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School Proposal Overview

Provide information for the primary point of contact for the applicant team. This individual will serve as the contact for all communications, interviews, and notices regarding the submitted application. (Note! Names and contact information may be shared with external groups by the Delaware Department of Education.) The information in this section is not included in the narrative page limit.

Name of proposed school	Freire Charter School Newark
Opening year	2023-2024
Geographic community †	New Castle County/Christiana area
Model or focus (e.g., Arts, College Preparatory, Dual-Language, etc.)	College preparatory high school
Primary contact person (name, email, mobile phone, fax)	Walter Nathan “Nate” Durant nate.durant@freirewilmington.org Cell phone: (215) 370-8513 Fax: (302) 380-7595
Mailing address	201 W 14th St, Wilmington, DE 19801
Board Chair (name, email, mobile phone, fax)	Clinton “Clint” Walker clintwalker52@gmail.com Cell phone: (302) 383-9695 Fax: (302) 380-7595
Name of applicant group or entity applying	Freire Charter School Wilmington, Inc. (to be renamed ‘Freire Schools New Castle County’ if charter application is approved)

† Identification of geographic community may be as specific as a neighborhood or as general as the city/town identified for the school location.

Applicant

Provide the names and roles in the applicant team and current employer of all persons on the applicant team.

Name	Role	Current Employment & Title
Nate Durant, M.Ed.	Proposed Head of School (Certified School Principal)	Co-Head of School, Freire Charter School Wilmington
Darren Rainey, M.A.	Proposed Head of Academics	Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Freire Charter School Wilmington
Khyle Nelson	Proposed Dean of Students	Dean of Students, Freire Charter School Wilmington
Clint Walker, J.D.	Board President	Board President, Freire Charter School Wilmington
Kelly Davenport, Ed.D.	Planning around vision, Founding Group, education plan, community involvement, facilities	CEO and Network Founder, Freire Schools Collaborative
Paul Ramirez, M.A.	Planning around vision, school leadership, education plan, remote learning	Director of Digital Learning & Innovation, Freire Schools Collaborative
Max Matthews	Planning around governance, operations, compliance	Director of Operations and Compliance, Freire Schools Collaborative
Melanie Burke Reiser, M.P.A.	Planning around governance, evaluation, community involvement	Director of Mission Advancement, Freire Schools Collaborative
William Ray, CPA	Planning around budget and finance, start up, staffing	CFO, Freire Schools Collaborative
Leigh Botwinik, M.S.Ed., M.P.A.	Planning around performance management, goals, evaluation	Managing Director, Freire Schools Collaborative
Selena Castro	Staff recruitment and retention	Director of Talent Acquisition

Deborah Stern, Ph.D.	Education planning, curriculum development	Independent Education Consultant, R4 Education Consulting Services
Alexander Schuh, Ph.D.	Education planning, curriculum development	Director, School Frontiers, LLC
Johnny Mills	Prospective parent outreach	Director of Creative Initiatives, Freire Schools Collaborative
Randall Ball	Prospective parent outreach	Business Coordinator, Freire Schools Collaborative
Olivia Burgess	Planning around governance, support of Founding Group	Executive Assistant, Freire Schools Collaborative
Regan Fanelli	Community involvement, mission advancement	Communications Manager, Freire Schools Collaborative
Lilian Wehbe Kobeissi	Planning around performance management, goals, evaluation	Director of Performance Management, Freire Schools Collaborative

Does the school expect to contract or partner with a Charter Management Company or other organization for school management/operation?

YES

If yes, provide the name of the Charter Management Company or other partner organization if known.

Freire Schools Collaborative

Proposed Principal/School Leader Information (if known)

Name, email, mobile phone, fax:

Walter "Nate" Durant

nate.durant@freirewilmington.org

Cell phone: (215) 370-8513

Fax: (302) 380-7595

Current Employment: Co-Head of School, Academic Supports, Freire Charter School Wilmington

School Enrollment Projection

Grades	Number of Students				
	Year 1 2023-24	Year 2 2024-25	Year 3 2025-26	Year 4 2026-27	Year 5 2027-28
K					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9	135	150	140	150	150
10	90	120	125	135	135
11	0	80	105	115	115
12	0	0	65	100	100
Total Students	225	350	435	500	500
Classes per grade	9 th : 5 10 th : 3	9 th : 5 10 th : 4 11 th : 3	9 th : 5 10 th : 4 11 th : 3 12 th : 3	9 th : 5 10 th : 4 11 th : 3 12 th : 3	9 th : 5 10 th : 4 11 th : 3 12 th : 4
Average number of students per class	27-30	25-32	25-32	25-34	25-32

(Note! Provide additional columns if you will not reach full enrollment by year five.)

Student Demographics

	Low-Income %	Special Education %	English Learner (EL) %
Projected Demographics	40%	17.5%	5%

Table of Acronyms Used in the Application

FCSN	Freire Charter School Newark
FCSW	Freire Charter School Wilmington
FCS	Freire Charter School
TFCS	TECH Freire Charter School
FSNCC	Freire Schools New Castle County (proposed successor to FCSW corporation)
FSC/FSNO	Freire Schools Collaborative (often referred to as Freire Schools Network Office)

1.1 Executive Summary

1. Mission and Vision Statements

Mission: Freire Charter School Newark (pronounced “free-AIR-ee”) 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.

Vision: Freire Charter School Newark is the power to build your future.

2. Educational Need and Target Population

Target Population: Freire Charter School Newark (FCSN) will ultimately serve 500 students in grades 9-12 from New Castle County, primarily from Colonial, Christina, and Red Clay School Districts. We anticipate attracting a diverse community of Dragons (the Freire Schools mascot), including 17.5% students with disabilities, 5% English Learners, and 40% students qualifying as economically disadvantaged. Based on an analysis of 2019 8th grade Smarter Balanced scores at area middle schools, we also anticipate that approximately 67% of incoming students will be below proficient in ELA and 77% below proficient in math.

Location Selection & Community Impact: Our proposed school location is in unincorporated New Castle County in the Christiana area. When Freire Schools received a federal Charter School Program grant to expand high-quality Delaware charter school seats, key Delaware community leaders encouraged us to consider developing a high school in this area. Our proposed location allows us to meet local family demand for quality school choice and improve educational outcomes for local students. We are eager to replicate the successful FCSW model with refinements to reflect our new community. For example, FCSW offers grades 8-12, but because the area already has many quality middle school options, FCSN will offer only grades 9-12. Our program incorporates lessons learned during FCSW’s tenure, our network’s experiences responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., the need to emphasize academic acceleration over remediation and keep kids engaged with high-interest extracurriculars), and the national reckoning on systemic racism (i.e., implementing an antiracist curriculum and discipline process from the first day at FCSN that is built to celebrate, support, and uplift our students).

Meeting Community & Target Population Needs: All kids deserve, and can thrive in, a college prep educational environment — and Freire Schools’ college prep model works. In fact, 98% of FCSW’s first graduating class, the Class of 2019, were accepted to college, with an average of more than four college acceptances per student. 2020 and 2021 graduates faced a unique set of challenges, and more students opted to take a gap year due to uncertainty about the pandemic’s impact on college. But FCSW’s Class of 2021 still made impressive strides toward their college goals, with 79% of graduates accepted to at least one college and more than \$4.6 million earned collectively in scholarships and aid. While college persistence declined

nationwide, 82% of 2019 FCSW graduates and 83% of graduates of Freire High School in Philadelphia persisted to their second year of college, beating the national average of 74%. Freire Schools' network-wide post-secondary outcomes are among our key indicators of our ability to meet this population's needs.

Intent to Enroll: Our parent outreach efforts for FCSN are ongoing, but initial interest has affirmed the demand for quality high school options in New Castle County/Christiana. Within the past two months, 132 families have signed our Parent Support Survey. We are confident that demand for the Freire model is strong based on Freire Wilmington's strong track record of meeting its enrollment target and historical pacing for admissions.

3. Community Engagement

Assessing Demand & Soliciting Support: Following our initial outreach to community leaders that led to our location selection, our outreach campaign has included targeted mailers to New Castle County families, social media, in-person outreach at the Christiana Mall, and coordinating with local businesses that work with youth. Our efforts have demonstrated strong initial demand for the school, which we will build upon in the coming months.

Current Community Partners: Our community support efforts have focused on leveraging the strong partnerships already present at FCSW and identifying community partners that can enrich the student experience and provide essential services to our school. These connections include LYTE, Delaware Contemporary Art Museum, the Wave, Relay GSE Delaware, Teach for America DE, Community Education Building, DelawareCAN, First State Educate, Longwood Foundation, and various service providers. Additionally, our Founding Group includes eight members of the community FCSN will serve, as well as New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer, who will support us as we continue to build grassroots community support for FCSN.

4. Educational Plan

Educational Program: Freire Schools' college prep model makes real academic rigor accessible to all students by pairing it with integrated academic, social, and emotional supports. Our innovative focus on "Graduation x2" for ALL students, ensures that students have the skills and knowledge to graduate from high school AND to persist in and graduate from college. Other key elements of our instructional model include: (1) commitment to antiracist teaching and learning (FCSN will be the first school in the Freire Schools network to develop its educational program with the Freire Teaching & Learning Continuum as our guide for what antiracist instruction should look like from the start), (2) social justice education (FCSN will embody Paulo Freire's social justice philosophy, with courses designed to help students learn to create social change), (3) a belief in the "Power of Yet" that pushes students to embrace a growth mindset on their way to mastery, and (4) a belief that the best way for our students to recover educationally from the pandemic is to emphasize accelerated learning rather than remediation. Deeper Learning is at the core of our educational practice and promotes a student-centered learning environment. Focused on five domains – relationships, community of learning, meaningful

materials and instruction, student thinking and engagement, and demonstration of learning — Deeper Learning ensures that FCSN students and teachers are both learners and teachers and that each student’s unique voice is leveraged to enhance instruction.

Learning Environment & Culture: Our learning environment is student-centered. Students can explore their individual interests and adapt activities, projects, and assessments to incorporate their strengths and passions. Additional hallmarks of our learning environment include: classrooms that are joyous, intentional and safe; instruction that is focused, efficient, and active; robust student supports that are incorporated into every part of the school day; and technology used to enhance learning and create flexibility.

At FCSN, like at all Freire schools, our values guide our decision-making and form the foundation of our school culture. Chief among these values is the belief that “Freire = Family.” We are successful in connecting as a healthy and supportive family when we tap into our shared humanity, let love guide our decisions, fight for an antiracist future, value our diversity, commit to growing every day, create safe and peaceful spaces that inspire bravery, and never doubt our students’ power to succeed in college and build the future.

Improving Student Learning for All: FCSN is committed to maximizing learning opportunities for all students. We expect that a majority of our students will fall into one or more special populations that put them at risk (e.g. exceptional children, migrant and homeless children, English Learners, students performing below grade level and/or behind on credit accumulation, students recovering from trauma, LGBTQ+ students). As a result, we consider all students potentially at risk of not mastering Common Core Standards, graduating from high school, and/or being ready for college. Our entire program, therefore, is designed around supporting at-risk students and providing extra support for all. This is one of the motivations behind our rigorous MTSS program, robust student progress monitoring, academic advising, and IST and IEP teams. We also meet our gifted students’ unique learning needs with opportunities to take higher level courses than the grade-level standard or to take dual enrollment classes.

Using Assessment to Improve Student Learning: Freire Schools uses assessments to drive instructional decisions across all subjects both formatively and summatively with the aim of improving student learning for all. All teachers and leaders receive extensive, ongoing training regarding the use of assessments to develop teaching and learning plans for individuals and groups. We use research-based interim assessments (e.g. Renaissance Star, Edmentum’s Study Island) to identify which students are not on track to meet future expectations and, therefore, in need of intervention. We do so early and regularly throughout the year to allow educators to assess student learning needs and intervene in time for meaningful progress during the year.

