020-21	2021-22
8				
9	54%	58%	73%	84%
10	64%	68%	91%	75%
11	76%	81%	91%	86%
12	78%	92%	89%	94%
schoolwide	66%	74%	88%	85%

In order to maximize re-enrollment, we distribute surveys to students in all grade-levels each spring asking if they intend to return the following year. Our Academic Advisors meet with students who answer “not sure” to identify possible barriers to re-enrollment and provide additional support where necessary. This strategy has successfully led to increased student retention in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 years as compared to earlier in the charter term.

That said, we expect our schoolwide retention rate for the 2022-23 year to be approximately 75%. COVID exacerbated certain issues leading to a lower re-enrollment rate for 2022-23. Specifically, upon return to in-person learning post pandemic, some students struggled to meet Freire Wilmington’s high standards. For example, we require students to earn a grade of 75% or higher to pass a course, while the passing grade at most area high schools is 60%. This means that sometimes students leave Freire Wilmington so they will be promoted to the next grade, rather than attend summer school or repeat a grade-level at our school. However, we felt it critical to hold the line, since a passing grade of 75% aligns with college readiness integral to our college prep mission and our high expectations and high supports for every student.

Additionally, some students also struggled emotionally and behaviorally after being absent for so long from the traditional school environment during the pandemic. Again, we felt it imperative to hold the line in enforcing our Code of Conduct and assigning appropriate consequences such as suspensions and detentions. Our standards resulted in some students choosing to transfer out.

A key root cause of attrition in the past three years is transportation. Some families have expressed that long commutes with especially early pick-up times are problematic. During our first charter term, we had an 8 AM start time for school. However, during this charter term, we had to start and end the school day earlier than desired to enable our bus provider to serve us and another school with the same buses/drivers each day. While we have always had a strong relationship with our bus provider (Lehane’s), this change not only impacted re-enrollment but also attendance and lateness, as students who missed their bus pick up would either arrive late or in some cases, not be able to attend at all. This summer, we were able to work out



a slightly later start time for 2023-24, by 15 minutes. We would still prefer an 8 AM start and/or to add an additional bus line to address the length of student commutes, as these changes would be most conducive to student learning. We will continue to look for creative ways over the next charter term to optimize our transportation.





## 5. Academic Performance

Delaware operates under the belief that all schools benefit from continuous improvement – including those that receive exceeds expectations ratings – to best support all students. The Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) ([https://doewebmaster.wpeenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/dssf\\_one\\_pager\\_final.pdf](https://doewebmaster.wpeenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/dssf_one_pager_final.pdf)) outlines the accountability standards by which all Delaware public schools are measured. This state- and school-level data helps identify each school's needs and determine how best to support students across the state.

DSSF measures the following areas to determine school success. This annual data is publicly available on the Delaware Report Card (<https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/>).

- Academic achievement – Proficiency for ELA and math (grades 3-8 and 11)
- Academic progress – Growth in ELA and math (grades 4-8); includes growth of the lowest and highest performing students in a school
- School quality/student success – On-track attendance (K-12), science proficiency (grades 5, 8 and biology), social studies proficiency (grades 4, 7 and 11), college/career preparedness (grades 9-12), and on-track in 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Graduation rates – 4-year, 5-year and 6-year adjusted cohort graduation rates
- English language proficiency (ELP) – Progress toward English language proficiency (grades 1-12)

Due to COVID-19, all school year 2019-20 assessment and accountability requirements were waived by the U.S. Department of Education. Additionally, due to the impact of COVID-19 on learning and learning environments, accountability was waived for school years 2020-21 and 2021-22. The school's assessment data is available below (see also Charter School Report Card Link (<https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/detail.html#aboutpage?scope=school&district=9607&school=4055>)). Attached are the school's annual reports (see also Annual Reports (<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2654>)). **Note: Assessment data is provided in lieu of DSSF results for the years impacted by COVID-19. School year 2022-23 DSSF preliminary results will be provided to renewing charter schools by September 15, 2023.**

### 5.1. Delaware School Success Framework

	2019-20			2020-21			2021-22		
	Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations			Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations			Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations		
	Freire	District <sup>1</sup> %	State %	Freire	District %	State %	Freire	District %	State %
English Language Arts				*	45.00%	42.00%	19.57%	44.45%	42.26%
Mathematics				*	30.00%	26.00%	4.34%	31.28%	29.48%
Science				*	25.00%	22.00%	*	20.00%	19.00%
Social Studies				32.00%	34.00%	31.00%	*	32.00%	28.00%
4-Year Graduation Rate (Class of 2021)				83.04%	89.04%	87.02%	80.51%	89.57%	87.02%
5-Year Graduation Rate (Class of 2020)				86.61%	90.30%	83.14%	N/A	N/A	88.42%
6-Year Graduation Rate (Class of 2019)				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	88.7%
Chronic Absenteeism <sup>2</sup>				24.66%	15.93%	20.31%	69.29%	22.16%	24.77%

\*This data has been suppressed for student privacy.

<sup>1</sup> Red Clay Consolidated School District is Freire's district of residence.

<sup>2</sup> Chronically absent students are those students who are missing 10% or more of school days throughout the school year. Absences may be excused or unexcused, which are determined by local board policy.



Preliminary 2022-23 DSSF Results

PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

2018-19 DSSF Results

Freire Charter School Wilmington's DSSF ratings are:

Indicators	Weight	Points	Points Earned
Academic Achievement	20%	100	35
Academic Progress	25%	125	68
School Quality/Student Success	25%	37.5	34
Graduation Rate	20%	n/a	n/a
Progress toward English Language Proficiency	10%	n/a	n/a
<b>Total Points Earned</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>262.5</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Overall Percentage/Rating</b>			<b>52%</b>

By September 2023, our expectation is to achieve "Meets" or "Exceeds" ratings on each metric area of the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF). Each year, we will show growth within each metric area, putting us on track to achieve our academic performance expectations. This progress will be monitored through our annual performance review.


Indicators/Measures	Weight	Metric Value	Points Possible	Points Earned
<b>Academic Achievement</b>	<b>20%</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>8</b> Well Below Expectations
Proficiency ELA (grades 3-8 and 11)	10%	12.82%	50	6
Proficiency Math (grades 3-8 and 11)	10%	3.42%	50	2
<b>Academic Progress</b>	<b>25%</b>		<b>106.25</b>	<b>53</b> Well Below Expectations
Growth in ELA (grades 4-8)	10%	36.76%	50	18
Growth in Math (grades 4-8)	10%	59.03%	50	30
Growth of lowest quartile ELA (grades 4-8)	1.25%	56.56%	N/A	*
Growth of highest quartile ELA (grades 4-8)	1.25%	22.00%	N/A	*
Growth of lowest quartile Math (grades 4-8)	1.25%	82.24%	6.25	5
Growth of highest quartile Math (grades 4-8)	1.25%	36.67%	N/A	*
<b>School Quality/Student Success</b>	<b>25%</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>66</b> Well Below Expectations
On Track Attendance (grade K-12)	3%	46.30%	12.5	6
Proficiency Science (grade 8 and Biology)	5%	5.06%	25	1
Proficiency Social Studies (Grades 7 and 11)	5%	16.42%	25	4
College and/or Career Preparedness (9-12)	8%	88.02%	37.5	33
On Track in 9th Grade	5%	88.02%	25	22
<b>Graduation Rate</b>	<b>20%</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>82</b> Approaching Expectations
4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	15%	80.51%	75	60
5-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	3%	86.61%	13	11
6-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	2%	93.33%	12	11
<b>Progress toward English Language Proficiency</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b> Well Below Expectations
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>481.25</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>Overall Percentage / Rating</b>				<b>43%</b> Well Below Expectations

Q18. Reflect on your school's academic performance in relation to the goals set forth in the performance agreement. Please reference the specific Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) measures listed below. Highlight successes, challenges, root causes, and describe how the school will address the challenges.

- a. Academic Achievement
- b. Academic Progress
- c. School Quality/Student Success
- d. Graduation Rate (if applicable)
- e. Progress toward English Language Proficiency

Please see the attached document.

Applicant Evidence :



Q18FCSWRenewal (1).pdf

Uploaded on **9/28/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

**5.2. Supplemental Academic Performance Data**




Q19. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information. In this section, you may provide graphs and/or charts to supplement your narrative as **Appendix 1**.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 20

**Applicant Comments :**

Please see our response to Q18 attached here.

**Applicant Evidence :**


Q18FCSWRenewal (1).pdf

Uploaded on **9/28/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

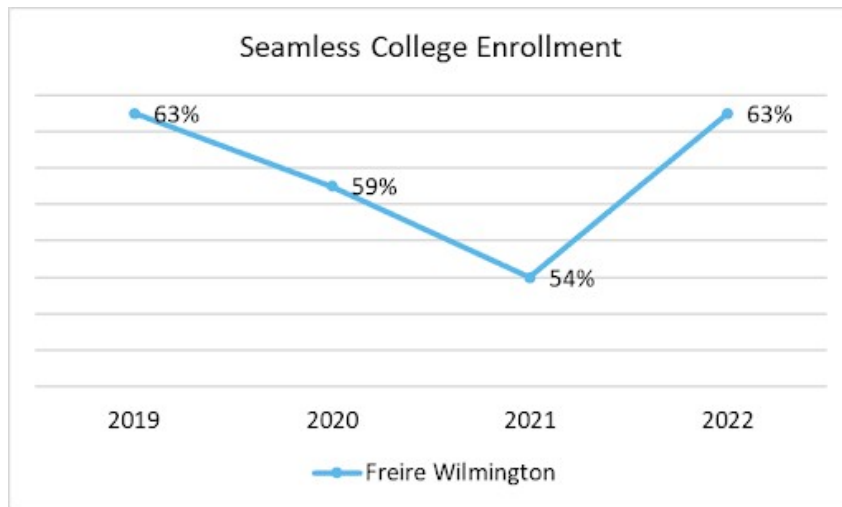
Q20. Reflect on other aspects of the school's academic performance that may not be captured by the DSSF. Highlight successes, challenges, root causes, and describe how the school will address the challenges.



A critical academic metric relative to our college preparatory mission is the percent of students accepted to college. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to preparing students for college – 87% of seniors in 2023 applied to at least one two or four-year college, and 85% received at least one acceptance. A handful of students were awarded *full* scholarships, and collectively, the class was awarded more than \$10 million dollars in scholarships and aid. The class enrolled in over 20 colleges and universities – among them: Delaware State, University of Delaware, and Drexel University.

To strengthen and further emphasize college prep in 2023-24 and in our next charter term, we will provide orientation for all 8th & 9th graders that builds understanding of our Nonviolence Policy and college prep mission. All 8th and 9th grade students will participate in a full day of orientation focused on school culture, student expectations, and the supports available. Additionally, we hired The Princeton Review to provide 60 hours of SAT Preparation to all 11th Grade students during the Math Analysis block; and through the Princeton Review, administer weekly practice items and quarterly practice tests leading up to the SAT in March. Moreover, we will bolster opportunities for Dual Enrollment by partnering with University of Delaware to offer EntreX and LeadX to 12th grade students, partnering with Stockton University to convert all AP courses to dual-credit eligible courses through their dual enrollment program, and continuing to offer supplemental dual enrollment options through Wilmington University and Del Tech.

Freire Wilmington has one of the highest seamless college enrollment rates of non-selective schools in New Castle County. In 2019, 63% of our graduates enrolled seamlessly compared to a state average of 58%. Covid did impact our college enrollment rates; however, with concerted effort at reestablishing our college admissions supports, we were able to bounce back to our 2019 levels in 2022, and look to build on that in the next charter term.



**Q21. Provide and reflect on additional information regarding academic-related indicators your school would like the Accountability Committee to consider. (This could include social and emotional development, attendance and retention, student engagement, student discipline, and others as appropriate.) Highlight successes, challenges, root causes, and describe how the school will address the challenges.**

As stated earlier, we implemented a plan during the 2022-23 school year to decrease the chronic absenteeism that arose upon the return to in person learning. We were thrilled to see those efforts pay off. The percent of students attending 90% or more of instructional days climbed 16 percentage points as of June of 2022-23 as compared to the prior year and average daily attendance rose 4 points from the prior year. We are still nowhere near where we want to be with attendance; however, our experience over the last year does give us confidence that when we take a problem seriously, develop a sound strategy, and monitor frequently for implementation, measurable improvement is possible. We plan to bring this same focus and determination to the strategies outlined in Q18.