5. Leadership and Governance

Board Oversight: Freire Charter School Wilmington, Inc. is the charter applicant. We propose that FCSW operate as a multiple charter holder to be named “Freire Schools New Castle County (FSNCC)” with a single Board of Directors governing two separate charters, FCSW and FCSN. The

FSNCC Board of Directors will set FCSN's mission and evaluate progress toward it, exercising its fiduciary responsibility and ensuring that FCSN is academically strong, fiscally sound, and well-managed in the long term. The Board will govern with integrity, providing academic, operational, and financial oversight by (1) operating Board meetings that are efficient, substantive and productive and that raise strategic issues for discussion; and (2) regularly reviewing and analyzing financial, organizational, and academic metrics aligned with DDOE's required metrics and school priorities. The FSNO shares key indicators of the School's health and wellness in a dashboard at every Board meeting, which allows the Board to ask important questions and assess the organization's academic, fiscal, and operational health regularly.

Leadership & Board Strengths: The three proposed FCSN leaders are current leaders at FCSW who have developed their craft at FCSW and would leave FCSW to lead FCSN. FCSW Co-Head of School Nate Durant will become FCSN Head of School; FCSW Director of Curriculum and Instruction Darren Rainey will become FCSN Head of Academics; and FCSW Dean of Students Khyle Nelson will become FCSN Dean of Students. Nate is a motivational leader and a certified school principal with instructional and school operations experience. Darren is a certified educator and instructional leader with experience implementing our ELA curriculum and developing teachers. Khyle is skilled in developing a positive school culture. These rising stars in Delaware education are committed to replicating FCSW's strongest elements at FCSN while also ensuring that FCSN charts an innovative course that meets its community's unique needs. Meanwhile, a cohort of additional aspiring leaders across all four Freire Schools campuses plus the seasoned academic, cultural, and operations leaders remaining at FCSW, including current Co-Head of School Madeline Weckel, will guide FCSW to continued growth and success.

The nine current FCSW Board members are the proposed initial FSNCC Board, led by Board President Clint Walker. This committed and talented Board has led FCSW successfully through its first renewal; helped FCSW earn "meets standard" marks on the educational program, governance and reporting, and finance on the Performance Framework; and been central to FCSW's success in navigating the pandemic and ensuring continuity of education for our students during this challenging time. The Board includes community members, parents, and those with experience in law, finance/accounting, K-12 education, higher education, business management, fundraising, government, and non-profit governance. With the new members we add as we develop FCSN (e.g. FCSN parent and teacher members), this Board will be poised to ensure the educational and operational success of both charter schools.

Stable and Effective Governance & Leadership: Continuity at the Board, leadership, and management level will position FCSN to raise student achievement and fulfill its mission and vision from day one. Our proposed governance structure – one FSNCC Board of Directors governing both FCSW and FCSN – allows FCSN to benefit from the FCSW Board's expertise and guarantees FCSN an effective governing board while FCSN is in its start-up phase. Sharing a single Board will allow both schools to recruit the most qualified members without having to compete with each other. Clint Walker is committed to leading the Board at least until FCSN reaches full stability and success, likely through its first charter term. During this time, Clint and the FSNO will continue to develop the capacity of the other Board officers, so we have strong

candidates to provide Board leadership continuity when Clint leaves.

Both the School leadership and the Board are supported by the Freire Schools Collaborative Network Office (FSNO). Led by CEO and Network Founder Dr. Kelly Davenport, FSNO staff and leaders' vision and depth of experience frees school leadership to focus on supporting students. FSNO leadership has specific expertise in new school development, with six members of the leadership team having worked on FCSW's development and opening, supported it through its first renewal, and helped the School navigate the pandemic challenges of the past two years.

School Leader Qualifications: The FCSN Head of School, like all Freire staff and leaders, must have an unequivocal belief that all students can achieve, graduate from college, and be agents of positive change. They should have a measurable record of success as a school leader in instruction and/or operations, and ideally have instructional experience and positive outcomes working with populations similar to ours. They will hold a DE license and DE school principal certification. They must be committed to their own professional growth and embody Freire Schools' values. Nate Durant meets these qualifications, plus is a community builder who ensures that love and equity thrive in our Freire Family.

6. Business Plan

We have identified a school facility in New Castle County and are currently in the early stages of negotiation to lease approximately 60,000 sq ft of space in a commercial building on 6.72 acres. If we are unable to proceed with the lease of this location, we are committed to securing an alternate site in New Castle County that will meet the needs of our school and students.

Freire Schools has a record of innovation in student transportation, with FCSW pioneering the use of DART cards for school transportation. FCSN will use a combination of public transit (we are a 0.3-mile walk from a DART Route #10 stop), yellow buses (Lehane's Bus Service has signed an MOU), and parents dropping kids off at school or students driving themselves (our first-choice facility is conveniently located to I-95 and has ample parking to allow a portion of our student population to park at school). In addition to Lehane's, we have already secured letters of support from partner organizations to support school operations and instruction, including: Community Education Building (food service provider), Back to Basics Learning (English language learning provider), Hope School Services (Speech/OT provider), and more.

Under the leadership of the FSNO's Chief Financial Officer, FCSW has received "meets standard" ratings in the financial management and oversight domain and overall on the DDOE Financial Framework every year. FCSN will benefit from this experience, with the CFO leading an accounting team at the FSNO that will manage all finance and accounting services for FCSN, including transaction processing in FSF and PHRST. The FCSN budget has expenditures sufficient to meet student needs and advance the School mission, and conservative revenue projections that include contingency plans. Funding sources include: state and local per pupil funding; federal, state, and local entitlement grants; a construction loan to finance the school renovation; a \$1.5M grant award from the federal Charter Schools Program grant (secured), and fundraising, which the FSNO has a strong track record of securing.

1.2 Founding Group and School Leadership

14 Del. C. § 512(1)

1.2.A: Founding Group Membership [14 Del. C. § 512(1)]

a. Identify the key members of the Founding Group for the proposed school. Identify only those individuals who will play a substantial ongoing role in school development, governance, and/or management, and will thus share responsibility for the school. These may include proposed Board members, school leaders/management, staff members, or other essential partners.

Explain what role each individual will play, and note which Founding Group members are certified educators, parents, and members of the community as required by 14 Del. C. § 512(1).

b. Explain the Founding Group's collective qualifications for establishing a high-quality charter school in Delaware and in assuming stewardship of public funds.

c. Describe the Founding Group's ties to and knowledge of the proposed school community.

- Summarize each person's experience, qualifications, and affiliations that will be directly relevant to developing a high-quality charter school that reflects the school's mission and vision. Explain why each individual was chosen to participate in this Founding Group.
- Explain how and why the Founding Group decided to form a school in Delaware.

FCSN's Founding Group is composed of 23 diverse and talented individuals who are committed to playing a substantial ongoing role in the new school and sharing responsibility for its success. Included in this group are:

- An alum from FCSW's first graduating class who is currently studying at Bryn Mawr.
- Six members of the FCSW's leadership team who have been central to that school's success and are eager to replicate the program at FCSN.
- Six members of the FSNO leadership team who have developed FCSW and bring leadership development, academic, finance, performance management, operations, admissions, community engagement, educational technology, communications, and fundraising.
- Nine members of the FCSW Board who have ensured that FCSW's mission has been implemented with fidelity and that the School meets its financial metrics, is legally compliant, and is supporting and growing its leaders so they can ensure academic success at FCSW and replicate it at FCSN. This includes two members who have served on the Board since FCSW's first year of operation or earlier.
- Eight people who have supported FCSW since its first year of operation, as Board members, staff, and network office staff. Many were involved in the application and start-up process.
- Eight certified educators.
- Eight members of the community in which FCSN will be located.

- Four parents of school-aged children in the community in which FCSN will be located.

Individually, the members of the Founding Group have contributed tremendously in the education sector and/or their communities. Collectively, this group is committed to advancing equity, raising the academic bar for ALL students, and empowering a new community of students at FCSN to build the future. The qualifications of the Founding Group are significant as detailed in the table below. This table also indicates the sustained role each person plans to play at FCSN.

			Certified Educator	Parent	Community Member	Public K-12	Charter Design/Operation	School Lead, Mgmt, Gov	Curriculum & Instruction	Business Management	Personnel Management	Diversity Issues (Outreach, Enrollment, Instruction)	At-Risk Populations/Children with Disabilities	School Operations	Parent/Community Engagement	Alumni
Name	Role they Will Play @ FCSN															
1 Siawaa Antwi	Alumni Visionary			X			X									X
2 Leigh Botwinik	Managment				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
3 Sheela Dattani	Board		X	X	X		X			X					X	
4 Kelly Davenport	Managment	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
5 Evelyn Davies	Board		X	X	X		X			X						
6 Walter "Nate" Durant	School Leadership	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
7 Ruble Harris	Partner				X	X	X					X	X	X	X	
8 John Kane	Board				X		X			X						
9 Matt Meyer	Community Liaison	X		X	X		X			X			X			
10 Johnny Mills	Managment				X	X	X					X			X	
11 Nathan Moser	Board	X			X	X	X	X								
12 Khlye Nelson	School Leadership		X	X	X	X	X					X		X	X	
13 Katie Pollard	Partner	X			X	X	X					X	X	X	X	
14 Darren Rainey	School Leadership	X			X	X	X	X				X	X			
15 Paul Ramirez	Managment	X			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
16 Bill Ray	Managment				X	X	X			X				X		
17 Melanie Burke Reiser	Managment				X	X	X					X		X	X	
18 David Singleton	Board			X	X		X			X				X		
19 Mark Stellini	Board			X	X		X			X						
20 Tara Terry	Board				X		X									
21 Clint Walker	Board				X		X			X						
22 Maddie Weckel	Partner	X			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
23 Nathan Will	Board				X		X									
	TOTALS		8	4	8	22	13	23	7	10	5	11	8	11	11	1

The group has deep ties to the New Castle County Community that FCSN will serve and extensive experience with public charter education in Delaware. A summary of each member's qualifications follows below.

- **Siawaa Antwi** – Siawaa was a part of FCSW's first graduating class (2019), where she made an impact in the classroom (she took three AP courses and a college computer science course) and outside as a member of Student Council, President of the National Honor Society, a peer mediator, and event coordinator. She also served as a member of the Delaware Youth Leadership Network as well as the Delaware Community Foundation's Youth Philanthropy Board, making recommendations for impactful projects to support New Castle County. She resides in the community FCSN will serve and is currently a junior at Bryn Mawr University studying psychology.
- **Leigh Botwinik** – Leigh is an experienced leader in the educational non-profit sector and serves as Managing Director of the FSNO. Leigh works to ensure coordination among Freire Schools' teams in order to provide high-quality service to our schools and advance the network's mission. She is also a champion of using data to improve performance and has shepherded in a new era of data-driven decision-making at Freire Schools. Leigh has experience in instruction, operations, higher education, and parent involvement. She put her expertise to work supporting FCSW from its first year of operation to the present day, and she will apply the lessons learned there to the development and management of FCSN.
- **Sheela Dattani** – Sheela joined the FCSW Board in 2019 and currently serves as Vice President. She has been central in expanding the School's fundraising efforts and working with school leadership to chart a clear course through the educational and operational challenges of the pandemic. Sheela is an attorney specializing in corporate law, having previously been Of Counsel for the Flowers Counsel Group. Her knowledge of governance and management matters and fundraising expertise have been central to FCSW's success and will be of great benefit as she serves on the FSNCC Board and governs FCSN to similar success. She resides in the community FCSN will serve.
- **Kelly Davenport, Ed.D.** – Kelly is the founder and CEO of the FSNO. In 1999, she co-founded Freire Charter High School with the goal of engaging Philly kids directly in their education, nurturing leadership, citizenship, and creativity. Today, she leads Freire Schools with passion, excellence, and dedication and spearheaded the creation of FCSW. She provides the vision and the heart for our network, is the public face of our efforts, and coaches and supports Freire school leaders. She began her career in education as a Spanish teacher, seeking to make her classroom a space in which students could expect democracy, kindness, and to be valued for exactly who they were. Through her work with Freire Schools, Kelly has witnessed the transformative role school leaders can play in improving education. She is committed to supporting the school leadership of the new FCSN and to advancing educational equity in Delaware. She is a certified educator.
- **Evelyn Davies** – Evelyn is a member of the FCSW Board and mother of two students at FCSW. She joined the Board because she believes that she needs to make sure that our children have access to an even better education than she did. Professionally, Evelyn is a

Contract Associate Manager at Accenture, a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Her 25+ years of financial management experience have been an asset to the FCSW Board during her first year of service and deepen its capacity to provide financial oversight to the new campus. And her experience as a parent of children in a Freire school and a resident of the community that FCSN will serve will give her a valuable perspective as a member of the FSNCC Board and ability to elevate student, parent, and community voice in decision-making to ensure that all our students are truly prepared for college and beyond.