## 6. Organizational Performance

The Organizational Performance Framework reflects expectations the charter school is required to meet through state and federal law and the charter performance agreement, and seeks to provide information regarding these key questions:

- Is the school organizationally sound and well operated?
- Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations and sound public stewardship?
- Is the school meeting its obligations and expectations for appropriate access, education, support services, and outcomes for students with disabilities?

### 6.1. Organizational Performance Framework

#### SUMMARY AND OVERALL RATINGS

YEAR	Education Program				Governance & Reporting			Students & Staff		Facilities, Transportation, Health, & Safety	OVERALL RATING
	Mission Fidelity	Applicable State & Federal Requirements	Students with Disabilities	English Learners	Governance & Public Stewardship	Oversight & School Management	Reporting & Requirements	Student Rights	Teacher Certification and Hiring		
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b		
2019-20	M	M	AS	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Meets Standard
2020-21	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Meets Standard
2021-22	M	AS	AS	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Meets Standard

M: Meets Standard  
AS: Approaching Standard  
F: Far Below Standard

#### PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

*By September 2023, our expectation is to achieve an overall rating of “Meets,” as measured by the Organizational Performance Framework. Each year, we will be on track to demonstrate performance aligned with those organizational performance expectations. This progress will be monitored through our annual performance review.*

Q22. Describe the school’s organizational performance over the current charter term. (This section is for the school to address any overall rating where the school has not met standards. The school will be able to address individual metrics in the sections below.)



In 2019-20 and 2020-21, Freire Wilmington met standard in each category.

In 2021-22 Freire Wilmington met standard in every category except Educational Program 1b (Applicable State and Federal Requirements) and Educational Program 1c (Students with Disabilities), where we received an overall rating of Approaching Standard.

The rating for 1b stems from metric 1b3, where Freire Wilmington fell short of the 95% test participation requirement. Prior to the pandemic, Freire Wilmington regularly met the 95% threshold.

Test Participation Rates								
	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21*	21-22	22-23
DESSA Science				98%	NA	41%	84%	82%
SAT ELA			96%	99%	94%	75%	75%	87%
SAT Math			96%	99%	94%	75%	75%	87%
SB ELA	97%	97%	95%	97%	NA	46%	92%	81%
SB Math	96%	97%	95%	97%	NA	43%	92%	81%
*School was operating virtually								

There were several root causes that led to missing the standard. First, attendance issues that arose during pandemic closures persisted into 2021-22 and greatly impacted test participation. Second, the schedule of test days within the test window did not leave sufficient time for make ups. Third, we needed more targeted communication with students and families about the significance of participation in standardized testing. In 2022-23, we put into place a variety of attendance strategies that helped to increase overall school attendance, and we were more careful in scheduling make-up days for testing. This led to a 12% point improvement in test participation on the SAT, though we continued to struggle with test participation on Smarter Balanced and did not meet the threshold for participation on state testing, receiving a 2022-23 rating of Approaches Standard on this metric. We rely on test results to help us improve our programming, and therefore we want to ensure that all students are represented. Clearly, we still have room for improvement. Our refined attendance strategy next year will likely be the biggest driver of improved test participation. Alongside that, we will strategically incorporate test prep into our courses in a way that communicates test importance while also helping students feel more confident and perhaps even excited to take them.

The rating for 1c was due to metric 5 which measures implementation of IDEA Indicator 13: Transition planning in the IEP. Due to pandemic related student attendance issues, we were unable to complete the transition plans for a group of students. We have used a two-pronged approach for improving performance in metric 1c5. First, we monitor transition planning and





progress monitoring to allow us to immediately intervene if there were gaps in progress. Second, we have employed a range of tactics to increase attendance of all students, including students with IEPs, as chronic absenteeism was a root cause of the gaps in transition planning progress in 2021-22. This metric met standard in 2022-23.

In 2022-23, Freire Wilmington met standard in every category but was rated Approaches Standard in Educational Program metric 1b3 and Governance and Reporting metric 2a6. 1b3 is discussed above. The rating for 2ac stems from the metric for website monitoring. Due to staff transition, some of the board meeting materials were not uploaded to our website and it took a while for us to understand which one we were missing. All relevant staff have now been trained on this compliance requirement with the deadlines added to the team calendar to prevent this issue in the future.

**Q23. Discuss management and operations successes and challenges during the current contract term. Areas you may want to consider as appropriate:**

- School leadership
- Day-to-day operations including: transportation; facilities; food service; staffing (hiring, retention, professional development, evaluation); health and safety; community engagement





Our most significant operations challenge during this charter term, and one we have noted in past annual reports and in Q17 above, is student transportation. Since our opening, FCSW has thought outside the box to solve the school transportation challenges in Delaware, pioneering the use of DART alongside yellow bus and personal transportation. But one of the key root causes of attrition in the past two years is transportation. Families have expressed that long commutes are problematic. Unfortunately, transportation has become even more difficult in recent years with the national bus driver shortage. With all the area schools competing for limited yellow bus drivers and limited bus providers, we have had to make operational decisions based on the availability of buses instead of what best serves our needs. Specifically, we have had to start and end the school day earlier than desired to enable our bus provider to serve us and another school with the same buses each day. We have always had a strong relationship with our bus provider (Lehane's), and understand that they are also dealing with a less than desirable context. We have been able to work out a slightly later start time for the 2023-24 school year and hope that this schedule is more conducive to student learning.

One of our notable management and operations successes has been the acquisition of our school building and an adjacent building (see Q62) and the renovation of the new building into an athletic center worthy of our kids (scheduled to open in early winter 2024). This project was necessary because Freire Wilmington's main building has only one multipurpose room, largely used as a cafeteria. It cannot accommodate varsity athletics or full school gatherings, and gym class offerings are limited by space size and availability.

Over the years, FCSW has developed creative solutions for students to participate in sports, but current and prospective students cite the lack of onsite athletic facilities as a disadvantage of attending FCSW. This requires us to invest significant time and resources into admissions, and school leaders note the lack of athletic facilities as a factor in student attrition, specifically between 8th and 9th grade. Sports teams lose time commuting to offsite gyms, and we must pay for transportation and gym rental. Offsite games are also less likely to attract student spectators and don't convey the same home-court energy that cultivates school spirit.

With our new athletic center, we anticipate positive outcomes on student enrollment and retention. Interscholastic sports also have a proven positive impact on academics, postsecondary outcomes, and social emotional health. As we emerge from COVID-19 (where we saw an increase in chronic absenteeism) and work to reestablish student connections, a home gym will position us to improve student engagement. Finally, 89% of our students identify as BIPOC, and we serve the third highest percentage of low-income students of any high school in the state. As one of the only area high schools without a gym, our historically underserved population is receiving the wrong message about their value – often feeling invisible and overlooked by a system where their more affluent peers have access to better resources.

This athletic center solves for an operational challenge and positions us for future success. And, our ability to quickly act on the opportunity to purchase the two buildings, secure over \$1.9M in philanthropic support over a 9-month period to fund the gym renovations, and secure competitive financing for both the purchase and renovation, speaks to the nimbleness and effectiveness of Freire Wilmington's and the Freire Schools Network Office's management – and to our commitment to doing whatever it takes to make sure our students have access to equitable resources.

**Q24. Address any measure(s) where the school did not meet standard or is approaching standard.**

Please see our response to Q22.

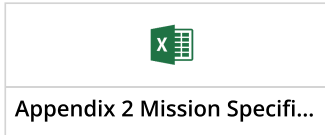
## 6.2. Educational Program

**Q25. Mission-Specific Goal(s): As Appendix 2, provide the results (data source) of the school's mission specific goal(s). Remember not to include any personally identifiable information (PII).**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 20



Applicant Evidence :



Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

**Q26. Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development As Appendix 3**, provide the following documents as evidence of curriculum alignment to Delaware Content Standards: Provide an electronic copy of curricula including scope and sequence documents, units, assessments and content covered per core content area (Mathematics, English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Visual/Performing Arts, World Languages, Health and Physical Education) for each grade level the school serves. The documents should demonstrate clear alignment with the Delaware Content Standards (including Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards) in all content areas. Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **ELA standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Evidence of the adoption of a high quality instructional resources as defined by EdReports.org., which includes the scope and sequence documents showing units of study with their corresponding anchor texts and culminating tasks with the intended pacing for each grade/course; **OR** curricular resources/documents that meet the criteria of the appropriate IMET from achievethecore.org, including additional resources selected to support areas where the curriculum materials were weak per EdReports.org (yellow or red). Scope and sequence documents must include:
  - featured anchor texts of knowledge building units around topics of inquiry/exploration and intended pacing for each grade/course. These should reflect the distribution of text types and genres required by the standards as outlined in Appendix B.
  - a set of targeted grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards for each unit.
  - alignment to the foundational reading skills and intended pacing for each grade must be included for grades K-5.
- Sample learning experiences (lesson/unit) and assessments with their corresponding rubrics.
- Opportunities provided and embedded within curriculum for professional learning and strategic use of curricular resources.
- In addition, there needs to be a well-articulated academic MTSS process for reading that includes screening, diagnostics, evidence-based interventions, and progress monitoring.
- For grades 9-12, English course sequences/programs of study should be provided. No curricular documents are required for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate SL or HL, or dual enrollment courses.
- Description of the professional learning structures for the ELA teachers and how the vision for professional learning adheres to the state's standards for professional learning. Please provide sample professional learning goals for the ELA department since the last renewal.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **Math standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Evidence of the adoption of a high quality, standards aligned instructional resource as defined by EdReports.org. This includes the scope and sequence documents showing alignment to standards and



intended pacing for each grade/course; **OR** curricular resources/documents that meet the criteria of the appropriate IMET from [achievethecore.org](https://achievethecore.org) including additional resources selected to support areas where the curriculum materials were weak per [EdReports.org](https://edreports.org) (yellow or red). Scope and sequence documents showing alignment to standards and intended pacing for each grade/course must be included in this documentation.

- Sample learning experiences (lesson/unit) and assessments
- Opportunities provided and embedded within the curriculum for professional learning and strategic use of curricular resources.
- Description of the professional learning structures the mathematics teachers engage in and how the vision for professional learning adheres to the state's standards for professional learning. Please provide sample professional learning goals for the mathematics department since the last renewal.
- In addition, there needs to be a well-articulated academic MTSS process for mathematics that includes screening, diagnostics, evidence-based interventions, and progress monitoring.
- Additionally, for grades 9-12, Mathematics course sequences/programs of study should be provided. No curricular documents are required for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate SL or HL, or dual enrollment courses.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **Social Studies standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Scope and sequence showing standards targeted and major topics for each grade/course in the school.
- One sample assessment aligned to state standards – intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards - for each grade/course in the school.
- No curricular documents are required for AP, IB, or dual enrollment courses.
- Schedule of time allotted for social studies instruction in each grade

Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **Science standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Evidence of the adoption of a high-quality instructional resource as defined by [EdReports.org](https://edreports.org) or curricular resources that meet the criteria of the EQulP rubric from [nextgenscience.org](https://nextgenscience.org), reviewed by an external evaluator that is not the materials publisher.
- The LEA must provide a scope and sequence for each grade level that includes the unit topic, the unit phenomenon, standards that are covered in that unit, what the students do and figuring out in the unit, and include a lesson and sample assessment from K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, depending on the structure of the school.
- Schedule of time allotted for science instruction in each grade
- A Response to the following questions:
  - What is the professional development plan to support continuous three-dimensional learning along with your instructional resources?
  - Describe how you ensure accessibility for all students in science.
  - Describe how your administrators are monitoring science instruction to ensure the shifts in science are occurring.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **Visual/ Performing Arts standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Scope and sequence showing National Core Arts Standards/Delaware State Standards targeted and major topics for each grade/course in the school.



- One sample assessment and rubrics aligned to state (NCAS) standards – intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards - for each grade/course in the school.
- Schedule of time allotted for arts instruction in each grade band.
- No curricular documents are required for AP, IB.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **World Languages standards and instruction** in grades 9-12 should include the following:

- Curriculum map or scope and sequence showing the targeted Delaware World-Ready Standards for Learning Languages, state proficiency targets and major learning contexts (themes) for each level of language instruction.
- One sample assessment and accompanying scoring rubric from one learning context--intended to provide evidence of student growth in proficiency--for each level of language instruction.
- No curricular documents are required for AP, IB.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **Health Education standards and instruction** in grades K-8 and 1/2 credit in high school (grades 9-12) should include the following:

- Curriculum map or scope and sequence showing the National Health Education Standards/Delaware State Standards targeted and attention to the specific learning concepts for each grade.
- One sample document outlining adherence to the hours requirements for specific health concepts in Regulation 551.
- One sample assessment and accompanying scoring rubric aligned to state standards – intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards – for each grade level in the school.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **Physical Education standards and instruction** in grades K-8 and 1 credit in high school (grades 9-12) should include the following:

- Curriculum map or scope and sequence showing alignment to the Delaware physical education standards and grade level expectations.
- One sample assessment and accompanying scoring rubric aligned to state standards – intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards – for each grade level in the school (example: state physical fitness assessment data and programming provided by the Delaware Department of Education)
- No curricular documents are required for elective Physical Education courses, which should not exceed 1 credit to fulfill graduation requirements.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 100

#### Applicant Comments :

Our curriculum files were too large to upload individually or as a ZIP file. We've created a Dropbox link for your viewing. Please click here to review FCSW's curriculum. ([https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gubbrku0cavwglA/AAAOu4\\_4FsFcibQkUkJf\\_hMoa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gubbrku0cavwglA/AAAOu4_4FsFcibQkUkJf_hMoa?dl=0))

### 6.3. At-Risk Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners

Q27.If applicable, describe any changes or enhancements the school has made based on findings from audits, investigations, or other administrative proceedings related to at-risk students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, or Multilingual Learners.

Please see Q22 for Freire Wilmington’s plan to respond to its ratings of “approaching standard” within the Students with Disabilities category, metric 1c, of the Organizational Performance Framework.



**Q28. Describe any changes or enhancements to the process by which at-risk students, students with disabilities and gifted and talented students are identified and the evidence that the school was able to provide the right resources and services for these students.**

Freire Wilmington is committed to ensuring that all students receive rigorous academic instruction and the holistic social and emotional supports that they deserve to achieve at the highest levels. We identify academically at-risk students at the beginning of the year through our universal screener. We employ a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to continuously shape key programmatic initiatives that drive positive student outcomes. This framework incorporates data across four domains (academics, attendance, social/emotional, and behavior) to problem-solve in the areas of instruction and intervention at three tiers of support.

No matter each individual student's level of learning or needs when they arrive at FCSW, we are committed to providing the supports they need to succeed. FCSW is committed to the identification of students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and 14 DE Admin. Code 922-929, and our Student Services program provides a continuum of placements for identified students.

In the event that reasonable regular education and MTSS intervention options have been exhausted or upon request by a parent, we refer students for a full evaluation by a qualified psychologist. Parent consent is required before evaluation can occur. After an evaluation is completed, parents, teachers, and the student meet to discuss the results and potential outcomes. If a student is identified as eligible for special education services, an IEP team is assembled and meets to create the student's IEP. Each student is assigned a special education teacher who serves as their case manager. That special education teacher also provides push-in co-teaching to regular education classrooms and pull-out support for students who need it.

We provide a continuum of placements that enable each student to attend school in the Least Restrictive Environment in accordance with the IDEA and 14 DE Admin. Code 922-929. With the support of our special education teachers, we are able to accommodate most students with IEPs with minimal or no pull-out support (served in the regular classroom 80% or more of the day). While some students may require more specialized attention, such as students receiving services in Separate Special Education Classes and Regular Setting (Students served inside the regular classroom between 40% and 79% of the day) or students served in Separate Special Education in an Integrated Setting Student (served inside the regular classroom less than 40% of the day), our goal is to limit the amount of out-of-class time students are experiencing as much as possible.

Students with IEPs are taught on the same path to mastering Delaware's academic standards as students without IEPs. Their progress is monitored using the same set of assessments as students without IEPs (unless a student should have a cognitive impairment so severe that adaptations to assessments are required). These tests, supplemented with additional monitoring tools, are used to monitor the progress of students with IEPs throughout the year and in re-evaluations every three years (or whenever a re-evaluation is requested or deemed necessary). If a student is not making progress in the core academic areas based on their formal assessment targets as established in the IEP, the IEP team examines possible additional interventions and recommends changes to the education plan that are deemed necessary to help the student progress more quickly. As evidence that we are adequately supporting students with IEPs, there were no students with IEPs retained for failure to meet their academic goals or failure to pass their classes.

Students in grades 8-12 have a dedicated Transitions Coordinator who meets with them annually before their IEP meeting, conducts interviews, and assists with transition goals. They collaborate with special education teachers quarterly to ensure accurate progress monitoring aligned with post-secondary plans. The Transitions Coordinator supports a seamless transition by facilitating visits to college disability offices, practicing transit, and other relevant activities. Students also have a college counselor in 12th grade who provides guidance during college applications and financial aid processes. They engage in college and career programming, including visits and skill-building activities.





**Q29. Describe any changes or enhancements to the process by which Multilingual Learners are identified and the evidence that the school was able to provide the right resources and services for these students.**

We have not implemented any changes or enhancements to the identification process of Multilingual Learners. However, throughout the term of the charter we have administered home language surveys, ACCESS placement tests, and delivered EL instruction and support appropriately. We ensure that parents are notified of their child's status as a Multilingual Learner, what supports are available, and how we will be helping their child increase their English proficiency. We will be undertaking an evaluation of the resources and services provided to Multilingual Learners during the 2023-24 school year.

#### **6.4. Governance and Reporting Requirements**

**Q30. Describe how the board has provided oversight in the areas of academics, finance, and operations, including legal compliance.**

FCSW Board members are committed to their governance role, particularly as it relates to performance and compliance. This starts with the first board meeting of the year, when Board members review state assessment data from the prior year and give feedback on the school's yearly academic plan developed by school and network leadership. The plan proposes goals and strategy for the upcoming school year, and the review allows Board Members to give input into goals and ask clarifying questions to ensure the strategy is clear and comprehensive, and to offer general suggestions. Midyear, the Board reviews and approves the school's Annual Report in order to keep abreast of academic accountability metrics and operational and financial compliance metrics. Throughout the year at each board meeting, Board members review a data packet to monitor progress and hold school leaders accountable for results on key school performance metrics. Through the discussion, Board members are able to push for continuous improvement and ensure that the Head of School has a plan for responding to any weaknesses. The Board also receives a financial report at each board meeting to ensure that there is continual oversight over financial performance. Finally, the Board conducts two evaluations, one for the Head of School and the other for the Freire Schools Network Office (FCSW's CMO), each of which get discussed at a board meeting, to ensure that the leaders who are responsible for executing in the three domains of academics, finance, and operations are receiving feedback from the Board.

**Q31. Discuss board-related successes and challenges during the current charter term. Areas you may want to consider as appropriate include:**

- **Membership and recruitment**
- **New member induction and ongoing governance training**
- **Meeting attendance**
- **Board self-evaluation**
- **Progress on particular board-level projects**



One challenge the board faced during this past charter term was recruiting parents for the Board and CBOC. When there were openings, we would try casting widely through school-wide newsletters as well as making individual asks to parents. We did not receive much interest and in a few cases, parents who expressed initial interest dropped off at some point during the process of learning about the roles or going through the clearance and training process. As part of our improvement plan for the 23-24 school year, we have created a 3 part plan to improve parent engagement (see question 18 for summary.) It is our hypothesis that by engaging parents more regularly throughout the year, we will be more likely to find parents to join the Board and CBOC.

A success has been the board-level work to bring our dream of an athletic facility to life. Board members were instrumental in helping our Advancement team secure \$1.9 million in philanthropic support in order to make this project financially viable. Moreover, one Board member, our Secretary David Singleton, took a leadership role in the project management, earning the prestigious IDEA cornerstone award from the DE Charter Schools Network in acknowledgement of his efforts. This award is granted to those who demonstrate significant levels of commitment and involvement in DE's public charter schools. David gave countless hours of volunteer service, from helping the school secure financing, to assembling architects and builders, to helping coordinate the vendors and school leaders to ensure the project moved forward at a steady clip. We are grateful for David's leadership and the support of the entire Board.

**Q32. Describe the process used by the board to evaluate school leadership.**

The school's charter management organization facilitates an annual Head of School evaluation survey that addresses a range of competencies within six domains: Effective Administration, Positive Culture, Interpersonal Skills, Academics, Operations, and Overall Leadership. The evaluation incorporates input from diverse stakeholders such as school administration and staff, students, and the CEO of the charter management organization as well as a self-evaluation by the Head of School. The results of these surveys are aggregated and then reviewed at a board meeting so the board can help determine future areas of development.

**Q33. Describe the school's process for succession planning including identification, development and retention of school leaders.**

The Freire model has always featured a distributed leadership model with leaders focusing primarily on academics or on facilities, climate and other functions that support the academic program. Based on needs and budget, we will usually have one or more Assistant Heads who manage day-to-day operations while being developed and coached by a school leader. In 2021, Freire began the Freire Leaders Fellowship, a leadership incubator designed to nurture emerging leaders at each Freire school. The cohort meets regularly throughout the year, with each session focused on developing varied and essential leadership skills. In 2022-23, building on the successes of the Freire Leaders Fellowship, we launched our Teacher Fellows program, which allows our veteran teacher leaders from across the network (e.g. lead teachers, teacher coaches) to come together to exchange knowledge and learn from each other. Both programs simultaneously help staff develop within their current roles while also preparing them for the increased responsibility of an Assistant Head or Head level role in our network.

In some cases, Freire Wilmington's Head of School may encourage an individual they have identified as having leadership potential to apply for one of these programs in order to further their development. In other cases, staff apply on their own and through their participation, show themselves to be ready for more responsibility. In this way, we are able to maintain a robust pipeline so that when a leadership opportunity opens up at any Freire campus, we have individuals within the network who are ready to assume the role.

**Q34. Share how the Board supports the school. Speak to the Board's involvement in events, operations, and fundraising activities.**



Overall, the Board of Directors supports the school by working to set the school's mission, vision and strategic goals, establish policies and plans consistent with the school's ethos, engage proactively with the Head of School in cultivating and maintaining good relations with school constituents as well as the broader community, accept accountability for the financial stability and financial future of the institution, and participate in fundraising. The Board discharges its power and responsibility by functioning primarily as a policy-making body and delegating day-to-day administration to the Head of School.

The Board meets regularly to aid in the visioning, monitoring, and maintenance of policies to ensure compliance with the school's mission as well as federal, state, and local regulations. A part of this oversight includes the Board's responsibility to ensure that the school is on track to meet its targets as identified in the Delaware Organizational Framework. At its six regular meetings a year, the Board reviews a dashboard showing academic and climate data, detailed financial statements, and policies that require updates. The Head of School, the teacher representative on the Board, and a student provide updates and answer questions about the state of the school, updates on key initiatives, and progress toward goals.


To be able to best support the school and ensure that it has all necessary resources, it is important that the Board constantly build upon its understanding of on-the-ground aspects of the school and its community. Parent membership and student participation on the Board are vital to decision-making and ensuring its primary focus is the mission and ethos of the school. Annual board visitation days are an opportunity for the board to interact with students and teachers during a normal school day. During these visitation days, board members can sit in on classes with students, observe the overall school culture and climate, and discuss the school's needs and strengths with a panel of students. Board cultivation breakfasts are held at the school and serve as an opportunity for Board members, school administration, community partners, and businesses to meet some of Freire Wilmington's student body, network and discuss the school's advancement, goals, and needs.

The Freire Wilmington Board plays an active role in ensuring our school and our students have the resources they need for success by both supporting the school philanthropically and by encouraging the local philanthropic community to invest in our school. For the past four fiscal years, 100% of Freire Wilmington Board members have made a donation of personal significance to the school, and the school has met its target for unrestricted fundraising. A fundraising committee of the Board has been especially active in the past year as the school conducted a capital campaign to support the athletic center development project. With the Board members' ties to the philanthropic community, including the major regional foundations, Freire Wilmington successfully secured over \$1.9M in grants and donations in support of this critical project.


**Q35. Appendix 4: Current Organizational Chart**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Evidence :**



Q35Appendix 4 Network O...



Q35Appendix 4 Freire Wilm...

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**


**Q36. Appendix 5: Board member and school leader succession plans**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10





Applicant Evidence :


Q36FCSWRenewal.pdf

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

## 6.5. Students and School Environment

### Q37. Describe how the school solicits feedback from parents and students regarding satisfaction with the school. Provide summary data and reflect on the feedback. How does the school use this information to inform ongoing school improvement?