- **Walter “Nate” Durant** – Nate is the current Co-Head of School at FCSW and proposed Head of School for FCSN. He is a parent and resident of the community that FCSN will serve, and a certified principal. He believes that “one of the greatest gifts you can give is opportunity” and that “Freire Newark will expand the opportunities for students in Delaware without any red tape, red lines, or academic qualifiers.” Please see 1.2.C.1 below for a detailed description of his qualifications to serve on the Founding Group and lead FCSN.
- **Ruble Harris** – Ruble joined FCSW in its first year of operation and now serves as Assistant Head of School. In this role, he is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure school environment. He is skilled at conflict resolution, crisis management, supporting at-risk populations, working with families to foster positive behavior outcomes, and implementing proactive supports. Ruble is a gifted and supportive mentor to staff and students. While he remains in leadership at FCSW, he will apply his mentoring skills to collaborate with and support the culture staff at FCSN, partnering with them to develop a safe and supportive school culture there.
- **John Kane** – John is Group President for Business Processing Solutions for Navient and has served on the FCSW Board since its first year of operation, where he serves as Board Treasurer. His finance and business background have contributed to the Board’s strong financial oversight capabilities and will be an asset to the development and governance of FCSN as he plans to serve on the FSNCC Board.
- **Matt Meyer** – Matt is the elected County Executive for New Castle County. Prior to becoming County Executive, Matt worked as a math teacher, a diplomat in Iraq, an economic advisor to Delaware Governor Jack Markell and started two successful businesses. As the Chief Executive of Delaware’s largest county, a certified educator, and a resident in the community FCSN will serve, Matt has firsthand knowledge about the educational needs in the New Castle community and will support FCSN in its community outreach efforts. He has been a partner with FCSW for many years, including leading a student leadership seminar on local government in 2018-19.
- **Johnny Mills** – Johnny is Director of Creative Initiatives in the FSNO, where he leads special projects across the Freire Schools network and within individual schools that focus on advancing Freire Schools’ mission. Johnny worked as the Director of Admissions at Freire High School before joining the Network Office team and continues to support the admissions teams at each campus. He has been central to FCSW’s enrollment success and is leading parental outreach efforts for FCSN.
- **Nathan Moser** – Nathan has served as the teacher member on the FCSW Board since 2017. Nathan is a certified secondary social studies and science teacher who teaches our

10th grade Power and Money course, a class that is tied to our social justice foundation. He also is active in leading our 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, which provides engaging extracurricular programs to our kids after school and in the summer. His work in the classroom and with our kids during out of school time gives him a unique insight into school and student needs, which he shares at our Board meetings. He is excited to collaborate with the to-be-named teacher Board member from the FCSN campus on the FSNCC Board to ensure staff voice in decision-making.

- **Khyle Nelson** – Khyle joined the FCSW team in August 2016, where he now serves as Dean of Students. In this role he is responsible for cultivating a positive school culture, ensuring school and classroom expectations are clear and communicated regularly, integrating restorative practices into our discipline model, and supporting the peer mediation program. Prior to FCSW he was a supervisor at a group behavioral health facility, where he gained experience working with students with disabilities. As the proposed Dean of Students at FCSN, he will strike a balance between replicating FCSW's effective culture practices and cultivating new practices and traditions among the FCSN community. As a graduate of Glasgow High School and resident in the community FCSN will serve, Khyle has a personal understanding of the community's educational needs.
- **Katie Pollard** – Katie is Assistant Head of School at FCSW, where she leads parent engagement activities, academic supports, college counseling, state assessments, and academic advising. In her first year leading FCSW college counseling department, the Class of 2019 had a 98% college acceptance rate. As she partners with the new leadership team at FCSN, she will collaborate with them to develop similar academic support systems while also looking to their innovations for ways to continue to strengthen FCSW. She is a certified educator in special education K-12, elementary education, and middle school science.
- **Darren Rainey** – Darren is the Director Curriculum and Instruction at FCSW and is the proposed Head of Academics at FCSN. He is a certified educator (secondary ELA) who transitioned into the classroom after a career in the U.S. Army. He also serves as an Impact Leader with Profound Gentlemen, Inc. and has worked as an Adjunct Professor at the Relay Graduate School of Education's Delaware Campus. He is passionate about recruiting diverse educators to the field. At FCSN Darren will lead all things teaching and learning, including recruiting and growing a diverse team of educators, mentoring instructional staff, and developing an academic culture that raises the academic bar for all kids.
- **Paul Ramirez** – Paul Ramirez is the Director of Digital Learning and Innovation for the FSNO. He works at the intersection of instruction, strategy, technology, and innovation – helping to re-envision what's possible for learning while continuing Freire's commitment to empowerment and critical thinking. He also leads professional development for current and aspiring school leaders at Freire School, including supervising and coaching several Heads of School. Prior to this, Paul was the founding Head of School for FCSW and served in that capacity for five years. During that time, FCSW was successfully renewed and Paul was recognized for his leadership with the Delaware Charter School Network's Impact Award for charter school principals (2020) and Teach for America Delaware's Excellence in School Leadership Award (2017). Paul is a certified Delaware

school principal and secondary ELA teacher, and he will share his experiences in leading a new Delaware charter school as he coaches the leadership team at FCSN.

- **Bill Ray** – Bill is Chief Financial Officer for the FSNO and a CPA with 17 years of experience in audit and financial accounting in both the public and private sector. He joined the Freire Schools Network Office in 2015, and has worked with FCSW since its first year of operation. He has a strong understanding of school finance in the State of Delaware (including the intricacies of charter school funding and experience with FSF and PHRST). Under his leadership, FCSW has received “meets standard” ratings in the financial management and oversight domain and overall on the DDOE Financial Framework every year. He is eager to support FCSN with all of its finance, accounting, and budgeting needs.
- **Melanie Burke Reiser** – Melanie is Director of Mission Advancement at the FSNO, and has 20 years of experience working with public charter schools. At Freire Schools, she develops and implements robust communications and public affairs strategies and leads all aspects of fundraising. Melanie has extensive experience in public charter school operations and compliance, project management, new school development, charter school renewal, professional writing and grant writing, and public advocacy. This made her an asset during the start-up of FCSW and will be essential as we develop and support FCSN to success.
- **David Singleton** – David is retired after splitting his professional career fairly evenly between the public and private sectors, including executive-level positions with the Wilmington City government, New Castle County Government, and JP Morgan & Co. David is a member of the FCSW Board and will serve on the FSNCC Board. He has extensive leadership and governance experience in higher education (Vice President at University of Delaware and Swarthmore College Board member for 20+ years) and pre-K-12 governance experience (Wilmington Friends School Board member for 26 years). He has a keen expertise in facilities and operations, both of which will be critical during the start-up of FCSN, and his long-standing reputation as an active member of the New Castle community will help ensure we are responsive to community needs as we develop FCSN.
- **Mark Stellini** – Mark serves on the Board of FCSW and will serve on the Board of FSNCC. He brings his entrepreneurial spirit, business leadership skills, and strong presence in New Castle County’s business community to the Board, and he is currently the Founder and Principal of Assurance Media, LLC. Among many board positions, Mark has experience in school governance at the K-12 (NCCVT) and higher education (Delaware Tech) levels and served on the 2016 SJR 4 Education Funding Improvement Commission.
- **Tara Terry** – Tara is the parent of a senior at FCSW. Watching her child grow at FCSW has given her unique insight into FCSW’s educational program, student supports, and mission commitment. She serves as a parent Board member and Board Secretary at FCSW. Professionally, Tara has worked at the Internal Revenue Service for more than 13 years in a variety of roles with increasing responsibility. Her customer service background is important to the Board’s efforts to provide stakeholder voice in decision-making.

- **Clint Walker** – Clint joined the FCSW Board in its first year of operation and has led the school to its current success, including leading FCSW’s fundraising efforts. Currently the FCSW Board President, Clint is prepared to lead the FSNCC Board. Clint is an attorney specializing in governance with extensive experience in finance. He retired in 2019 from Barclays Bank Delaware, for which he served as General Counsel and Chief Administrative Officer. In addition to his experience leading FCSW’s Board and his legal and financial acumen, Clint brings to the Board deep ties to the New Castle County community, where he chairs the Board of the West End Neighborhood House, serves as Chair of Jewish Family Services, and a member of the Board of Leading Youth Through Empowerment. On the state level, he chairs the Delaware State Commission on Hiring Individuals with Disabilities and is the Governor’s representative on the Wilmington Riverfront Development Corporation.
- **Madeline Weckel** – Madeline Weckel is Co-Head of School of FCSW, responsible for leading the school’s instructional program. Maddie joined FCSW in 2016 as a special education and math teacher. Maddie is a certified educator (special education and secondary English in Delaware and Pennsylvania) and proven instructional leader who founded and led FCSW’s instructional coaching program. Maddie will continue to lead FCSW, forging academic and extracurricular partnerships between FCSW and FCSN and collaborating with FCSN school leadership for the betterment of both schools.
- **Nathan Will** – Nathan is a member of the FCSW Board and is excited to serve on the FSNCC Board. He is an attorney who has worked in The Vanguard Group since 2013, currently serving as Head of Municipal Credit Research. His legal and financial expertise has been an asset to the Board since he joined in 2019, and he is active in FCSW’s fundraising efforts. As a Wilmington resident and father of two school-aged children, Nathan is deeply connected to expanding high quality education options in New Castle County.

Forming a Delaware School: Freire Schools was grateful for the opportunity to replicate our college prep high school model in Delaware when Freire Charter School Wilmington opened in 2015. Our experience in Wilmington has made our entire network of schools stronger – and allowed us to serve 500 amazing students per year, develop new partnerships, and learn alongside some of the most talented educators in the state. Freire Schools was awarded a Charter School Program grant in 2019 to expand high quality charter school seats in Delaware and Pennsylvania, but we did not want that to be the driving force behind our growth. We instead only wanted to develop a school if we could advance our vision for a high academic bar for all kids in an area in which families need more high quality school options. We spent this past summer and fall meeting with key leaders in the Delaware community, including elected officials, education officials, philanthropic leaders, and CEOs of area K-8 charter schools to inquire whether this was the right time for us to grow and, if so, where and in what grades. These leaders consistently affirmed our plans to grow and identified the Christiana area in New Castle County as a place in need of a high school, specifically a strong school focused on college-preparatory education. While the proposed area has a number of vocational schools as well as large-comprehensive high schools, there are only limited options for families seeking a college preparatory option. From there we did a detailed analysis of demand in New Castle County and

ascertained that, if we located the school several miles south of New Castle, we could attract students from Newark, New Castle, Christiana, and further south without depleting the enrollment demand for FCSW. Furthermore, through our admissions outreach for FCSW, we have had many families from the area who have said they would attend a college preparatory school like FCSW but did not want the long commute into Wilmington.

d. Provide, as Attachment 1 (Founding Group Résumés and Biographies). Include full résumés (including contact information) and professional biographies (brief narratives) for the individuals named. Label each document with the individual's affiliation with the proposed school.

Founding Group résumés and professional biographies can be found in Attachment 1.

1.2.B: Principal/Founding Group, School Leader, and School Leadership Team [14 Del. C. § 512(1)]

Background [14 Del. C. § 512(1)]

Explain the circumstances and motivations that brought the Founding Group together to propose this school.