Parent involvement is a strong indicator of student success. This is why FCSW views parents as partners and therefore regularly asks for their feedback. Through parents on the Board and CBOC, individual parent meetings, parent surveys, and Title I meetings and events, we are able to keep a pulse on how our parents and students are feeling. In order to facilitate access to family programming throughout the year, events are held at different times, during the traditional workday, in the evenings, and on weekends. As Freire Wilmington implements Title I programming, the planning committee takes into account family feedback shared at parent meetings, feedback through parent surveys, and suggestions made directly to staff. During the 23-24 school year, we will support increased parent input via a Freire Parent Association, recruiting parents during Fall conferences and holding monthly meetings by the end of Marking Period 2.

Our yearly surveys help us better understand the perceptions of our students, teachers, and staff. They cover topics ranging from perceptions of school climate, support, and school leadership. The results allow us to identify strengths and areas for growth. Data is reviewed periodically throughout the year. For some things, such as student suggestions for after school clubs, school leadership is able to implement at their discretion. Feedback relating to professional development and curriculum changes are reviewed and discussed by school leadership and the Board.

Parent involvement is a strong indicator of student success. This is why FCSW views parents as partners and therefore regularly asks for their feedback. Through parents on the Board and CBOC, individual parent meetings, parent surveys, and Title I meetings and events, we are able to keep a pulse on how our parents and students are feeling. In order to facilitate access to family programming throughout the year, events are held at different times, during the traditional workday, in the evenings, and on weekends. As Freire Wilmington implements Title I programming, the planning committee takes into account family feedback shared at parent meetings, feedback through parent surveys, and suggestions made directly to staff. During the 23-24 school year, we will support increased parent input via a Freire Parent Association, recruiting parents during Fall conferences and holding monthly meetings by the end of Marking Period 2.


Our yearly surveys help us better understand the perceptions of our students, teachers, and staff. They cover topics ranging from perceptions of school climate, support, and school leadership. The results allow us to identify strengths and areas for growth. Data is reviewed periodically throughout the year. For some things, such as student suggestions for after school clubs, school leadership is able to implement at their discretion. Feedback relating to professional development and curriculum changes are reviewed and discussed by school leadership and the Board.

### Q38. Appendix 6: Please upload an up-to-date Fire Inspection Certificate

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10



Applicant Evidence :




Appendix 6 Wilmington Fir...

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

**Q39. Appendix 7: Please upload an up-to-date Insurance Certificate(s)**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :



Appendix 7 COI Evidence o...

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

**Q40. Appendix 8: Please upload Navigate report for SY21/22 and SY22/23.**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :

			
2022-23 School Assessmen...	2021-22 Safety Plan Report...	2022-23 Safety Plan Report...	2021-22 School Assessmen...

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

Uploaded on **9/26/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

## 6.6. Teacher Retention

Is the school monitoring and minimizing teacher attrition rates and maintaining a stable teacher staff?

SCHOOL YEAR	% TEACHERS RETAINED	# OF TEACHERS RETAINED	# OF TEACHERS ELIGIBLE
2019-20	64.00%	16	25
2020-21	80.8%	21	26
2021-22	72.00%	21	29

**Q41. Enter 2022-2023 PERCENT of Teachers RETAINED**

69%



**Q42. Enter 2022-2023 NUMBER of Teachers RETAINED**

22

**Q43. Enter 2022-2023 NUMBER of Teachers ELIGIBLE**

32

**Q44. Explain successes or challenges of implementing the school's teacher retention plan.**

It's vital to us that we have an excellent teaching team. We aim to hire experienced, certified teachers who are passionate about our mission. Over the course of the charter term, finding certified teachers has not been easy. In some cases, even uncertified teachers are hard to find. Despite these challenging circumstances, we do our best to be creative in our recruitment efforts, to offer impactful training and coaching and support for pursuing certification, and to prioritize planning time in our schedule – all to ensure our teachers are successful in our school and stay with Freire Schools.

Over the charter term, Freire Wilmington has prioritized retention of both new and veteran educators. This took an even greater importance in recent years with the multifaceted challenges of the pandemic and the broader teacher shortage.

We are proud that retention increased during the years of the pandemic, with teacher retention rising from 64% in 2019-20 to 81% and 72% in 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively. We attribute our successes in these years to building a strong culture combined with solid teaching structures throughout the pandemic.

This number dropped to 69% for 2022-23, however. While there are many reasons, the teacher shortage has been a significant challenge. Nationally, teachers are leaving the profession, and there is increased competition among schools for those teachers that stay. We also see a need to significantly improve our coaching and professional development to help teachers feel successful in addressing the social and academic gaps that our students face.

Our team is central to our success. We've built an environment that supports educators and offers avenues for professional growth. To support our entire team, especially newer teachers, we now use experienced instructional mentors, more than ever offer quality professional training, and set aside dedicated planning periods. This investment in our instructional staff and our team environment aids in staff retention and attracting a diverse group of talented educators to our school.

Our coaching program also plays a significant role in supporting and growing our educators. Through this program, our school leaders and instructional mentors provide tailored guidance. This includes specific coaching for educators working with students facing academic or personal challenges. The mentoring covers classroom techniques, curriculum content, teaching strategies, and feedback-driven learning. In the 2022-23 academic year, we also hired an external math specialist to help strengthen this subject area. Our goal remains: to ensure every classroom benefits from an effective teacher and that our entire team continues to learn and grow.

Finally, last year, Freire Schools participated in the TNTP's inaugural consortium for The Fellowship for Black Teacher Talent. Aimed at boosting the hiring, supporting, and retaining Black educators, this initiative involves various school districts and charter groups. By participating, Freire Schools deepened its understanding of the importance of diverse talent. We learned how to adjust our hiring methods and implement strategies to attract and retain more Black educators.

In addition to the ways we support teachers in their role, (i.e. through professional learning, coaching, and mentoring), during the 2023-24 school year we will pay more attention to improving their day-to-day experience at work. We believe that teachers will be more likely to stay at FCSW if they develop deeper connections to one another and experience joy more frequently; if they feel seen and acknowledged and celebrated; and if they are able to work in a positive environment.



Q45. Describe how the school's professional development plans have evolved over the course of the charter term to support teachers and leadership.



Over the charter term, our professional development plan has evolved to focus intentionally on supporting teachers in implementing high-quality instructional materials. Our goal over this charter term was to select high-quality instructional materials and develop our teachers' understanding of the shifts required by these materials. In 2019-20, we began this process by implementing Illustrative Mathematics (IM) in our math courses. Alongside our curricular shift, we partnered with Teaching Labs to engage our teachers in curriculum-aligned inquiry cycles during biweekly professional learning communities (PLCs). In 2020-21, we piloted multiple high-quality instructional materials in ELA. After feedback from a variety of stakeholders, we chose and fully implemented EngageNY as our high school ELA curriculum, and EL Education as our 8th grade curriculum starting in 2021-22. Alongside this shift, we worked with external consultants to both develop the capacity of our ELA teacher-leaders and to engage our ELA teachers in professional learning grounded in strong implementation of high-quality materials. Finally, in the new 2023-24 school year, we are undergoing an internal audit of our instructional materials in science and piloting individual units from OpenSciEd in our high school biology, chemistry, and physics classes. While we had a strong plan and vision for our shift to high-quality instructional materials, we were not prepared for the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and have continued to monitor and adjust our professional development plan in light of the increased learning needs of both our students and teachers. This has necessitated a deeper investment in staff development to ensure teachers – including more teachers than ever with little or no prior teaching experience – are successful in implementing our new curricula effectively. Looking forward, we will continue to develop teachers' understanding of how to best implement high-quality materials to support learning and academic growth for all students.

We use several structures throughout the year to ensure that all teachers have meaningful and high-impact professional development. First, Freire Wilmington's professional development program begins with an induction program for new staff, followed by a week of pre-service sessions for all teachers and staff. In these sessions, teachers are introduced to and continue to deepen their understanding of our college-prep mission, our student-centered pedagogical approach, our implementation of high-quality instructional materials, and the ways in which we support the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of our students.

Once the school year is underway, all teachers meet in biweekly content PLCs, where they are supported by both school leadership and a teacher-leader to engage in inquiry cycles related to instructional strategies, deepening content knowledge, and curriculum implementation. In addition, teachers have monthly professional development days, which allow them to deepen their understanding of these topics and others cross-curricularly.

Finally, Freire Wilmington relies on our instructional coaching program to meet the individual needs of teachers and to provide significant support for our newest teachers. We have a team of coaches, some of whom remain in the classroom part-time, and others of whom are full-time coaches. Our coaches help teachers plan or internalize lessons or units, observe and debrief lessons and provide actionable feedback, cultivate collaboration, develop the capacity of teachers to coach peers, and plan and set coherent, aligned, and mutually agreed upon goals for teacher development based on data specifically related to student learning. Over the course of this charter term, the teacher shortage has meant that we are increasingly relying on novice teachers with limited teacher training. As a result, coaches work closely with our newest teachers to develop fundamental teaching practices, including writing strong and measurable learning goals/objectives, intentionally aligning classroom activities to these goals, appropriately differentiating for students, and developing strong procedures and routines to support classroom management.

As for leadership development, in addition to direct coaching and mentorship of school leaders, Freire Schools offers two staff development programs, one specific to school leaders and the other to veteran teacher leaders. In 2021 Freire began the Freire Leaders Fellowship, a leadership incubator designed to nurture emerging leaders at each school. The cohort meets regularly throughout the year focusing each session on developing a variety of leadership skills. In 2022-23, building on the successes of the Freire Leaders Fellowship, Freire Schools launched its Teacher Fellows program, which allows our veteran



teacher leaders from across the network (e.g. lead teachers, teacher coaches) to come together to exchange knowledge and learn from each other. Both fellowships have not only fostered personal and professional growth among the staff, but have also shown staff a clear pathway to leadership roles within Freire Schools, reinforcing their commitment to the organization.

**Q46. Describe how the school's completion of educator evaluations has evolved over the course of the charter term.**

Freire Wilmington conducts evaluations for educators through an approved teacher evaluation framework. Through this process, the school is able to hold high standards for all teachers while also differentiating for individual needs. Observers focus on providing differentiated coaching based on each teacher's progress and results on a standardized rubric.

Freire Wilmington uses the Freire Schools Deeper Learning Rubric as its performance framework for evaluations. This rubric is based on research from the National Research Council of the National Academies and aligns with Freire Schools' mission, values, and beliefs, with a focus on observable student outcomes and high standards for teaching. For the student growth component, Freire Wilmington uses the multiple measures of student growth under DPAS Component V to determine ratings for teachers.

The feedback process for full debriefs follows the six steps outlined in Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's Leverage Leadership, including precise praise, probing with open-ended questions, identifying the problem and concrete action step, practicing concrete action steps, planning ahead, and setting a timeline for implementation.

The evaluation process is similar for both new and experienced teachers, with new teachers being evaluated a minimum of four times and experienced educators a minimum of two times during the school year. New teachers may also receive differentiated professional learning sessions and mentoring activities as part of the induction program.

Finally, Freire Wilmington ensures compliance with the Department of Education by inputting observation and evaluation data and ratings into the Data Service Center.

## 6.7. Closure Requirements

**Q47. Describe the school's plan for procedures it will follow in the event of the closure or dissolution of the school. The plan should, at a minimum, address each of the following areas:**

- Current balance of contingency reserve funds to be used to cover accrued expenses including summer pay obligations (identify estimated amount for the 2023-24 school year), final audit (identify estimated cost), and other expenses typically incurred by June but paid in July or thereafter.
- If the current contingency reserve balance is insufficient to cover the estimated costs identified above, discuss the school's plan for ensuring the required funds are set aside, including the timeframe for meeting this requirement.
- Identification of the individuals responsible for handling the school's final closeout activities after closure or dissolution (i.e., who will process any final payments, coordinate the final audit, etc.).



The school's bylaws require the Board to adopt a formal plan of dissolution prior to distribution of assets should that scenario become necessary.

If the school faces closure or dissolution, Freire Wilmington will:

- Establish an open line of communication between parents/guardians and the school as well as all staff;
- Maintain an accurate record of enrollment, including the school's final student enrollment.
- Accurately account for the school's financial status;
- Appoint a board member to assume oversight of the school's dissolution process;
- Ensure each student continues his or her education and has complete student records transferred to their new school;
- Satisfy payroll and all creditors;
- Properly return funds acquired through federal, state, and local grants;
- Appropriately distribute all other funds; and
- Conduct a final financial audit.

To prepare for a possible closure or dissolution of the school, Freire Wilmington will set aside adequate funds to:

- Ensure all employees are paid according to their contractual agreements with the school;
- Pay any staff who would be required for close-out activities;
- Pay any vendors such as auditors, movers, liquidators, etc. that would be needed for the closure.

All cash and cash equivalents will be distributed first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for the employees of the school then to the remaining creditors of the school. The Board of Freire Charter School Wilmington understands that a charter school such as ours authorized to operate in Delaware must, by December 31 of any fiscal year, maintain an available balance or salary reserve, sufficient to pay the minimum cost necessary to provide students with the minimum annual instructional hours required by the Department of Education during the remainder of the fiscal year as reasonably projected by the charter school (14 Del. Code 515 (k)). We also understand that these costs may include but are not limited to non-payroll expenses, both fixed and non-fixed, incurred through the final month of the school year. We further understand that our failure to maintain sufficient available funds by December 31st will be deemed a material violation of our charter, a requirement we have met thus far. The board will review the fund balances and financial projections at each board meeting to ensure the fiscal health of the school and the maintenance of the reserve fund. In the event that Freire Wilmington is closed for nonfinancial reasons and, following the authorizer's charter school closure protocol, the Freire Wilmington board will work with DDOE concerning the steps necessary (parent notification, transfer of records, disposition of school assets, etc.) to ensure a smooth and orderly closure and transition (14 Del. Code 515 (i) and (j)). All steps described above would be managed by a transition team comprised of the Board Chair, the Head of School, and the Controller from Freire Schools Network Office, which is FCSW's charter management organization. In addition to any responsibilities outlined above this team would take responsibility for final closeout activities.





## 7. Financial Performance

The Financial Performance Framework is a reporting tool that provides the Department of Education with the necessary data to assess the financial health and viability of charter schools in its portfolio for the purposes of an annual review. The framework summarizes a charter school's financial health while taking into account the school's financial trends over a period of three years. Please utilize the hyperlink in this sentence for more information about the Financial Performance Framework (<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2626>).

### 7.1. Financial Performance Framework

#### SUMMARY AND OVERALL RATINGS

YEAR	Current Ratio (Working Capital Ratio)	Debt to Asset Ratio	Days Cash	Debt Service Payments / Loan Covenants	Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin	Cash Flow	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Enrollment Variance	Student Retention	Financial Management & Oversight	OVERALL RATING
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2b	2c	2d	3	4	
2021-22	M	M	AS	M	M	M	M	M	Not Rated	M	Meets Standard

M: Meets Standard  
AS: Approaching Standard  
F: Far Below Standard

**Note:** On June 18, 2020, the State Board of Education approved the updated Financial Performance Framework. Below is the school's historical data.

#### Historical Financial Framework Data

YEAR	Near Term Indicators				Sustainability Indicators				Financial Management & Oversight	OVERALL RATING
	Current Ratio	Days Cash	Enrollment Variance	Default, Loan Covenants, & Debt Service Payments	Total Margin	Debt to Asset Ratio	Cash Flow	Debt Service Coverage Ratio		
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2b	2c	2d	3	
2019-20	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Meets Standard
2020-21	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Meets Standard





## PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

*By September 2023, our expectation is to achieve an overall rating of “Meets” or “Exceeds on the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF). Each year, we will show growth within each metric area, putting us on track to achieve our academic performance expectations. This progress will be monitored through our annual performance review.*

**Q48. Using the results contained in the Financial Performance Framework, describe the school's financial performance over the current charter term. (This section is for the school to address any overall rating where the school has not met standards. The school will be able to address individual metrics in the sections below.)**

Freire Wilmington met standard in all metrics in 2019-20 and 2020-21. In 2021-22 we were rated approaching standard in Days Cash, where we had 67 days cash on hand. This was the year the State increased the standard for Days Cash on Hand Ratio from 60 days to 75 days (effective FY 2022), and also a year in which we incurred significant HVAC repairs costs in addition to the capital purchase of our facility and the adjacent building.

**Q49. Identify changes to financial practices that the school has implemented to improve the school's financial outcomes.**

Our school's financial practices are sound as evidenced by our DSSF ratings. The Days Cash issue in 2021-22 was an unusual confluence of events where we were purchasing our building at the same time as the State increased the standard.

**Q50. Address any measure(s) where the school did not meet the standard.**

Please see our response to Q48.

**Q51. Describe how the school developed and implemented a corrective action plan in response to audit findings (if applicable).**



There have been no audit findings during the charter term.


**Q52. Appendix 9: Upload a Summary of Findings from Independent Audits (if applicable).**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

**Q53. Appendix 10: Upload a Final Fiscal Year 2023 Revenue & Expenditure Budget Report in the prescribed Department format**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :



Q53 - Appendix 10 - FY23 R...

Uploaded on **9/30/2023** by  
**Leigh Botwinik**

**Q54. Appendix 11: Upload an Approved Preliminary Fiscal Year 2024 Budget in the prescribed Department format. The budget narrative should make clear the assumptions on which the school bases its key revenue and expenditure projections. In addition, the budget and narrative should describe any anticipated changes to the school's financial position and clearly articulate the financial impact of any proposed modifications on other aspects of the school's education program and operations (e.g., new curriculum or instructional materials, modified staffing structure, decreased or increased enrollment, etc.).**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :


Q54 - Appendix 11 - FY24 B...

Uploaded on **10/2/2023** by  
**Leigh Botwinik**

**Q55. Appendix 12: Upload a Fiscal Year 2023 Audited Financial Statements (if final report is not available, a draft version is acceptable until final version is completed).**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :


Q55 - Appendix 12 - FY23 Fl...

Uploaded on **9/29/2023** by  
**Leigh Botwinik**





## 8. Innovative Practices

Q56.

Describe effective systems, structures, and/or processes that have led to significant school improvement that could be replicated at other schools. Please include the data that supports the success of these practices.

Areas you may want to consider, as appropriate:

- Leadership
- Professional Learning
- Instructional Transformation
- Equity
- Culture and Climate Shift
- Collaboration/Partnerships



From our distributed leadership model to our peer mediation program to our delivery of cost-free individual and family Emotional Supports therapy, Freire Wilmington has a number of unique programs and practices that could be replicated at other schools. One of our exciting newer promising programs is our Freire Leaders Fellowship, which was launched network-wide in 2021-22. As described in our response to Q.33, the Freire Leaders Fellowship is a leadership incubator designed to nurture emerging leaders at each Freire school. The cohort meets regularly throughout the year, with each session focused on developing varied and essential leadership skills, including: instructional leadership, distributive leadership, the Freire vision, change leadership, public leadership, and leadership of self as well as skills development in the areas of special education, talent, school operations, fundraising and stewardship, etc. Across the Freire Schools network we had 10 fellows in 2021-22 (three from Freire Wilmington) and 18 fellows in 2022-23 (two from Freire Wilmington). In 2022-23, building on the successes of the Freire Leaders Fellowship, we launched our Teacher Fellows program, which allows our veteran teacher leaders from across the network (e.g. lead teachers, teacher coaches) to come together to exchange knowledge and learn from each other. Both programs simultaneously help staff develop within their current roles while also preparing them for the increased responsibility of an Assistant Head or Head level role in our network. As these programs are both relatively new, it is hard to draw too many conclusions on the long-term impact on staff retention. But in just our second year of our Freire Leaders Fellows, we saw 94.4% of the fellows return to Freire Schools for fall 2023.

With Freire Wilmington being part of a small network of charter schools, we benefit from trying new programs out on a small scale in partnership with our peer schools, such as these two fellowships. We also benefit from being able to replicate programs that have worked well at other Freire campuses. For example, in 2023-24 Freire Wilmington became cell phone-free space using a system called Yondr. Yondr has been implemented in over 50 schools in our region (including Freire High School in Philadelphia) and over 1,000 schools across 21 countries to facilitate an engaged learning environment. We believe that cell phones have great utility. We have also found that learning and social behavior improve drastically when students are fully engaged with their teachers and classmates. The Yondr Program utilizes a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone. Every student secures their phone in a personally assigned Yondr pouch when they arrive at school. Students maintain possession of their phones and may not use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day. If a parent needs to reach their child during the school day, they are able to call the main office. Students are required to bring their Yondr pouch to and from school each day and are responsible for their pouch at all times. Yondr recently surveyed over 900 school partners to measure the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

- 65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance
- 74% of schools saw an improvement in student behavior
- 83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom

Freire Wilmington is implementing this system in 2023-24, because we saw the positive impact it made at Freire Charter High School in Philadelphia in 2022-23. In an end of year survey to get feedback and input from teachers, 97% of staff at Freire Charter High School reported wanting to continue the approach (one person responded that they were unsure). One teacher's comment really captured our greatest hope when we initiated the pouches: "Can't say enough good things about this policy and the focus it allows us to have on teaching and learning!" Moreover, the academic results 2022-23 would support this teacher's contention, with a 7 point higher proficiency rate in Algebra and 17% in ELA vs the year prior to the pilot. We look forward to Freire Wilmington's replication this school year and the impact evaluation we will conduct at the conclusion of the school year.





## 9. Looking Forward: Plans for the Next Charter Term

This section provides the school with an opportunity to discuss plans for the next charter term. Schools should identify any anticipated changes to the school's educational program, governance model, and financial outlook and must identify any proposed changes that would require modification of a material provision in the school's charter contract or that are likely to impact the school's academic or organizational success or its financial sustainability. As a general rule, the school should identify any changes that are relevant or significant with respect to the performance outcomes that the school has agreed to meet or are otherwise relevant to the school's renewal and continued authorization and operation as a public charter school. The authorizer reserves the right to request additional information so that it may sufficiently assess the impact and planning for such changes. Even if proposed changes would occur several years into the next charter term, the authorizer strongly encourages applicants to outline them here.

### Q57. Describe any significant changes to the essential terms of the school's educational program, including but not limited to the school's mission, course of study, instructional program, grade levels served.

During this charter term, while there have been no significant changes made to the educational plan, grades served, location or CMO, we did make minor revisions to our mission statement to reflect our commitment to equity, the work we do, and the values we hold. Since our last renewal, the Board has approved a revised mission statement. It now contains the phrase "commitment to peace" instead of "nonviolence" to convey the positive state of being we aim to promote, and adds the word "equity" as another one of our values. While peacefulness and equity have been FCSW's goals since its founding, the timing felt right to explicitly state those in our mission so that current and prospective students, families, and staff know what Freire Schools stand for. Our mission statement now reads, "Freire Charter School Wilmington 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."

Looking ahead, we do not anticipate any significant changes to the foundational elements of our program. We plan on doing some market research to see how to make FCSW more attractive to students as a way to increase enrollment. And Q18 outlines the many important changes we are pursuing to improve performance. Briefly, these changes involve:

- Intervention blocks in math and ELA.
- Intensive supports and interventions for attendance.
- Diversifying the pool we recruit from and investing in current staff and their day-to-day experience at FCSW.
- Professional learning and coaching around problem based learning and the way that Illustrative Math structures support it.
- Professional learning and coaching on the science of reading and how to shift the cognitive load to students during lessons; increase in time spent writing.
- Piloting new science curricula; professional learning around NGSS shifts.
- Adopting a cell phone-free school policy.

The world has changed so much since our last charter renewal. There is no way any school could have anticipated and planned for the changes we all had to implement in response to the pandemic. If COVID taught us anything, it is that we have to remain nimble and be willing to evolve based on context and data. We are committed to making those kinds of changes throughout the charter term.

### Q58. Describe any anticipated changes to the governance of the school, including but not limited to board composition, committee structure, and/or amendments to by-laws.



During the next charter term, we will continue to cast widely for new diverse, committed Board members, but we are not anticipating any structural changes or changes to foundational documents such as the by-laws. As with our educational program, we are open to making adjustments if the context requires it.