Freire Schools was founded with the audacious belief that ALL kids can achieve when provided with a rigorous, college prep curriculum plus robust academic, social, and emotional supports. For 21 years we have seen the power of that belief in action, first in Philadelphia and, since 2015, in Wilmington. At our Philadelphia campuses we are thrilled to be experiencing our alumni growing up and doing great things, even rejoining our community as parents of the next generation of Freire Dragons, as Board members, and as teachers and support staff in our schools.

When we were encouraged to replicate Freire High School in Wilmington by then Governor Jack Markell, we found that the core parts of our Freire program translated successfully into our Delaware school at the same time that the unique Delaware experience helped us develop new partnerships and new perspectives that refined our vision for FCSW and our network as a whole. To date, we have celebrated three graduating classes at FCSW, and we are eager to watch them build the future and we hope to welcome some of them back to the school as staff.

The events of the past two years have deeply impacted not just how we educate our students, but why we believe this work is so critical. When COVID-19 shuttered schools across the country, the very critical role that schools play in our communities was illuminated almost overnight. Schools are of course places of learning, and they are also places where kids access food, health, and mental health services and have access to reliable technology. They are places where students cultivate their interests, relationships, and identities. COVID-19 exposed the inequities in our education system, and schools were left struggling to close digital and resource divides at a time when our kids needed us most. While the pandemic was a challenge for our

schools, like for schools everywhere, Freire Schools was able to quickly restore these services and connections because the Freire program has always prioritized integrated student supports.

Our Founding Group of school and network leaders, Board members, and community leaders know that all kids deserve and can thrive in a college prep education, and we know that Freire Schools' college prep model is working, even with the challenges of the pandemic. We are eager to replicate the successful FCSW model with refinements to reflect our new school community and lessons learned during FCSW's tenure, including during our response to the pandemic. We are also eager to advance our diversity and equity work, positioning our academic program as the primary lever for antiracism and ensuring that our school culture supports restorative practices and generative conflict.

FCSW has enjoyed becoming part of Wilmington's Central Business District and building collaborative partnerships in the region. We look forward to doing the same in our new community, as we expand the college prep options for more families, providing a safe space for more New Castle County kids to hope, strive, grow, and achieve.

1.2.C: Principal/School Leader, Founding Group, and School Leadership Team [14 Del. C. §512 (1)]

1. If the Principal/School Leader candidate has been identified:

a. Explain why this individual is well qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission and goals. Summarize the proposed leader's academic and organizational track-record. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates the leader's capacity to design, launch, and manage a high performing school. If the School Leader has never run a school, describe any principal leadership training programs that the proposed leader has completed or is currently participating in.

b. Provide specific data that demonstrates strong evidence of the school leader's ability to effectively serve the proposed target population.

Proposed School Leader: Walter Nathan "Nate" Durant will serve as the Head of School of Freire Charter School Newark. Over the past decade, Nate has developed instructional, operational, and extensive leadership skills working in Delaware schools in a variety of roles. He has worked as an administrator at FCSW for the past five years, initially as Director of Student Activities and then Assistant Head of School, and now serving as the Co-Head of School since 2020. His leadership ensured that kids kept learning and growing during the COVID-19 building closure, and he reimaged our summer program to help kids reconnect while accelerating learning in summer 2021. During this time, he has developed deeply within Freire's leadership model, working directly with CEO Kelly Davenport and former FCSW Head of School Paul Ramirez.

The oldest of five children, he grew up in a single-parent, single-income household in a two-bedroom row home in North Philadelphia, where he faced many of the same obstacles that economically disadvantaged youth encounter today. With the help of dedicated teachers and community members, Nate found his path and earned a B.A. in Communication from Kutztown University in Pennsylvania and an M.Ed. in School Leadership from Wilmington University. He holds an active Delaware educator license and principal certification.

Nate also brings an extensive history as a community leader to the role. For three years he was the Board President of the Cool Spring/Tilton Park Neighborhood Association, where he was known for bringing neighbors together around community issues. He is also the current Chair of the Wilmington Civil Rights Commission, where he leads efforts to support equity, diversity, and civil rights.

Nate began his career as a science teacher at Thomas Edison Charter School in Wilmington, where he led students to some of the school's highest academic gains. He also led the chess team to two national championships in 2014 and 2016.

Evidence of Leader Effectiveness: As a head of school, Nate has a record of positive outcomes in student academic success, school operations, and culture. Over the past three years, Nate has overseen the college counseling program at FCSW. During these years, Nate led FCSW to achieve an average of 87% of students accepted into college each year — an acceptance rate that far exceeds schools with similar populations, and matches or sometimes surpasses schools with students who come from more privileged backgrounds.

Upon becoming Head of School at FCSW, among his many responsibilities Nate was tasked with leading the admissions and student recruitment team. Both years that he led this team, FCSW exceeded its enrollment goal for the first time in its history and led to FCSW exceeding full enrollment. This experience will be essential as we recruit students for FCSN.

On academics, Nate has led FCSW to significant academic success. Much of this success is outlined in detail in the CMO Supplement, Attachment 25 question 2. To summarize, Nate has helped to oversee major staff and student initiatives that have led to exceptional growth on DSSF growth scores, SAT proficiency, and STAR benchmarking results. Experienced as a successful science teacher himself earlier in his career and then at Freire supporting major curriculum overhaul as well as helping to shift teacher instructional practice, Nate has deep knowledge of the instructional work necessary for students to succeed.

Over three years, Nate also oversaw FCSW's operations, organizational, and legal compliance, and he led FCSW to consistently high ratings on the Organization and Financial Performance Frameworks of the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF), achieving ratings of Meets Standard. This includes areas such as students with disabilities, English learners, reporting requirements, facilities, transportation, health, and more.

Nate is also a student culture leader. DDOE commended him for creating one of the most successful 21st Century Grant After-School Programs with an average daily attendance of 126 students in pre-pandemic years, and for successfully shifting programming to virtual during the COVID-19 building closure. He also fostered a huge range of partnership programs, including United Way, Junior Achievement, Code Differently, LYTE, the Delaware Contemporary Art Museum, and more.

2. If the candidate is not yet identified, summarize the Board and/or other Founding Group members' academic and organizational performance record and provide specific evidence that demonstrates the Board's ability to effectively serve the proposed target population.

This is not applicable as the school leader has been identified (see above).

3. Who will work on a full-time or nearly full-time basis immediately after approval to lead development of the school? How will this person be compensated prior to the school receiving per-pupil funding?

Immediately after approval, the Freire Schools Network Office (FSNO) will provide leadership on the project in conjunction with the Board. Kelly Davenport will work on a nearly full-time basis in building and establishing FCSN. Further, a team of FSNO staff will also dedicate significant time to establishing FCSN, including the financing, facilities, curriculum, standards, and hiring — see Attachment 11c for an organizational chart of FSNO staff. These staff will be paid out of the Freire Schools' CSP grant which has already been awarded to the network office (note this is separate from the Delaware CSP grant).

In addition to FSNO staff, we began to heavily develop future school leaders across the Freire network when FSNO was awarded a CSP grant in 2019. Because of this, Freire Schools finds itself in a strong position with several individuals ready to lead a new campus as well as to continue the leadership of FCSW. In the 2022-2023 school year, members of FCSN's proposed leadership team, not including Nate Durant, will continue leadership learning experiences via placements at other schools in the Freire network. These training experiences will be funded through a combination of CSP and private fundraising.

Finally, Nate Durant will continue leadership as Head of School at FCSW, developing as a principal working together with Kelly Davenport and Paul Ramirez.

4. Describe the responsibilities and qualifications of the school's leadership/management team (beyond the School Leader). If known, identify the individuals who will fill these positions and provide, as Attachment 3, the qualifications, résumés, and professional biographies for these individuals. If these positions are vacant, explain the timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment and hiring.

In Year 1, two leaders will report directly to the Head of School:

Darren Rainey is the proposed Head of Academics at FCSN. He has worked at FCSW since 2017 and is currently serving as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at FCSW. In this role, he has made a huge impact in coaching and developing teachers as well implementing a more rigorous math and English curriculum. He is a certified teacher and previously taught secondary ELA, where he has deep knowledge of rigor and engagement as well as how to serve the needs of exceptional learners. He joined teaching after a career in the U.S. Army. In addition to work at FCSW, he has been an Impact Leader with Profound Gentlemen, Inc. and has worked as an Adjunct Professor at the Relay Graduate School of Education's Delaware Campus. He will receive his principal certification in June of 2022 through Lead for Delaware. At FCSN, Darren, reporting to the Head of School, will lead all things teaching and learning.

Khyle Nelson is the proposed Dean of Students at FCSN. He joined the FCSW team in 2016, where he now serves as Dean of Students. In this role he is responsible for cultivating a positive school culture, ensuring school and classroom expectations are clear and communicated regularly, integrating restorative practices into our discipline model, and supporting the peer mediation program. Prior to FCSW he was a supervisor at a group behavioral health facility, where he gained experience working with students with disabilities. As the proposed Dean of Students at FCSN, he will strike a balance between replicating FCSW's effective culture practices and cultivating new practices and traditions among the FCSN community. As a graduate of Glasgow High School and a parent resident in the community FCSN will serve, Khyle has a personal understanding of the community's educational needs.

Job Descriptions for the Head of Academics and Dean of Students, as well as Darren and Khyle's resumes, are included as Attachment 3.

The responsibilities and qualifications of the proposed school management — the FSNO leadership team — is detailed in the response to question 2.8.C. of the CMO Supplement included as Attachment 25.

1.3 Education Plan

14 Del. C. §§ 512(4)-(8) and (11)

The educational program should meet the requirements of 14 Del. C. §§ 512(4), (5), (6) and (7) and applicable regulations.

1.3.A: Curriculum and Instructional Design [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]

1. Provide a synopsis of the proposed educational program, including key components of the education model and any unique or innovative features.

We modeled FCSN's educational program on Freire Schools' successful high schools, especially on FCSW's education program. Our education model encourages innovation and modification based on FCSN students' unique needs, but has the following key elements as its foundation:

- **College prep for all students:** At Freire Schools, we prepare our students to seize their power to build the future by raising the academic bar and providing a college-preparatory education to every student. We believe that meaningful and rigorous college-preparatory content sets conditions for students that empower them for a life of leadership and to actualize the goals they set for themselves. At FCSN, college prep means preparing students for "Graduation x2" – ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to graduate from high school AND to persist in and graduate from college. To achieve this goal, the academic program is a challenging liberal arts program that helps students achieve deeper learning — encouraging students to think critically and scientifically, communicate effectively, read and synthesize complex texts, and apply the skills and knowledge they acquire in the classroom to real-world situations. FCSN will have more required courses than some traditional high schools (e.g. 4 credits of science and 3 credits of world languages), because we know that this prepares kids for the competitive college application process and for success when they get there.
- **Antiracist Teaching and Learning:** With support from our diversity, equity, and inclusion partner REthinc, Freire Schools developed a Teaching and Learning Continuum in 2021 to keep us accountable to making the sustained changes needed to grow into a fully inclusive, antiracist, multicultural organization in a transformed society. The Teaching & Learning Continuum (Attached as Appendix A) focuses on the question, "What does antiracist instruction look like at the school and network level?" It helps us evaluate how student race, experience, background, etc. are all brought into play to help students make meaning and internalize their learning at the deepest level. At the core of the continuum is our belief that every member of our Freire Family must view themselves as an educator and strive to use their role and relationships with students to amplify students' possibilities to achieve, graduate from college, and be agents of positive change. FCSN is in a powerful position to develop its educational program with the highest level of the Continuum in mind, and, as we implement our program, the Continuum will provide markers with which we can measure our progress toward

advancing antiracism in how we use data; expose students to history and current events; include diverse voices and vantage points in our curriculum; meet individual needs with robust supports, empower students to be leaders; allow families and students to contribute to the education process; and inspire, uplift, and celebrate our students while promoting diversity in culture and perspective and fostering humanity for all.