**Q59. Provide detailed information on the board's plan to assess its performance annually and hold itself accountable for achieving its goals and govern effectively.**

The governing board is constantly seeking to improve its effectiveness and capacity. The primary tool used is an annual self evaluation survey. In 2022-23, commitment and collaboration were named as Board strengths. Fundraising was named both as a strength and an opportunity for improvement. The board reported seeing a need to be more focused on mid-long range planning and identified the following topics as critical for such plans: enrollment, the teacher shortage, and finances after federal funding declines. In our next charter term, we will continue the practice of administering the Board self-evaluation tool each spring and discussing the results at a Board meeting.

**Q60. Describe any anticipated changes to the school leadership or staffing model and any proposed changes to the management of the school, including any changes to the school's relationship with a third-party education service provider, if one exists. If the school does not currently contract with an Charter Management Company but intends to do so during the next charter term, if the school currently contracts with an Charter Management Company but does not intend to continue to do so during the next term, or if the school intends to make material modifications to its existing management agreement, the school must contact the authorizer for additional information prior to the submission of this application.**

During the current charter term, we made an adjustment to the leadership model. From the school's founding, we had employed a co-Head of School model. This distributed approach split leadership for academics and all the functions that support academics equally. Two years ago, we switched to a Head of School approach, where there is one leader at the highest level overseeing several Heads or Assistant Heads of Academics and Academic Supports. The relationship with the CMO and the overall staffing model have remained consistent over that time. We have no immediate plans to change either the leadership model or CMO, though, like all the elements of our program, we will continue to evaluate to ensure leadership, staffing, and the CMO are meeting the school's current needs.

**Q61. Describe how state data systems will be used and monitored to support informed decision-making in the areas of academic performance, organizational management, and financial viability. Include any coordinated professional development intended to sustain these processes.**





In the coming charter term, FCSW will continue to utilize the applications found in the Department's EdAccess, including eSchool, IEPPlus, EdInsight Report portal and DE Open Data to collect data on student demographics, attendance, school climate, student grades, test scores and more. We feed these data into our network's Schoolzilla data warehouse, which populates a school performance dashboard that allows school leaders to monitor the data in real time. In conjunction with the Freire Schools Network Office, we will use DEEDs to collect and track data on staff certification; Navigate360 to record fire and lockdown drills and tabletop exercises; DENARS to collect financial and participation data for the school's breakfast, lunch, and after-school snack program and compliance and membership in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs; and eGrants for accountability to federal grant obligations. The Freire Schools Network Office accounting team uses the State's systems (FSF and PHRST) to manage and process all day-to-day accounting, payroll, and benefits transactions. We also use Aplos, the network's internal accounting software, to measure the financial ratios used in the Framework. Aplos is reconciled to FSF and PHRST each month and gives us the flexibility to maintain full accrual-based accounting records that mirror the financial data presented in the audited financial statements, allowing us to accurately calculate and project financial ratios in real time. For a final look at the prior year's performance, we will use the Annual Report and the DE School Report Card site to review performance against the DSSF academic, organizational, and financial frameworks. Several Freire staff are members of PAC and Data Forum and attend those meetings regularly. In our new charter term, FCSW leaders will continue to take advantage of professional development and documentation provided by DOE and the Freire Schools Network Office, which has experience supporting FCSW with these data systems.

**Q62. Describe the current status of the school facility and discuss any anticipated changes in facilities needs or location. Ensure that the budget narrative (Appendix 11) explains how the school's facilities plans are reflected in the budget.**



Since its founding in 2015, Freire Wilmington has been located in rented space in a building at 201 West 14th Street that has mostly suited our students' needs. However, the building was only under lease until 2031 and lacked athletic facilities or a space large enough for the full school community to gather.

In FY22, we made our first significant building upgrade, renovating the school's undeveloped basement into the Dragon's Den, a multi-purpose space. The Dragon's Den serves as a common room for students and includes additional tables and chairs, comfortable seating, computer stations, and recreation equipment. During the return to in-person learning, this space allowed us to maintain social distancing guidelines during meals. Since then, the space has become a gathering place for students to enjoy their meals, study, socialize, and participate in club activities. It also provides a valuable space for school activities such as Dragon Day and awards ceremonies.

In summer 2022, FCSW was presented with an exciting opportunity to purchase its current building at 201 West 14th Street as well as an adjacent site at 205 West 14th Street using a below-market lending program only available to high-performing charter schools through the Equitable Facilities Fund (EFF). We acquired the two buildings in July 2022, and used part of the loan to upgrade our HVAC system, elevators, and complete other maintenance on the main school building.

We are currently in the process of completing a \$5.2 million renovation of the 201 West 14th Street building. The lower level will continue to be used as a parking facility for our school, and we are making major renovations to the upper level to convert it into a 14,000 square foot athletic center. This requires raising the roof from 9 ft. tall to 25 ft. and replacing existing steel columns with a new structure. The athletic center will include a regulation court that will be used for basketball and volleyball, plus locker rooms, training space, and spectator seating. Freire Wilmington received nearly \$1.9 million in support from Delaware's philanthropic community, including grants from the Longwood Foundation, Welfare Foundation, Sonecha Family Foundation, WSFS CARES Foundation, Laffey-McHugh Foundation, and Crestlea Foundation toward this project. The remaining project is funded by a \$2.75 million loan from Level Field Partners and operating funds. The project is progressing on time and on budget, and we look forward to opening the facility in early winter 2024.

We do not anticipate any other facility or location changes for the coming charter term. Our budget and budget narrative reflect the costs associated with our facilities loans with EFF and Level Field Partners, as well as costs associated with facility maintenance and repairs.

## 9.7. Projected Enrollment

Q63.Fill out the five-year enrollment chart by grade level (see Resources). Ensure that the chart allows for the natural progression of students from year to year.

- **Note: This will become the school's authorized enrollment for the new charter term.**
- **Note: An increase or decrease in enrollment exceeding 5%, but less than 15%, is considered a minor modification of the school's charter. 14 Del. Admin. C. § 275.9.9.1.4. An increase or decrease in enrollment exceeding 15% is considered a major modification of the school's charter, which requires a review by the Charter School Accountability Committee and the assent of the State Board of Education. See 14 Del. C. § 511(b)(2); 14 Del. Admin. C. § 275.9.8.1.3. As such, if the projected enrollment is increasing or decreasing by 5% or more over the term of the charter, the school is required to submit a Charter Modification Application (<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/4361>) including budget sheets, and a budget narrative reflecting the new enrollment figures.**


Upload Required File Type: excel Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 20




**Applicant Comments :**

Please see the spreadsheet below. We are requesting a minor modification to our charter to lower the school's enrollment cap from 500 to 430, representing a decrease of 14%.

**Resources**


Projected Enrollment.xlsx

**Applicant Evidence :**


FCSW 5-Year Projected Enr...

Uploaded on **9/28/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

## 9.8. Measuring Academic Progress

The school's responses to the next 4 questions in this section will be used to populate the Academic Performance section of the school's new Performance Agreement.

**Q64.Explain how the school's Board and School Leadership Team will measure and evaluate the academic progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole throughout the school year, at the end of each academic year, and for the term of the charter.**



Each year, the Head of School collaborates with the Freire Schools' CEO and Performance Management Team to set goals for the coming year that correspond to key DSSF domains including academic achievement, growth, and attendance, as well as goals related to our college prep mission. As a general rule, we look for consistent, incremental growth. A typical annual goal might be a 5 percent increase in proficiency rates on the state assessments.

These goals, along with a set of strategies for achieving them, are presented to the Board for discussion and feedback at the start of each school year. Once the Board and Head of School come to final agreement on the annual plan, the school's dashboard is aligned to it so that the Board can track progress towards the school-level goals.

Throughout the year, the Head of School meets with Freire Schools staff in data meetings, where the group looks in depth at a variety of performance data to evaluate the success of school programming and make corrective plans if needed. Student achievement data is regularly reviewed alongside other kinds of data including survey data; school climate data, including attendance rates; engagement data such as assignment completion data; and teacher observation and walkthrough data. The conversation starts at the school level, and then the team uses an interactive dashboard connected to our data warehouse to drill down and view performance for student groups and individual students.

At each regular board meeting, the Head of School gives a status update on performance, using the Board's dashboard as a starting place for discussion and supplementing it with summaries of key takeaways from the data meetings about the performance of groups of students as well.

At the end of each academic year, the school leaders report to the Board on the school's performance as a whole, including performance against the metrics set forth at the start of the year. The Board also receives a copy of the annual DSSF results each Fall and votes to approve the school's Annual Report each Winter. This ensures focus on tracking progress toward charter-term goals.

We plan to continue the practices above for measuring and evaluating academic progress in our coming charter term.

**Q65. Outline the clearly measurable annual performance status and growth goals that the school will set over the course of the next charter term in order to monitor and evaluate its progress accelerating student achievement. Include information about proposed school's student performance goals and the DSSF.**



Our goal is to show growth within each DSSF metric annually, putting us on track to achieve a “Meets” or “Exceeds” rating by September 2028.

Given our current data, we know that we cannot wait until DSSF results are shared each year to evaluate our progress and, therefore, we will set annual goals for key metrics including proficiency on Smarter Balanced and SAT assessments, % of students attending 90% or more, % of 12th grade students participating in dual enrollment, % of 9th graders on track, % of 12th graders graduating, and seamless college enrollment.

Even the data for the metrics above can present too much of a lag to effectively monitor progress, and so we will keep a close eye on a range of leading indicators. Most important are our benchmark assessments, to see whether there is an increase in the percent of students projected proficient and a decrease in the percent of students projected below basic. Our baseline target is a 5% improvement in proficiency rates on standardized tests year over year. If our benchmark tests are not showing growth, and, therefore, a 5% improvement on standardized tests seems unlikely, this will trigger course correction conversations mid-year. We will examine the quality of implementation of the strategies outlined in Q18 above. If we determine that our fidelity of implementation is lacking in any areas, we will put a plan together to improve by the end of the year.

If we do not make year to year growth on our DSSF score, we will begin our corrective action process to reevaluate each element of our strategy. Was there an implementation problem, and, if so, what caused it? If we implemented the strategy well and still didn't see results, what other root cause of low performance might be at play that we haven't yet addressed? Based on this analysis, we will speak with stakeholders and do research in order to identify alternative strategies that may be more effective. We are not holding key elements of our improvement plan as described in Q18 and elsewhere in this application as so sacred they cannot be changed. We will let the data guide us so that we can best serve students.

**Q66. In addition to the State's mandatory assessments, identify the primary interim assessments that the school will use to assess student learning needs and demonstrate academic progress throughout the year. Explain how these interim assessments align with the school's curriculum, performance goals, and Delaware Content Standards (Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards).**

Universal Screening is one piece of data regarding students' progress that we will consider during PLC, MTSS and/or grade-level team meetings. Freire Wilmington will use Star Math and Star Reading as its benchmarking assessment. We will administer Star assessments during the Fall (finalize assessments by 9/30); Winter (finalize assessments by 1/31); and Spring (finalize assessments by End of Year). These Benchmark assessments: (1) serve as universal screeners, (2) allow students to be screened to monitor their academic progress, and (3) provide data on school programming effectiveness. Renaissance has conducted alignment studies to ensure that the STAR assessments results correlate with Smarter Balanced and SAT assessment results. Therefore, they provide a pulse on how the school is doing in terms of progress toward its annual 5% increase in proficiency goal. Star reports map individual student results to Common Core standards so that teachers can use the data from interim assessments to help assess student learning needs and progress towards common core standard mastery. Also, Freire Wilmington will utilize supplemental Smarter Balanced resources from the state as interim assessments for the 8th grade. Specifically, we will use the Smarter Balanced Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) as a midterm for 8th grade ELA and Math. Further, we will use the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks throughout the year to assess 8th grade progress in ELA and Math; these assessments are typically given in the 1st and 3rd quarters of the school year.