- **Social Justice Education:** Our namesake Paulo Freire was an educational philosopher and activist who embodied the tenets of social justice education. In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argued for an educational approach based on exchange between students and teachers, in which there is mutual respect amongst all participants and everyone matters and has a voice. From our inception, Freire Schools has integrated a focus on social justice into our program as we seek to enhance equity and democracy for all— students, staff, parents and community. This quest to enhance equity and democracy for all informs how we teach and what we teach. A Freire Schools education helps students see the structures at play in society, challenge the status quo, and work to transform themselves and those around them in order to bring about more equity in society itself. FCSN’s social justice mission will be alive in our classrooms in the ways our English Language Arts curriculum (Engage NY), Illustrative Math, and other key courses develop in our students the kind of literacy they need to be engaged citizens. You will also see it in the many courses we offer focused on helping students understand the structures of society so that they can influence the system itself. For example, our Power and Money course helps students understand the current and historical function and operation of power and money, while courses like Writing for Change and Peace & Social Change help students understand how to create social change. Our commitment to social justice is an act of love. We show our kids that they are loved by valuing their voices and experiences and showing them the power they have to build a more equitable future.
- **Power of Yet:** When we refer to “the Power of Yet” at Freire Schools, we mean that teachers need to understand test results are simply an indicator of mastery of standards on a particular day, not as a final statement of students’ capacity to perform at standard. That is, learning is iterative. We understand that a student who does not succeed on a quiz or test has just not mastered the assessed concepts *yet*. Similarly, students must develop the confidence that with extra work, they can improve and master concepts that were more difficult at an earlier stage in their learning process. FCSN will inspire a shift — for both students and teachers — from a fixed mindset to an understanding of both our fixed and growth mindsets. FCSN will encourage its teachers to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery on assignments and tests and encourage students to retake mastery assignments. Between the first attempt and subsequent attempts, teachers will work closely with students to reteach and relearn material, and students will have opportunities to collaborate with their peers as they support each other toward growth and mastery.
- **Acceleration over Remediation:** COVID-19 challenged us in tremendous ways. While other schools and districts are talking about remediation and the COVID slide, Freire Schools is focusing on accelerating learning. We are continuing to teach on grade level

while increasing the structure, care, and supports to help students get on grade level while deepening and strengthening skills and content knowledge. We believe that it is a disservice to students to focus on what they missed instead of where they are going. We raise the bar academically for all kids beginning on the first day while integrating academic supports into the daily school program.

2. Provide a synopsis of how the proposed instructional design reflects the needs of the school's target population, and how all students will meet or exceed the expectations of the Delaware Content Standards (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Next Generation Science Standards, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages).

a. The description of the instructional design should include, as appropriate, the educational approach (or approaches), including class size and structure, teaching methods with a supporting research base, technology integration for all grades to be served, and how the design relates to the mission of the school.

FCSN's instructional design is based on the needs of the diverse community of creative and collaborative students from New Castle County we plan to serve. Based on an analysis of surrounding schools (including William Penn H.S., Christiana H.S., Glasgow H.S., and Newark H.S.) and our own experience with FCSW and in opening new schools, we estimate that FCSN's student population will be comprised of approximately 17.5% students with disabilities, 5% English Learners, and 40% students qualifying as economically disadvantaged. We also understand, and have witnessed this at FCSW, that students will likely join us performing below grade level. Based on an analysis of 8th grade Smarter Balanced scores from 2019 at area middle schools, we anticipate that approximately 67% of incoming students will be below proficient in ELA and 77% below proficient in math. This is a substantially greater proportion of students below proficient than we see statewide (62% below proficient in math and 48% in ELA). Our proven instructional model, which focuses on individual learning, allows us to meet each of our students' diverse learning, social, and emotional needs and support them as they accelerate their learning and prepare for Graduation x2.

Deeper Learning is at the core of our educational practice. Our Deeper Learning Rubric (Attached as Appendix B) promotes a student-centered learning environment where students build their critical thinking skills and teachers are responsive to student needs in real-time. We developed the Deeper Learning Rubric based on the National Research Council of the National Academies' "Education for Life and Work: Guide for Practitioners." This research is considered the guidebook for how people learn by the National Center for Education and the Economy. It answers the question, "What does great instruction look like in the classroom?" and focuses evaluation and improvement of teaching on observable student outcomes over teacher inputs. The rubric is organized along five domains:

- Domain 1: Relationships: Do students feel known and valued as people by the teacher and their peers?

- Domain 2: Community of Learning: Are students invested in their learning and the learning of others?
- Domain 3: Meaningful Materials & Instruction: Are activities, tasks, and assignments demanding and appropriate for students' subject and grade?
- Domain 4: Student Thinking and Engagement: Do students drive their learning and do most of the thinking in class?
- Domain 5: Demonstration of Learning: Do all students show that they are learning?

The Deeper Learning Rubric ensures that students and teachers at Freire Schools are both learners and teachers. As Paulo Freire said, "Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning" (*Pedagogy of Freedom*, 1996). In our classrooms, this looks like:

- Each student's unique voice is leveraged to enhance instruction. Students can explore and pursue their individual interests or adapt activities, projects, and assessments to incorporate their strengths and passions.
- Joy, wonder, laughter or other authentic emotions appropriate for the moment are often present. Students do not appear bored.
- Students exclusively engage with content and concepts that advance them toward grade-level or above grade-level standards or expectations and/or IEP goals.
- Students exclusively engage with high-quality instructional materials (e.g. texts, questions, problems, exercises, assessments) that are also appropriately demanding for the grade and time in the school year based on student performance on targeted tasks, students' IEP goals, and/or Freire curriculum (e.g. Lexile level and complexity of text).
- Students construct almost all of their new knowledge themselves (i.e. they are doing almost all of the thinking, categorizing, organizing, and building off prior knowledge with the teacher as facilitator).
- Students frequently have opportunities to engage in challenging tasks and problem-solving with the appropriate amount of guidance and feedback from the teacher, peers, and others.
- Students frequently have opportunities to demonstrate how well they understand lesson content and their progress toward learning goals (lesson objectives). Almost all students use feedback to revise their thinking and/or adjust their work

While the field of study around deeper learning outcomes is still relatively new, the American Institute for Research (AIR) and The Research Alliance for New York City Schools conducted a matched comparison study of schools in networks across the country that are known to have embraced deeper learning and networks that did not (2014). Compared to similar students, they found that high school students in the deeper learning schools: (1) achieved higher scores on a test that assesses core content knowledge and complex problem-solving skills than did similar students who attended the high schools in networks that did not embrace deeper learning; (2) earned higher scores on the state English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics tests; (3) reported more positive interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes (e.g. higher levels of collaboration skills, academic engagement, motivation to learn, and self-efficacy); (4) were

more likely to graduate from high school on time (i.e. graduation rate was estimated to be about 9 percentage points); (5) were more likely to enroll in 4-year and selective colleges.

Additionally, a strong college-prep program provides students with a variety of learning experiences and diverse instructional techniques. At Freire Schools, we believe that hands-on learning is key to students' ability to understand and apply the lessons they learn in the classroom. Through a wide range of creative community partnerships (See Section 1.7.B for more information) and an emphasis on experiential learning, we connect our students to the world and the world to kids. Experiential Learning at Freire Schools is a series of trips, courses, and programs that emphasize hands-on experiences. It includes field trips, on-site courses, internships, mentorship programs, and dual enrollment programs. These experiences are made possible through collaborations with community organizations and university partners. Research clearly suggests that these types of experiential learning are what develop the critical intrapersonal and interpersonal skills necessary for success in the 21st century.

Additional elements of our instructional design include:

- **Classrooms are joyous, intentional, and safe.** FCSN classes will top out at approximately 30 students, and the student to staff ratio will be 13:1. In our classrooms, it is OK to be smart, OK to make mistakes, OK to ask questions, and everyone learns. Classes are approximately 60 minutes-long, and making this time effective is our first priority; what matters most in terms of student learning is how time is spent (Joyner and Molina, 2012). Each class serves articulated, clear, measurable, manageable, and meaningful objectives and begins with a bell-ringer or “Do Now” activity. Lessons progress along the gradual release of responsibility model and end in a check for understanding or clear measurement of whether the day’s learning objectives have been met. Teachers establish rules and procedures to maximize student learning, including developing a classroom culture that values respect, dialogue, and time-on-task. Student focus and discipline concerns are greatly minimized because our lessons are meaningful and worthy of our kids. This does not eliminate the need for effective classroom management, but it does establish the expectation that hard work and learning happen in class every day.
- **Instruction is focused, efficient, and active.** Freire classroom instruction relies on rigor, relevance, and relationships. We know our classrooms are rigorous, when we see students pulling apart difficult ideas and social constructs within standards-aligned, grade level texts and tasks that require argument, defense, and extrapolation. There are few lectures and fewer worksheets; teachers provide models and gradual release of responsibility to the students. This kind of instruction is effective with students (National Research Council, 2003) because it increases students’ senses of autonomy, competence, and meaning—the feelings inherent in having the power to build the future. These feelings, in turn, motivate the student, and work as a catalyst for developing adaptive, constructive learning (Seifert, 2004). What does this look like in the classroom? Teachers start by planning standards-aligned lessons with objectives

that are measurable, manageable, and meaningful. To support student learning, teachers anticipate the kinds of scaffolds they will need and provide support in every lesson. Lessons center around active learning, including small group, partner, and individual work, where students carry the intellectual load. Teachers use a variety of assessments— performance-based as well as traditional tests—and then use assessment data to reteach and determine needs for individual intervention.

- **Student supports are robust and incorporated into every part of the school day.** To be able to get into and succeed in college, most of our students will need extra help along the way. Instead of regarding extra help as an add-on, our instructional program builds support into every aspect and part of the school day. There is no stigma attached to getting extra help after school, talking with a therapist, or to asking a teacher who is introducing a new concept in class to “break it down.” We will offer academic centers after school, where students can go to get extra help with class work, homework, papers, and college applications. Our Academic Advisors are charged with making sure that no student falls through the cracks. They help prevent academic failure by linking students to the academic supports in place at school and developing supportive relationships with students and their families. And our curriculum itself is designed to support student learning from multiple angles, with built-in scaffolding for demanding tasks so all students can perform. In addition to the academic support structures, our Emotional Supports program and Peer Mediation programs help address social and emotional barriers to learning and signal to our students that we value their whole selves (see section 1.3.H, school culture, for more detail). When their emotional needs are met and when they experience a school community in which everyone’s needs are routinely being met, they will feel accepted and a sense of belonging. We amplify this sense of belonging by ensuring that students see themselves in class content, texts, and activities and give them choice in the work they do, including opportunities to lead projects.
- **Technology enhances learning and creates flexibility.** FCSN, like all Freire schools, will be a 1:1 computing school, in which all students will receive an individual laptop for use in school and at home. Our 1:1 program provides flexibility and ensures continuity of education during these uncertain times, allowing us to pivot to online instruction easily. Across the Freire Schools network, our 1:1 program is helping us integrate technology in our classrooms in meaningful ways, helping us to revolutionize teaching and learning. More and more classes have tech-based outcomes. For example, students completing the Senior Project are required to create a presentation using presentation software. Other courses “flip the classroom,” calling on students to learn independently, or create digital portfolios, or access assignments on the Student Portal. Students create original works as a means of personal or group expression in some courses. In still others, they use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively in group projects. In all the Internet research they conduct, students learn how to search, evaluate, select, and cite information sources—a critical 21st century skill. Using technology in these ways helps to bring our curriculum to life.

b. Present evidence that the proposed educational program is research-based and has been or will be rigorous, engaging, and effective for the expected student population. If evidence of effectiveness in other schools serving similar populations is not available, explain why the proposed program is likely to succeed with the targeted population.

As stated above, we have designed our instructional program to meet the needs of our estimated student population, including a 17.5% special education, 5% English Learners, 40% students qualifying as economically disadvantaged, approximately 67% of incoming students below proficient in ELA, and 77% below proficient in math. One of the challenges we have faced in our previous school openings in Wilmington and Philadelphia is that students coming to Freire Schools frequently do not view themselves as college-bound or as future professionals. Our paramount goal is to help these students learn, grow, achieve, and transform their senses of themselves and of their futures—to raise their expectations about what they can be, in school and beyond.

We do this by raising the academic bar for all of our students. This seems simple enough, but rigor is an area where most schools — even college prep schools — fail students. A 2018 report by The New Teacher Project states:

In fact, most students—and especially students of color, those from low-income families, those with mild to moderate disabilities, and English language learners—spent the vast majority of their school days missing out on four crucial resources: grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and teachers with high expectations. Students spent more than 500 hours per school year on assignments that weren't appropriate for their grade and with instruction that didn't ask enough of them—the equivalent of six months of wasted class time in each core subject. And middle and high school students reported that their school experiences were engaging less than half the time. In classrooms with more access to these resources, students did better—particularly if they started the school year behind their peers.

FCSN is projected to serve students who are more likely to have missed out on the grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and high expectations needed for them to meet grade standards and truly prepare for college. Our Deeper Learning Rubric (DLR), Teaching and Learning Continuum, research-based curriculum, integrated student supports, assessments, and teacher development program all work in concert to reverse that trend for our kids.

Our DLR specifically encourages teachers to focus on helping students develop the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills associated with deeper learning, understanding that developing these skills can influence student achievement and postsecondary outcomes. Our Deeper Learning Rubric and instructional practices are based on the National Research Council's report, "Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge in the 21st Century" and research on what motivates students (Seifert, 2004). But in order to experience the positive outcome of deeper learning reported in the 2014 AIR study above, instruction must

be intentionally designed to support the research-based principles of deeper learning, which few schools actually do. Based on Susan Goldman and James Pellegrino's research, we designed FCSN's learning environments to (1) promote student agency and self-regulated learning and (2) pose challenging tasks and provide guidance and supports that make the tasks manageable for learners (2015).

We have also carefully selected our research-based curriculum, which is proven to be successful with students similar to our estimated population. Our ELA curriculum, Engage NY, is based on research on vocabulary development, use of complex texts, reading closely, reading comprehension, and the cognitive benefits of reading. Our ELA curriculum (and also our TCI social studies curriculum) aligns to the research behind the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), specifically that text complexity has declined in K-12 schools over time without getting easier at the college level. For students to truly be college ready, there is strong statistical evidence that students need to be exposed to complex text as part of their routine curriculum in high school and they need to be able to answer questions about complex texts accurately (CCSS: Appendix A). EngageNY and TCI are designed to engage students with complex texts regularly. Freire Schools has also already addressed the biggest critiques of EngageNY, namely the Fordham Institute's finding that EngageNY "lacks a critical emphasis on literary content, a problem that is amplified by the fact that students read mostly excerpts of great books rather than full novels, biographies, and so on." (Haydel & Carmichael, 2016). Freire Schools addresses this by using fewer units/modules and choosing select texts to read in entirety.

Our math curriculum, Illustrative Math (IM), received the highest rating for focus and coherence, rigor and mathematical practices, and usability by EdReports. IM aligns with what researchers have been saying for years, namely that K-12 math instruction must teach students to develop the deep conceptual understanding of mathematics that is critical to succeeding in high school and college mathematics courses and beyond (Ball, 1988). This aligns with international research on effective mathematics that states that effective mathematics instruction must focus "on optimising a range of desirable academic outcomes that include conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, and adaptive reasoning" and "be committed to enhancing a range of social outcomes within the mathematics classroom that will contribute to the holistic development of students for productive citizenship" (Anthony and Walshaw, 2007). We selected IM because it centers on conceptual understanding — asking students to regularly talk about and explain math — and supports our deeper learning focus on building student interpersonal skills in a way that can be transferred across content areas in high school and later in college.

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3. Provide an overview of the planned curriculum, including, as Attachment 4, 1 scope and sequence per content area per grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) the school plans to serve. The scope and sequence documents should identify course outcomes and demonstrate clear alignment with the Delaware Content Standards (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Next Generation Science Standards, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages). If the proposed school commits to joining the Science Coalition, then a signed MOU would replace the scope and sequence requirement for Science. If the proposed school commits to joining the Social Studies Coalition, then a signed MOU would replace the scope and sequence requirement for Social Studies.

We have provided scope and sequence documents for the following courses as Attachment 4:

- Grade 9 English (Common Core Standards)
- Grade 9 Math (Algebra I; Common Core Standards)
- Grade 9 Social Studies (World Cultures; Delaware Content Standards)
- Grade 9 Science (Biology; NGSS Standards)
- Grade 10 Health (0.5 credit, Delaware Content Standards)
- Grade 10 PE (0.5 credit, Delaware Content Standards)
- Grade 10 World Languages (Spanish I; Delaware World Readiness Standards)
- Grade 12 Performing Arts (0.5 credit; Delaware Content Standards)

We designed FCSN's curriculum to work together as a whole to promote deeper learning and teach and mutually reinforce core literacy and numeracy skills, critical thinking, and research. Our course sequences are coherent and efficient. They are designed to build on one another "vertically" from grades 9-12, and also to reinforce one another "horizontally," so that, for example, students use the research skills they learn in 9th grade Social Studies in 9th grade English. In this way, teachers do not need to waste time teaching what has already been taught and instead can build on and deepen students' understanding over their years at FCSN.

Our curriculum consists of the following core subjects: Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Other subjects at FCSN will be Health, Physical Education, Spanish, Driver's Education, and Performing Arts. Qualities common to all FCSN courses are: alignment with CCSS and/or Delaware Content Standards or Next Generation Science Standards, carefully sequenced units of instruction that balance critical thinking and meaningful skill acquisition and practice, varied and rigorous formative and summative assessment, social justice themes, and curriculum that reflects the real world and real world expectations. Highlights of the curriculum in each content area follow below.

Math: In 2019-20, Freire Schools adopted Illustrative Math (IM) for the core math curriculum in all of its high schools. We first looked at IM because it meets expectations in all EdReports Gateways and is aligned with the CCSS. We ultimately selected it because it is both student-driven and focused on deeper understanding. IM is conceptual, not procedural, encouraging active learning with lots of simulations with real world examples and visualizations. This makes learning relevant and engaging for kids. IM also uses extensive online illustrative manipulatives that allow kids to learn at their own pace and to return to a topic if they do not master it

initially. This will give students at FCSN agency over their learning as envisioned in our Deeper Learning Rubric and put an end to didactic math classes. The goal of IM is that students be able to talk about and explain math. Students coming to FCSN needing additional math support will take Intensive Math (a career pathways course) in 9th grade to shore up the foundational skills prioritized by the CCSS. They take this course concurrently with Algebra I, aligned with our acceleration over remediation methodology. We follow a traditional path, offering courses in Algebra I, Geometry (taken concurrently with Algebra I for students not requiring Intensive Math), Algebra II, Precalculus, and Calculus. In 11th grade, all students take double math again: their regular course (Algebra II or Precalculus, depending on when they were able to take Geometry), plus Math Analysis, a half-credit fast-paced review of Algebra and Geometry, as a way to reinforce these building blocks of higher math. In 12th grade students may have the opportunity to take AP Calculus.

English Language Arts: In 2021-22, the Freire Schools Network adopted the EngageNY English Language Arts curriculum for all of its schools, and FCSN will use this research-based curriculum for ELA. We selected EngageNY 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. In each grade, EngageNY balances the study of classic works with contemporary writing. Freire Schools has made one significant change in how we implement this curriculum — EngageNY was built largely on excerpts of texts. To provide a more critical emphasis on the content, Freire Schools uses fewer modules of the curriculum, and extends the ones we do use to allow students to read texts in their entirety. We also supplement the EngageNY curriculum by providing grade-level grammar, usage, mechanics, and formatting expectations for students as they progress from grades 9-12. “Writing for Change,” a 9th grade composition career pathways course, helps students develop critical thinking skills and their own authorial voices, while also providing extra support in these writing conventions and expectations. In 12th grade students may have the opportunity to take AP English Literature.

Science: Freire Schools designed a science curriculum for FCSN that supports the teaching and learning of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and builds upon the success of FCSW’s science program. The science curriculum places the NGSS performance targets at the center of each grade’s program, from 9th to 12th grade, preparing our students for college, careers, and global and local citizenship. Our science program focuses on the three dimensions of science as articulated in the NGSS: crosscutting concepts with students (i.e. concepts that apply across all domains in science), including patterns, similarity, and diversity; cause and effect; scale, proportion and quantity; systems and system models; energy and matter; structure and function; and stability and change. It also focuses on the most important aspects of science (i.e. disciplinary core ideas), including the physical sciences; life sciences; earth and space sciences; and engineering, technology, and applications of science. Students will be challenged to develop the practice of being scientists from scientific investigation to engineering practices, allowing them to better see the relevance of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in everyday life. In addition, throughout all of the science courses, students are challenged to focus not just on how they do the work, but why. Hands on,

“real world” type laboratory and simulation work is a primary teaching and learning mode in each of our science courses. In 9th grade, our students study Biology, which places Biology closer to the life sciences course they likely took in middle school. In 10th grade, students take Physical Science, with an NGSS-targeted emphasis on blending science with engineering. Physical Science is strategically positioned to lead into Chemistry in 11th grade, which includes many laboratory projects that provide opportunities for more advanced students to engage at a deeper level. In 12th grade, students have a choice of taking either Environmental Science, with an emphasis on studying community issues, or Advanced Placement courses in Biology or Chemistry. Our unique sequencing of the science courses allows students to build on prior knowledge.

Social Studies: Our Social Studies curriculum is aligned with the Delaware standards and CCSS, with a consistent focus on reading, writing, and research using primary and secondary sources. Social Studies at Freire is active and engaging. We begin most courses with the TCI History Alive! curriculum. Each unit contains a group experiential exercise (e.g. case studies, role playing, peer collaboration, real world problem solving). We picked this curriculum because it treats history as inquiry, aligns with our belief in hands-on learning, provides diverse perspectives and expands student world views, and addresses social justice issues (i.e. focuses on both developed and developing countries, explores commonalities across cultures and speaks to injustices). Students take World Cultures in 9th grade, a Freire-designed Power and Money course (a career pathways course) in 10th grade, and American History/AP U.S. History in 11th grade. These courses prepare students for the challenge of our capstone “Peace and Social Change” and its Senior Project in 12th grade. This course and project call on students to use the critical thinking skills and critical voices they have developed in previous courses. Peace and Social Change is run like a college seminar, with students taking ownership of topics and leading discussions based on their reading and planning. For the Senior Project, students often pick topics with personal relevance, such as: gun violence (especially youth gun violence), colorism, substance abuse with a focus on the opioid epidemic, imprisonment of women, and homelessness. Students trace the ways society has changed in regards to their topic or examine the social change brought about by their topic. Outcomes for the senior project typically include relevant community service, formal proposal of a student-selected topic, an original research paper with standard citation requirements, and a formal presentation. This work is truly a summative capstone of the journey Freire students take, from the demanding but scaffolded instruction in 9th grade to the college-ready independent study of an issue or topic responsible for bringing about change in society, or through which students hope to change the world, and in so doing, themselves. 12th grade students may have the opportunity to take an AP course in the History and Social Sciences realm such as AP World History: Modern or AP Psychology in lieu of Peace and Social Change.

World Languages: FCSN will require three World Language credits for graduation and will offer three years of Spanish instruction to all students.. Our program covers all 11 Delaware World Readiness Standards for learning Languages and uses the Delaware Core Practices for World Language Proficiency.

Additional Courses: FCSN students will take a year-long Physical Education Course and a semester-long Health course in 10th grade, aligned with the DE standards, including the requirement for CPR instruction. These courses are designed to make wellness accessible to all, support students emotional and family health needs, and connect students to local resources. Students also take a semester-long performing arts course in 12th grade, aligned to Delaware standards. This course assumes no previous performing experience and moves from pantomime to improvisation and monologues. FCSN will offer a Driver's Education course in 10th grade.

4. Provide, as Attachment 5, 1 Mathematics unit with corresponding summative assessment and scoring rubrics, and 1 English Language Arts (ELA) unit with corresponding summative assessment and scoring rubrics to demonstrate alignment of instruction to the Delaware Content Standards. If the proposed school does not intend to join the Delaware Science or Social Studies Coalitions, then 1 Science unit and 1 Social Studies unit with corresponding summative assessments and scoring rubrics to demonstrate alignment of instruction to the Next Generation Science Standards and Delaware Social Studies Content Standards are also required.