**Q67. Explain how the school will collect and analyze student academic achievement data, use the data to refine and improve instruction, and report the data to the school community. Identify the person(s),**



**position(s), and/or entities that will be responsible and involved in the collection and analysis of assessment data.**

Freire Wilmington collaborates with the Performance Management and Teaching & Learning Teams from its charter management organization, Freire Schools, to aid the alignment of the instructional program to the unique academic needs of students. Data typically consists of a dashboard of key academic performance metrics, including grades, attendance, and suspensions. In addition, the packet includes data that is most timely and actionable that month. For example, in the fall, it would include the Star reports for Reading and Math. At other points of the year, the packet might include a detailed look at survey data or the rubric results of teacher observations. Often data analysis is discussed at a data meeting between the Head of School, other Heads and Assistant Heads, the CEO of the Freire Schools Network Office, as well as members of the Freire Schools Network Office Performance Management and Teaching & Learning teams to provide an opportunity to analyze the data, discuss potential actions to take, and anticipate challenges that may lie ahead. The data may be used to identify students to take part in academic interventions, to monitor students' progress, or to monitor program implementation. Further, teachers review data during PLCs and/or meetings with the Assistant Head of Academics or a teacher coach in order to develop lesson plans that reteach and/or incorporate focus skills for tiered instruction. The Head of School reports out to the Board at all regular bimonthly meetings using a consistent data dashboard. At the end of the year, when standardized test scores are received, these same individuals thoroughly review all data in order to evaluate programs and inform the school's strategies for the following year. We plan to continue these practices for collecting and analyzing student academic achievement data in our new charter term.

**Q68. Describe the corrective actions the school will take, pursuant to 14 Del. C. § 512(5), if it falls short of student academic achievement expectations or goals at the school-wide, classroom, or individual student level. Explain what would trigger such corrective actions and who would be responsible for implementing them.**

This charter renewal application and in particular Q18 where we lay out our plan to address subpar academic outcomes provides an example of how we approach corrective action. When FCSW does not meet student academic achievement goals, the Head of School collaborates with the school leadership team and the Freire Schools Network Office to reach a solution best for the School and its students and families. This process involves intensive data analysis to identify possible root causes for the performance issues, as well as researching evidence-based strategies for addressing the root causes. Corrective actions may include small group or one-on-one student interventions, new or additional professional development for teachers and staff, new student programming, changes to curriculum, additional student supports, or any other action that addresses the root causes identified. Over the next charter term, we will be engaged in a near-constant process of progress monitoring and making adjustments to our corrective actions as needed to ensure sustained growth in student academic achievement.

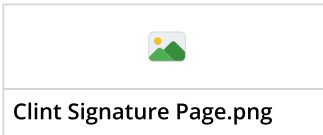


## 10. Compliance Certification Statement

Q69. The Board of Directors of this charter school certifies that it will materially comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the charter relating to the education of all students enrolled at the school. We have reviewed the Delaware Charter Law (14 Del. C. Ch. 5) and 14 DE Admin. Code § 275 in Department of Education regulations (Regulation 275), and have based the responses in this renewal application on the review of these documents. Signature of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Signature

Applicant Evidence :



Uploaded on **9/28/2023** by **Angela Miller**


Q70. Name of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Clint Walker

Q71. Title (if designated)

Board Chair

Q72. Date of Signature

Thu Sep 28 2023 (Eastern Daylight 

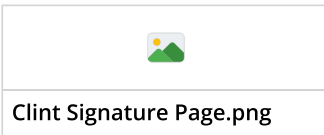


## 11. Renewal Application Certification Statement

Q73. I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for renewal of a charter school is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; that this application has been approved by the school's Board of Directors; and that, if awarded a renewed charter, the school shall continue to be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury. Signature: Chairperson of Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Signature


Applicant Evidence :



Clint Signature Page.png

Uploaded on **9/28/2023** by  
**Angela Miller**

Q74. Date of signature

Thu Sep 28 2023 (Eastern Daylight 


Q75. Name of Chairperson of Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Clint Walker

Q76. Title (if designated)

Board Chair

Q77. Date of approval by board of directors

Thu Sep 21 2023 (Eastern Daylight 



## Q18. Academic Performance

<i>Indicator/Measures</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>
<b>Overall All Metrics</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<i>Overall Academic Achievement</i>	35%	24%	12%	8%
<i>Overall Academic Progress*</i>	54%	51%	12%	50%
<i>Overall School Quality/Student Success</i>	91%	59%	67%	53%
<i>Overall Graduation Rate</i>			84%	82%
<i>Overall Progress Toward English Language Proficiency</i>	IS	IS	IS	0%

Our approved performance agreement is that by 2023, our expectation is to achieve a “Meets” or “Exceeds” rating on each metric area of the DSSF. Each year, we will show growth within each metric area, putting us on track to achieve our academic performance expectations.

Our school fell short of the goals set forth in the performance agreement. We saw the steepest drops in the Academic Achievement and Student Success domains of the DSSF over the course of the term. While Academic progress has rebounded back to pre-COVID levels, it is still rated Well Below Expectations. In 22-23 we received a rating in Progress towards ELP for the first time, which was rated Well Below Expectations. These results have led us to intensively analyze each and every element of our school program. In this section of our application, we will present the key takeaways of our analysis and our plan to adapt and evolve in response.

### Context

To try to understand what might be underlying this decline, we started by examining our context. Freire Wilmington serves the third highest percentage of low-income students of any public high school in the state. While our demographics have remained relatively consistent over the charter term, students’ entering academic levels have dropped. Certainly, the pandemic is partly to blame. Statewide, the average 7th grade scale score on Smarter Balanced was 25 points lower in ELA and 40 points lower in math in 2021-22 than it was back in the 2018-19 school year.

<b>A Comparison of average 7th Grade Smarter Balanced Scale Scores</b>						
	ELA		Math		ELA Variance	Math Variance
	18-19	21-22	18-19	21-22		
State of Delaware	2556	2531	2537	2496	-25	-40

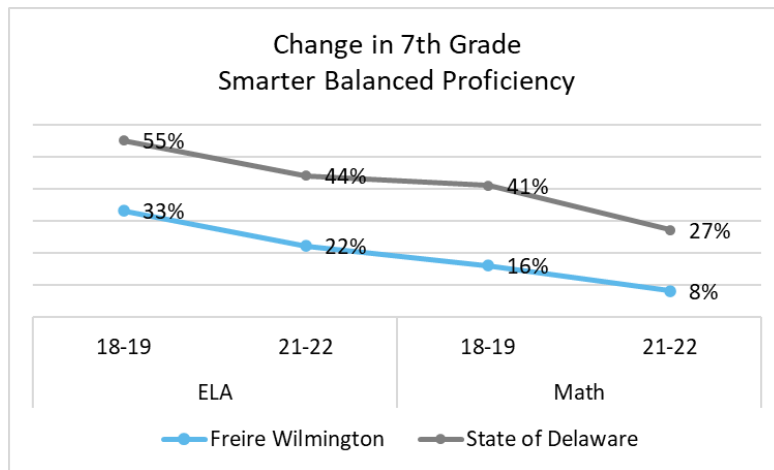
While all kids in Delaware were impacted by COVID, they were not all impacted equally. Our school begins in 8th grade, and when we look at how our students performed on the 7th grade Smarter Balanced test

prior to their arrival at Freire Wilmington, we see that the decline was even steeper than the State of Delaware overall, with a 36 point drop in ELA and a 62 point drop in math.

A Comparison of average 7th Grade Smarter Balanced Scale Scores						
	ELA		Math		ELA Variance	Math Variance
	18-19	21-22	18-19	21-22		
State of Delaware	2556	2531	2537	2496	-25	-40
Freire Wilmington	2520	2484	2487	2425	-36	-62

This same pattern can be observed when looking at proficiency rates. Statewide, proficiency among 7th graders declined by 11 percentage points in ELA and 14 percentage points in math from 18-19 to 21-22. Our population’s entering proficiency rates have always been lower than the statewide average and also followed a similar decline over this time period (11 percentage points in ELA and 8 in math respectively.)

Change in 7th Grade Smarter Balanced Proficiency						
	ELA		Math		ELA Variance	Math Variance
	18-19	21-22	18-19	21-22		
State of Delaware	55%	44%	41%	27%	-11	-14
Freire Wilmington	33%	22%	16%	8%	-11	-8



To put it bluntly, students are arriving at Freire Wilmington further behind than at any point during our school’s history.

Students’ entering achievement levels are beyond our control, and we do not present this data as an excuse. Rather, we are acknowledging that this shift in our context means that we must better adapt to these new circumstances. Anything and everything in our model needs to be reexamined with our current

context in mind. That has been the work of our leadership team since the minute we received our test scores – finding ways to revise and refine our program so that we can better serve the students who are sitting in front of us today.

**Academic Interventions**

Based on the above analysis of our students’ entering levels, we are retooling our academic program, and will now pilot intervention blocks as part of our multi-tiered process of supporting students with learning gaps. We are still committed to acceleration and providing students with grade level curriculum; however, we will supplement that with math and reading intervention in grades 8, 9, and 11. We will identify students who need additional supports using 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Smarter Balanced data as well as data from our universal screener, the Star ELA and Math assessments. During intervention blocks, teachers will utilize Corrective Math materials and Lexia Literacy strategies in order to provide targeted intervention on foundational math and reading skills. Teachers will attend regular meetings with the Assistant Head of Academics to understand and utilize data from various assessments (ICAs, IABs, STAR) to drive individual student growth.

**Pandemic Related Absenteeism**

COVID not only impacted the students who were new to Freire Wilmington, but also the students who were with us when the pandemic hit. For many of them, the return to in-person learning during the 2021-22 school year was more challenging than we anticipated. In particular, attendance dropped dramatically.

<b>Attendance pre and post pandemic</b>		
	19-20	21-22
Average Daily Attendance	94.3%	77.7%
Percent of students attending 90% or more	82.5%	28.4%

In an internal study we conducted in 2022, we found that chronic absenteeism was correlated with lower performance on state assessments. We replicated this study in 2023 (see table below), and found that the trend persisted – students who were chronically absent in 2023 scored on average 50 points lower in Math and 62 points lower in ELA on the Smarter Balanced assessment.

<b>Impact of Attendance on 22-23 8th Grade Smarter Balanced Scores</b>		
	ELA	Math
Chronically Absent	2450	2428
Not Chronically Absent	2512	2478
Variance	-62	-51

During the 2022-23 school year, we put a plan in place to address chronic absenteeism. Key elements included cross-collaboration to identify the root causes of student absenteeism, sharing meaningful resources with families, and supporting students in articulating a plan for success. We increased communication around student absences with parents and guardians, and involved them in the process of identifying barriers. Attendance updates as early as three absences and attendance-specific report cards to show whether students are on or off track have already proven effective in generating urgency around attendance and are resulting in positive attendance outcomes. We've also found that notification of referral to truancy court by email and certified mail at the 20-day threshold is moving the needle on attendance though still not at the rates needed to close the gap with years prior to COVID.

The percent of students attending 90% or more of instructional days climbed 16 percentage points by the end of the school year in 2022-23 from the prior year.

Attendance before and after new attendance strategy		
	21-22	22-23
Average Daily Attendance	77.7%	81.6%
Percent of students attending 90% or more	28.4%	44.5%

We plan to refine our implementation even further in 2023-24. We will provide individual case management from academic advisors and college counselors; complete home visits for students that reach the 15 day threshold; and implement mandatory Academic Centers and/or Saturday School as part of Attendance Improvement Plans. We were also recently awarded a Stronger Connections grant, which will enable us to hire a full-time MTSS Coordinator, who will ensure an integrated approach to attendance, emotional supports, and academic supports.

### Teacher Shortage

In 2022-23, three of the five teachers responsible for ELA and math instruction in 8th and 11th grades at our school took some type of leave (FMLA/parental) and one other teacher resigned midyear. In this charter term in particular, we also had some teachers who needed extended time off either because they were caring for sick family or dealing with mental/physical strain from the stresses of the pandemic. It is less than ideal for students to deal with disruption after they develop a rapport with a teacher, and even the best long-term substitute is less preferable to a qualified, consistent teacher. But due to the national teacher shortage, this unusual confluence of personnel issues was made worse by the fact that there were no certified teachers available to hire full-time or as long-term subs.

At the same time that fewer college students are receiving teaching certificates, one of our most consistent talent partners, Teach for America, stopped placing teachers in Delaware. Freire Wilmington was among the largest, if not the largest, placement site for Delaware's branch of Teach for America; high quality candidates dwindled after TFA closed its Delaware office.

In the face of these challenges and recognizing the correlation between teacher quality and student achievement, our People Team has relied on a range of strategies: direct message sourcing via LinkedIn, increasing collaboration with program partners (Relay, Wilmington University, Delaware

State University, and University of Delaware), increasing our referral bonus, improved marketing, and increasing outreach to alumni. A key element of the strategy is retaining our teachers, especially given how much is invested during the induction and coaching of new, uncertified teachers. We are entering the 2023-24 school mindful of the emotional experience of our staff. We want to support staff in developing deeper connections to each other. We are looking for opportunities to promote a joyful working environment. We will recognize accomplishments and celebrate growth. And we are beautifying common spaces in and around our building so that our people can work in an environment that uplifts the spirit.

## Math

Focusing on content-specific challenges, we have observed a marked decline in math performance since 2018-19. This challenge precedes the COVID pandemic.

Smarter Balanced, Math (Grade 8)								
	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Freire Wilmington	27%	23%	31%	11%	NA	0%	5%	2%
State of Delaware	38%	38%	38%	38%	NA	24%	24%	24%

SAT, Math (Grade 11)						
	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Freire Wilmington	20%	18%	6%	11%	4%	4%
State of Delaware	28%	28%	29%	28%	24%	23%

We have observed the following root causes specific to math instruction: (1) struggles implementing problem-based math curriculum and (2) students missing fundamental skills needed to access grade-level content. We adopted Illustrative Mathematics (IM) in 2019-20 for our core math curriculum, because it meets expectations in all EdReports Gateways, is aligned with the CCSS, and is both student-driven and focused on deeper understanding. What we have discovered, however, is that even those staff with deep content knowledge do not necessarily have the pedagogical knowledge about how math is learned (especially moving from concrete to pictorial to abstract), which can lead teachers to omit or deemphasize key pieces of the curriculum (e.g. Standards for Mathematical Practice). This is especially true when teachers feel rushed for time, which happens frequently due to how far behind students arrive. Teachers feel hurried trying to simultaneously teach the grade-level curriculum and incorporating the foundational/focus skills that students need to access that grade-level curriculum.

As such, high quality professional learning is one of our key strategies for the 2023-24 school year and beyond. Freire Wilmington will work to develop and strengthen teacher pedagogy around productive struggle, grappling, and student discourse (all hallmarks of IM and constructivist math instruction). We will couple high-quality instruction with guardrails to ensure that we remain standards-aligned and adaptations that allow our teachers to use curriculum in ways that best meet the needs of our students while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum. And by adding intervention blocks, we hope to help teachers feel less rushed so they give proper time to the most essential elements of the IM curriculum. This strategy is summarized below:

- We don't stick to a rigid pacing guide, but we ensure that we are preparing students for upcoming work in future grades by consulting major work of the grade.
- We make informed decisions about how and when to adapt structures and procedures to engage or meet the needs of students.
- We provide Tier 2 supports to our students within the classroom to ensure that they are able to meet the grade-level standards. These supports include:
  - Just-in-time spiraling – we identify students' gaps from previous grades and provide opportunities for them to relearn and master these skills alongside the new grade-level content.
- We use intervention blocks with Corrective Math to provide additional time for students to address prior learning gaps so they can access the grade-level curriculum in their math course.

## ELA

After experiencing declining ELA scores prior to the pandemic, in 2021-22, we adopted the EngageNY English Language Arts curriculum. We made this selection because it explicitly aligns to the CCSS and challenges students to read deeply in challenging texts, exposes them to diverse voices, is rooted in real world experiences, and aligns with our emphasis on social justice. Proficiency rates in 2022-23 started to creep up a bit in 8th grade, going from 11% to 14%, though they declined in 11th, from 23% to 13%. The 11th grade decline was especially disappointing given that the other two high schools in the Freire Schools network did experience improvements in 11th grade proficiency rates in 2022-23.

Smarter Balanced, ELA (Grade 8)								
	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Freire Wilmington	48%	39%	38%	30%	NA	25%	11%	14%
State of Delaware	54%	52%	53%	52%	NA	44%	42%	41%

SAT, ELA (Grade 11)						
	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Freire Wilmington	52%	38%	25%	30%	23%	13%
State of Delaware	50%	48%	49%	50%	47%	44%

When reflecting on our ELA performance in 2022-23, we identified two root causes: (1) students missing fundamental reading skills needed to access grade-level texts and (2) gap in teacher knowledge about the science of reading. With respect to missing fundamental reading skills and teacher's professional learning, our plan involves (1) training teachers in the science of reading, (2) planned intervention blocks to support struggling students, and (3) embedding the following curricular adaptations that we believe will help move the needle in ELA:

- We increase student engagement by introducing new or additional classroom structures or protocols that require students to do the thinking.
- We prioritize both on-demand and process-based writing. We ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage in the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, and revising with feedback.

- o In 8th grade, this means we intentionally prepare students to write on-demand essays like those they will see on Smarter Balanced.
- o In grades 9-12, this means we transform all Performance Tasks and some mid or end-unit assessments to become process-based, rather than on-demand.
- We provide direct instruction to students about literary concepts that build from grade to grade (e.g. rhetorical devices).
- We provide Tier 2 supports to our students within the classroom to ensure that they are able to comprehend grade-level texts. These supports include:
  - o Fluency practice
  - o “Juicy sentence protocol”
  - o Explicit vocabulary and knowledge-building instruction
- We use intervention blocks with Lexia to provide additional time for students to address prior learning gaps so they can access grade-level texts.

## Science

<b>Dessa, Science (Combined Grade 8 and Grade 10)</b>					
	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Freire Wilmington	13%	NA	16%	10%	5%
State of Delaware	32%	NA	24%	21%	NA

Freire Wilmington is deeply committed to improving outcomes in science for all students. Root causes of our performance include a need for higher quality curriculum and better PD around the shifts required by NGSS. In the spring of 2022-2023, Freire Schools convened a Science Leadership Team composed of instructional leaders, including Heads of Academics, Freire Schools network instructional leaders, and science department chairs to begin a multi-year curriculum evaluation and pilot process related to our science instructional materials. As part of this process, we committed to the following in 2023-2024:

- Continue to use Inquiry Hub as the primary instructional material in both 10th grade biology and chemistry.
- Pilot OpenSciEd’s recently released high school physics curriculum in 9th grade physical science, and pilot individual units from OpenSciEd’s biology and chemistry curricula in order to determine which program, Inquiry Hub or OpenSciEd, is the best fit for the science program at Freire Wilmington.
- Provide ongoing professional development for our science leaders, as well as our science teachers, related to the shifts required by NGSS and continuous growth in the three-dimensional learning framework of NGSS.

We chose both Inquiry Hub and OpenSciEd because Achieve, Inc. rates them as high-quality science instructional resources that are aligned with NGSS. Achieve, Inc. is an external evaluator that scores science materials using the NGSS EQUIP rubric.

As part of our multi-year science curriculum pilot and implementation, Freire Wilmington is providing professional development for both teachers and instructional leaders. In 2022-2023, the Science Leadership Team began this process. The team used the Solidify Science Leadership Workbook from Instruction Partners as the foundation to build our own deep

understanding of the shifts required by NGSS and the principles of three-dimensional learning. We leverage department-based PLCs, instructional walkthroughs, and instructional coaching to drive professional growth.

In 2023-2024, our professional development series for science began with a one-day "Science Launch Day," which will ground teachers in Freire Schools' Vision for Science Teaching and Learning by participating in NGSS-aligned learning experiences as learners themselves. Throughout the year, science teachers will meet in biweekly PLCs that will support teachers in piloting OpenSciEd and in continuing to develop their understanding of how to leverage Inquiry Hub materials in service of three-dimensional learning. Science teachers will also receive instructional coaching from Freire Wilmington's science department leader, with support from Freire Wilmington's Head of School and Assistant Head of Academics.

With support from the Freire Schools network's instructional leaders, our school-based administrators and Science Leadership Team will use Instruction Partners' Science Classroom Observation Tool in quarterly walkthroughs to monitor science instruction across all grades. We will use this tool to adjust our professional development plan in response to teacher and student needs. In addition, we will provide opportunities for Freire Wilmington's science leaders to visit classrooms at schools across our network to better align our science instruction to the shifts required by NGSS.

### **English Language Proficiency**

2022-23 was the first year that we had a student group size large enough to be rated, with 16 students scored. 4 students showed some improvement based on their ACCESS test scale score, but none met their target for growth. In the 2023-24 school year, we will be undertaking a thorough evaluation of our Program for Multilingual Learners including the quality of instruction/supports students receive, the coaching and professional learning provided to classroom teachers of Multilingual students, and the conditions during ACCESS assessment to identify areas that may be strengthened so that more students will hit their targets in the next charter term.

### **Student Engagement**

Another root cause that we identified of low academic achievement is a low level of student engagement in classrooms. This cuts across all subject areas. In 2021-22, across the Freire Schools network, we noticed a stark difference in student engagement compared to before the pandemic. Students were physically back in our classrooms, but many were checked out. While there are any number of teacher moves that can be employed to boost engagement (or, conversely, moves that can sap it) the common denominator that we observed was smart phones, which are tempting distractions that can often be used surreptitiously even if they are technically not allowed. Last year, one of our other Freire Schools network high schools piloted a cell-phone free building by using Yondr pouches. The difference in student engagement in the classroom was palpable and academic data backed up this observation, with increases of 7 points in math and 17 points in ELA on the state standardized test. The FCSW Board adopted a cell-phone free policy this June and the school began implementing Yondr pouches in the first week of the 2023-24 school year. The Yondr slogan is "Be Here Now." This speaks to the spirit of



this policy shift – we want students to connect with one another, with their teachers, and with their academics in a healthy way by focusing on the moment and the people in front of them.

## **Parent Engagement**

Parent engagement in schools is a vital cornerstone of a child's educational journey. It promotes a sense of community within the school, where parents feel invested in their child's educational experience, staff feel buoyed by the partnership with parents, and students feel supported and motivated. Parent engagement can impact academic outcomes when parents gain insights into their child's learning needs and teachers gain a deeper understanding of each student's unique strengths and challenges.

During the 23-24 school year, we will support increased parent engagement through a three-part plan. First, we will continue efforts that began in 22-23 to increase communication with parents through biweekly newsletters and biweekly progress reports. We will increase our activity on social media and we will ensure that every family receives a phone call by an advisor, counselor or admin at least once per quarter. Second, we will establish a Freire Parent Association, recruiting parents during Fall conferences and holding monthly meetings by the end of Marking Period 2. Third, in connection with our 21st Century Learning Center, we will work with the Parent Association to offer more school-wide family events at the school.

## **Dual Enrollment**

A key driver of School Quality/Student Success rating is dual enrollment. In some years, this has been an area of strength and in other years, our focus has been pulled in other directions. In 2023-24, we will bolster opportunities for Dual Enrollment by partnering with University of Delaware to offer EntreX and LeadX to 12th grade students, partnering with Stockton University to convert all AP courses to dual-credit eligible courses through their dual enrollment program, and continuing to offer supplemental dual enrollment options through Wilmington University and Del Tech.

## **Summary**

In summary, our analysis identified the following root causes of declining performance:

- Context: Students are arriving further behind than they used to with critical gaps in foundational skills needed to access grade-level curriculum.
- Pandemic related absenteeism: A larger proportion of students were chronically absent upon return to in person learning and this impacted their learning.
- Teacher shortage: The impact that the national teacher shortage had on FCSW was exacerbated by the closing of TFA Delaware, which had been a significant source of staffing for our school.
- Math: Struggles implementing problem-based math curriculum and students missing fundamental math skills.
- ELA: Students missing fundamental reading skills needed to access grade-level texts and a gap in teacher knowledge about the science of reading.

- Science: Need for better curriculum across all courses and gap in teacher knowledge about NGSS shifts
- Student engagement: Students are distracted by cell phones.

In response, our strategies for 2023-24 and beyond include:

- Intervention blocks in math and ELA with targeted instruction by student level.
- Intensive supports and interventions for attendance.
- Diversifying the pool we recruit teachers from and investing in current staff and their day-to-day experience at FCSW.
- Professional learning and coaching around problem based learning and the way that IM structures support it.
- Professional learning and coaching on the science of reading and how to shift the cognitive load to students during lessons; increase in time spent writing.
- Piloting new science curricula; professional learning around NGSS shifts.
- Adopting a cell phone free school policy.
- Conducting a thorough evaluation of our Program for English Learners
- Starting a parent association and holding more parent events
- Increasing dual enrollment opportunities.

We believe that the strategies outlined above will move the needle across all DSSF domains including Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Graduation Rate, School Quality/Student Success and Progress towards English Language Proficiency. That said, we are more committed than ever to interrogating the effectiveness of our strategies regularly and course correcting as needed. It is our responsibility to provide a high quality, college preparatory education to all of our students. That is our north star and we will remain nimble and adapt as needed to achieve our performance goals.