Please see Attachment 5 for the following units and corresponding summative assessments and scoring rubrics:

- Math (9th grade Algebra I, Unit 3: Two-Variable Statistics)
- English (9th grade English, Unit 1: "So you want a double life": Reading Closely and Writing to Analyze)
- Science (9th grade Biology, Unit 5: Cell Specialization and Homeostasis)
- Social Studies (9th grade World Cultures, Unit 2: Urban Sprawl in North America: Where Will it End?)

5. Describe how the school will ensure that all students have equitable access to the curriculum.

We have designed the FCSN program explicitly to ensure that all of our students have equitable access to our rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum. We plan to serve students with a wide range of entering skill levels and to help them prepare for the challenges and opportunities of a post-secondary education as quickly as possible. Using assessment data and input from teachers, parents, and students themselves, we benchmark, monitor progress, then differentiate instruction and provide targeted supports to help each individual student access and succeed in the curriculum no matter their needs. (Please see our responses to the next two questions for more information.) We plan to serve a population of students with a diverse set of needs including exceptional children, as we do at FCSW. These include at-risk students, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans, English Learners (ELs), gifted and talented students, and homeless students; please see Section 1.3.F (Special Populations and At-Risk Students) for more information on how we plan to serve these students. We ensure all students have equitable access to the curriculum by identifying when interventions are needed, providing those interventions, and monitoring their effectiveness

(See response to Question 1.3.F.1.b. for more information on our MTSS program); developing our staff (See our Professional Development Scope and Sequence in Appendix B); and ensuring that materials and instruction are meaningful (See our Deeper Learning Rubric in Appendix B). Using these strategies and other research-supported differentiation and accommodations, we will provide a continuum of services that address different levels and types of needs including co-teaching, pull-outs, small group instruction, behavioral intervention, related services, emotional support groups, etc.

Freire Schools also believes that an accessible curriculum is one that intentionally inspires, uplifts, and celebrates our students, promoting diversity in culture and perspective and fostering humanity for all. Our content design is purposeful, including diverse voices and multiple vantage points to cultivate consciousness around racism, and it develops our students as critical thinkers who are able to communicate in multiple modalities from speaking, listening, and writing to interrogating the validity, bias, and intent of all materials so they are skilled at naming, embracing, and addressing conflict in ways that generate positive solutions and honor differing perspectives. When we make curriculum decisions (e.g. adoption of the EngageNY ELA curriculum network-wide in 2021-22), we do so to ensure our students can see themselves in the texts they read, the tasks they complete, and the activities in which they participate.

6. Describe the methods and systems that teachers will use to provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students, including those who are gifted and talented.

We adjust the curriculum and scope and sequence for specific students through differentiated instruction involving grouping and assignments of different types of learning tasks in projects, and/or additional courses and/or above level or below level courses in a particular academic area. The scope and sequence documents we provided as Attachment 4 include scaffolds for diverse learners such as pre-teaching vocabulary, intensive vocabulary support, close reading strategies, chunking texts, writing conferences, graphic organizers, extra visual aids, strategic student pairing, incremental due dates, guided note catchers, cue cards, and sentence starters. Among the tools teachers can use is the ability to offer longer/more advanced texts or more challenging projects to students who are ready for more than the standard curriculum provides. Gifted students are also provided opportunities to take a higher level course than the grade-level standard or to take dual enrollment classes.

We provide opportunities in class for students to work in small groups at a variety of levels that allow students to work in a manner that best suits their learning needs. We assign a certified special education teacher to each grade level to provide extra support to students with IEPs and 504 plans. We strive to educate students in the most inclusive (least restrictive) environment that meets a student's needs. Therefore, we emphasize strategic push-in instruction for students who need particular attention from a special education teacher or teacher of English Learners. However, we also provide pull-out or separate instruction for special education students, ELs, or other diverse learners where that is appropriate to meet the student's needs. Our teachers of English Learners may work with our regular education teachers to train them in

offering Sheltered English Instruction in addition to push-in and/or pull-out ESL instruction in order to help boost mastery of academic content alongside English language skills. Students experiencing homelessness and migrant, immigrant, and refugee students may sometimes require supports in the classroom. Members of our school culture team, led by the Dean of Students, are the primary points of contact for extra supports for these students, but may identify that such a student is in need of academic or in-classroom support and work with the student's assigned academic advisor to find supports or refer the student to the grade-level team for discussion in the MTSS program.

7. Provide a synopsis of plans for additional academic support for at-risk students, including a description of how the school plans to implement procedures to determine whether a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions for reading and mathematics.

We expect that a majority of our students will fall into one or more special populations that put them at risk. In addition to the special populations we articulated above, we expect to serve a racially and culturally diverse set of students who may also be below grade level or behind on credit accumulation, come from economically disadvantaged families, be placed in foster care, be confronting or recovering from trauma, or identify as LGBTQ+. As a result, we consider all students potentially at-risk of not mastering Common Core Standards or meeting the demands of college readiness. We have therefore designed our entire program around supporting at-risk students and providing extra support for all rather than viewing the use of additional support as "different." This is one of the motivations behind our rigorous MTSS program (see "Special Populations and At-Risk Students," for more information— specifically 1.3.F.1.b regarding MTSS). We continually monitor the progress of all students with curriculum-based assessments and nationally normed STAR benchmarks in reading and math. Each grade level has an assigned academic advisor responsible for monitoring the progress of each student, meeting with students facing challenges, and participating in grade teams (our problem-solving teams), and, where necessary, ISTs and IEP teams. For more information on specific strategies, please see our responses to the two questions above, 1.3.E (supplemental programming), 1.3.F.2.B.b (special education placements), 1.3.F.2.C.a (IEP monitoring), 1.3.F.3.c (EL service models), 1.3.H.2 (school culture systems, especially academic advising and emotional supports), and 1.3.H.4 (school culture for students with special needs).

8. Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other post-secondary opportunities (trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).

We selected all graduation requirements at FCSN with one mission-driven focus: "Graduation x2" – ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to graduate from high school AND to persist in and graduate from college. With over twenty years' experience to draw from, at Freire Schools we know that our graduation requirements are what it takes to be ready for college. We accomplish this in two primary ways at FCSW that we will repeat at FCSN: requiring additional credits in science and world language and orienting our Career Pathways around college acceptance and readiness. At a time when college persistence (i.e. the percentage of students who return to college at any institution for their second year) declined due to the

pandemic, 82% of FCSW's first graduating class persisted to their second year of college beating the national average of 74%. This is a testament to students being well-prepared at FCSW. Please see the High School Graduation Requirements section of the Education Plan (Section 1.3) for more information.

1.3.B: Student Performance Goals [14 Del. C. § 512(4) and (6)]

Outline the clearly measurable annual performance status and growth goals that the school will set in order to monitor and evaluate its progress accelerating student achievement. Respond to the following with regard to the proposed school's student performance goals and the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF).

1. Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.

Overall student performance goal: Our expectation is to achieve an overall rating of "Meets" or "Exceeds" standard as measured by the DSSF Academic Performance Framework by September 2026 (the fall of the final year of our initial charter term). Each year within the charter term, we will show growth within our overall rating, putting us on track to achieve this goal.

Subcomponent goals include the following:

Academic Achievement in ELA and Math: We expect to achieve a rating of "Meets" or "Exceeds" standard by the final year of our initial charter term, with improved scores each year. In order to monitor progress, we will use interim assessments to project student proficiency throughout the year and use this information to adjust instruction and student supports as needed to accelerate student achievement. Additionally, our expectation is that our subgroup proficiency rates on the SAT Math and ELA assessments will meet or exceed the average for feeder districts and for public and charter high schools serving a similar demographic to FCSN each year.

School Quality/Student Success: We expect to achieve a rating of "Meets" or "Exceeds" standard by the final year of our initial charter term, with improved scores each year for the following metrics: on track attendance, Biology proficiency, Social Studies proficiency, college and career preparedness, and 9th grade on track. We will use interim and unit assessments to monitor progress in science and social studies, and internal records to monitor the college and career preparedness and 9th grade on track metrics.

Graduation rate: We expect to achieve a rating of "Meets" or "Exceeds" standard by the final year in our initial charter term (the fall of that year will be the first year we will have data for this category). In the interim, we will closely monitor students' pass rates and credits earned to ensure that we are on track to achieve this goal.

Progress toward English language proficiency: We expect to achieve a rating of "Meets" or "Exceeds" standard by the final year of our initial charter term, with improved scores each year. We will monitor progress by ensuring our Teachers of English Learners understand the

relationship between grade level, ACCESS scale scores, and the target composite score of 4.7. For any student who does not meet their annual target, school leaders, FSNO, and the Teacher of English Learners will meet to reexamine the EL services the student is receiving.

Mission-specific goal: Between 85% and 90% of graduating students each year will be accepted to one or more colleges or universities.

2. 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).

We use Renaissance Star as our primary interim math and reading assessments. Interim assessments are intended to identify which students are on track to meet future expectations. A linking study conducted by Renaissance in 2018 demonstrated that STAR reading and math tests are accurate predictors of performance on the SAT (<https://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R61746.pdf>). Using the cut scores identified in this research, FCSN can identify students for intervention early enough in the school year to allow educators to assess their learning needs and intervene in time for meaningful progress during the year. Please see Appendix C for an example of a student's personalized STAR dashboard and how we use benchmark data on a student-facing level. We will use Edmentum's Study Island as our primary Biology interim assessment, which provides NGSS aligned items to help teachers identify which standards need reteaching.

3. If the school plans to adopt or develop additional academic performance goals or assessments beyond the State's mandatory assessments, explain what standards the school will use, and describe the adoption or development process that has taken place or will take place. Include the timeline for achievement of student performance goals and the assessment of such performance.

We do not plan to adopt additional performance goals or assessments. We believe that the performance standards aligned to the DSSF, the interim assessments we will use to monitor progress towards those standards, and our mission-specific goals are comprehensive.

4. Explain the school's policies and standards for promoting students' from one grade to the next. Describe how and when promotion and graduation criteria will be communicated to parents and students.

- Students receive academic credit for each class passed with a grade of 75% or higher. Any final year grade under 75% earns no credit.
- Any student failing one or two classes in an academic year will be required to attend summer school for each class failed.
- In order to enter 12th grade, each student must have earned 18 credits by September

15th of their senior year.

- Students will be retained (i.e., required to repeat a grade) in the following situations:
 - Any student who earns less than four credits (i.e. fails three or more classes) in an academic year will be retained. The student will be required to repeat the grade level in its entirety (i.e. take all six classes over again). At the discretion of the Head of School and if space permits, a student who receives above an 80% in any non-failed class may elect to take the next grade level of that class.
 - Any student missing a total of three or more credits by the end of the school year (June) will be automatically retained. One example of this would be a 10th grade student who never made up a 9th grade credit and then failed two classes during 10th grade—thus, missing three credits total now. The student will be required to repeat the grade level taking a mix of classes from their previous years at FCSN.

We publish the promotion policy in the annual Student & Family Handbook (see Appendix E for a draft) that we distribute to everyone at the start of each school year and post on the school website. When any student is failing a class, the grade team will discuss the student's situation at a meeting and consider interventions. A representative from the grade team, typically either the teacher of the course the student is failing or an academic advisor, will contact the student and parent to ensure they understand the potential consequences of failing the course. If a student is failing more than one class, an academic advisor will meet with the student and a family member to go over the promotion and graduation requirements and potential impact on the college application process. The academic advisor will also review the additional supports we provide to all students as well as any additional individualized supports recommended by the grade team.

5. Explain the process for ensuring that all students in grades 8-12 have a complete student success plan. Describe how the success plans will be monitored as required by 14 Del. C. § 5.0.

FCSN's academic advising department will take the lead in ensuring that all students have a complete Student Success Plan (SSP). They will begin by working with a committee that includes school and network leaders to craft a Post Secondary Advisement Plan (PSAP) which meets the requirements of 14 DE Admin. Code § 507. The PSAP will identify the activities, experiences, and supports that our students need in order to develop and revise their SSP. A comprehensive PSAP will provide numerous opportunities for students to explore career paths and their own strengths and interests. As they do, students will hone their goals and identify the steps needed to meet them. As a college prep school, we will ensure that students understand the role that a college education can play in accessing certain career paths and that students are prepared for success in the college application process. In addition to planning whole group lessons, workshops, and trips, the Academic Advising department will meet one-on-one with students to provide individualized guidance on course selection and extracurricular opportunities that support their goals, as well as feedback on their plans. Students who are failing (or in danger of failing) classes will be connected to special supports/interventions to ensure they have the academic foundation to achieve their career goals.

1.3.C: High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only) [14 Del. C. §§ 512(4), (5), (6) and (7)]

1. High schools will be expected to meet the Delaware Graduation Requirements, which may be amended from time to time. The requirements can be found at:

<http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/500/505.shtml#TopOfPage>

FCSN will comply with Delaware Graduation Requirements as explained below.

2. Explain how the school will meet these requirements and monitor them through the use of the State's pupil accounting system. Explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed those required by the State of Delaware, explain the additional requirements.

FCSN's credit requirements for graduation will be as follows:

Mathematics	4.0 credits required Must include Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II (14 DE Admin Code § 505.5.1.1)
English	4.0 credits required
Science	4.0 credits required Must include Biology, Physical Science, and Chemistry
Social Studies	3.0 credits required Must include World Cultures, U.S. History, and Peace & Social Change or a 12th grade AP social studies course
World Languages	3.0 credits required
Physical Education	1.0 credit required
Health	0.5 credit required
Career Pathway	3.0 credits required
Electives	1.5 credits required

FCSN makes the following required for graduation:

- Students must earn 24 credits to graduate (14 DE Admin Code § 505.5.1).
- Students must take full-year courses in math, English, science, and social studies during senior year (In this way, FCSN ensures both college readiness and compliance with 14 DE Admin Code § 505.5.1.4).
- A student who fails three or more credits in senior year is required to repeat the year.
- Diplomas cannot be issued after September 15 in the year of graduation (14 DE Admin Code § 505.10.1).

FCSN's graduation requirements exceed the minimum requirements of the regulation in the following ways in order to ensure college readiness for all students:

- 3.5 elective credits are required by Delaware regulation. FCSN requires that 1 of the elective credits be in science and 1 of the elective credits be in World Languages.
- In Science, Biology is required by regulation. FCSN also requires Physical Science and Chemistry.
- In Social Studies, U.S. History is required. FCSN also requires World Cultures and a 12th grade course.

In compliance with 14 DE Admin Code § 505.6 and 14 DE Admin Code § 925.15, for students with IEPs, FCSN grants a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards and allows a student to participate in the graduation ceremony when the student meets the requirements of their IEP but not all of the credit requirements for graduation with a High School Diploma.

As a college-preparatory focus is at the heart of FCSN's mission, the "Career Pathway" that all our students follow is focused on career attainment through preparing for success in college. Therefore, we refer to it as our "Academic Success Pathway" at FCSN. All three courses in this pathway supplement core skills in English, Math, and Social Studies. All 9th graders take a course called "Writing for Change" concurrently with 9th grade English. This course helps bolster writing skills at the outset of high school. Any 9th graders who need additional support to be ready for secondary mathematics courses take a course called "Intensive Math" concurrently with Algebra I. Those 9th graders who come in at or above grade level may begin Geometry concurrently with Algebra I in order to prepare for taking AP Calculus in 12th grade. The third Academic Success Pathway course is one we offer to 10th graders called "Power and Money," which cultivates an in-depth understanding of government and economics and the skills you need to make change through our government and society. We have tailored all three courses in the Academic Success Pathway to our students' needs. These courses empower students to find and use their voices, ask them to think critically, and are essential in providing the academic skills needed to be successful on their pathway to a college degree.

Also in line with our college-preparatory mission, we minimize the number of elective courses in order to limit any stress on students when building their Student Success Plans and choosing courses. This helps all students feel confident they will be college-ready when they graduate from FCSN, regardless of the course choices they make in high school. The 1.5 credits of electives at FCSN are typically fulfilled through 0.5 credit courses offered on a rotational basis that may include art, music, culture, and often include dual enrollment courses in 12th grade. Students also have the option to fulfill core credit requirements through opting into AP classes which may include AP Psychology, AP World History, AP US History, AP English Literature, AP Chemistry, AP Biology, and/or other offerings.

At FCSN, we take the 135 hours of instruction of a Carnegie Unit required by 14 DE Admin Code § 505.1 as a minimum. Each course worth 1 credit at FCSN includes at least 135 hours of instruction, and this is prorated accordingly for classes worth less than 1 credit. In order to earn credit for a class, students must pass with a 75% (2.5 on a 4.0 scale) in order to help them

prepare for college-level expectations. Students who end a school year 1 or 2 credits behind must participate in summer school to stay on track and earn course credits, and students who end the year 3 or more credits behind must repeat the grade (for more information, please see other areas of the application such as 'Student Performance Goals,' 'Supplemental Programming' and 'Special Populations.'). When calculating GPAs, the credit value of a class plays a role. For example, Health (0.5 credit) has half the weight of a one-credit class. Any pass/fail courses (Driver's Education) are excluded from GPA calculation. Additionally, AP and dual enrollment courses are weighted on a 5.0 GPA scale.

We track and monitor course completion and credit accumulation using eSchool. Teachers enter grades, then administrators review student records to formally award credit. At the point of graduation, administrators conduct a final review of each student record and comply with DDOE's graduation verification process. Student transcripts reflect the student's identifying information, cumulative GPA, weighted GPA, total credits earned, graduation date (if applicable), transfer credits (if applicable), and all coursework in each year enrolled (course title, final year grade, and credit earned).

3. If applicable, also explain how the school will meet the requirements for any and all Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways courses.

FCSN is not seeking to offer CTE pathways courses, but will provide students with a variety of opportunities for college and career readiness pathways in line with each Student Success Plan and FCSN's Post-Secondary Advisement Plan (14 DE Admin. Code § 507). In line with Delaware's statewide education priorities as measured by the DSSF, FCSN will offer AP and Dual Enrollment courses to help supplement our Academic Success Pathway courses.

4. Explain how the school's graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other postsecondary opportunities (trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).

As stated above, we selected all graduation requirements at FCSN with one mission-driven focus: "Graduation x2" – ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to graduate from high school AND to persist in and graduate from college. We orient our Career Pathways around college acceptance and readiness, and the existing schools in the Freire Schools network have a demonstrated track record of success in college matriculation and persistence. FCSW's first graduating had an 82% second year college persistence rate compared to 73.9% nationally, a statistic that is particularly remarkable given the challenges of the pandemic. Freire Charter High School in Philadelphia had an 82% second year persistence rate.

1.3.D: School Calendar and Schedule [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]

1. Provide, in Attachment 6, the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation. Include the length of the school day, as well as start and dismissal times. Explain how the calendar will support the success of the educational program.

We design our school calendar and schedule to maximize student achievement so that all graduates are college-ready, and students take essential classes every day, all year long. The exact start and end times will be dependent upon the logistics of available transportation. For planning purposes, however, we aim for a school day that runs from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM and includes six class periods that are 60 minutes long as well as a lunch period. We have a variety of after-school programs that will run from 3:00-5:00 PM Monday through Thursday and expect many students to participate. Please see our responses in Section 1.3 regarding graduation requirements for more information on how our instructional time and course plan support our educational mission. For a draft Year 1 Calendar, please see Attachment 6.

2. Provide, in Attachment 7, Hourly Attendance Survey (see attached).

Please see Attachment 7.

1.3.E: Supplemental Programming [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]

1. Describe the extra- or co-curricular activities or programming the school will offer; how often they will occur; and how they will be funded.

Learning opportunities outside of the classroom and the traditional school day are a vital part of all students' Freire education. FCSN will offer a rich array of out-of-school-time programming, providing students access to the arts, athletics, a stronger sense of community, and academic enrichment. We anticipate that our after-school programming will run from 3:00-5:00 PM Monday through Thursday. FCSN will also offer a 7-week summer enrichment program, which is described in detail in section 1.3.E.4.

Freire Schools' culture emphasizes teaching students that their voices matter and how to advocate for themselves. As such, after-school offerings reflect students' expressed needs and preferences for enrichment activities. Once we enroll students at FCSN, we will work with them to identify the activities that most interest them. For purposes of illustration, FCSW currently offers the following programming:

- Academic Tutoring Centers in English, Math, and Science, offering one-on-one tutoring with FCSW teachers and peers
- Art Club, in partnership with the Delaware Contemporary Museum of Art
- Board Games Club
- Chess Club
- Credit Recovery for eligible students (described in detail in section 1.3.E.3 below)

- Concert Choir
- Dungeons and Dragons Club
- Freire Ambassadors (Leadership skills, community service, time management, public speaking)
- K-Pop Club
- LGBTQ+ Student Union
- Marching Band
- Movie Club
- National Honor Society
- Rowing, in partnership with Wilmington Youth Rowing Association
- Student Government Association
- Video Game Club, in partnership with Futures First Gaming
- Wave, in partnership with Community Education Building (academic and financial support for students in need)
- Yoga
- Cross Country
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Baseball
- Track & Field

This diverse collection of activities is the result of collaboration between several external community partners, staff, and students — whose interests, needs, and self-advocacy drive our after-school offerings. The 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) grant has been an essential funding source for these programs at FCSW, and FCSN will pursue funding through that program as well.

FCSN aspires to a similar level of quality programming as we currently offer at FCSW. Of course, external partnerships take time to nurture, and brand-new schools are at first ineligible for a variety of grants like 21CCLC. Just as FCSW continues to evolve its programming, getting stronger and stronger over time, we will accomplish the same at FCSN. And, we are also excited for the possibility of partnering with FCSW to offer sports and activities that are challenging given our small high school model (e.g. a combined football team for the two campuses).

2. Describe the school's programs or strategies to address student mental, emotional, and social development and health.

On October 19, 2021, the White House released a Fact Sheet titled “Improving Access and Care for Youth Mental Health and Substance Abuse Conditions” to address how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already increasing demand for mental health services for young people. They advocated for integrating mental health services in spaces where young people

and their families can access them, stating “Research shows that students are more likely to receive behavioral health supports if they are offered at school.”

At Freire Schools, we have absolutely witnessed this increased demand for mental health support caused by the isolation and trauma of the past two years. Further, while the recent addition to the Delaware Code at 14 Del. Code § 1716E in August 2021 established mental health services unit funding for grades K through 5, which does not cover grades 9-12, Freire Schools was uniquely prepared to meet these student needs, because an integrated Emotional Supports program has been a pillar of our school model since the early years of Freire Charter School in Philadelphia.

Since its founding, FCSW had been building up its Emotional Supports program to address student and family trauma and other social emotional barriers to learning. The Emotional Supports program provides individual and family counseling services at no cost to families. We have provided support for such issues as family conflict, trauma, relationship issues, self-harm issues, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and grief and loss. We support survivors of sexual abuse, physical abuse, poverty, abandonment, neglect, and gun violence. We provide support and make referrals for students in crisis and collaborate with families and local agencies to initiate care, manage coursework, and reintegrate students back to school.

At FCSW the Emotional Supports team is led by a licensed psychologist and a Director of Emotional Supports. As this program continues to grow, we anticipate a team of graduate level interns under the supervision of the psychologist will join the psychologist and Director of Emotional Supports in providing student and family therapy. With the founding of FCSN, we envision site-based counselors and intern therapists at the new campus, with the possibility of one Certified School Psychologist, School Counselor, or School Social Worker or Licensed Professional Counselor of Mental Health, Marriage and Family Therapist, or Clinical Social Worker providing clinical supervision at both schools.

Freire Schools’ Emotional Supports Program is one key way in which we help students develop the skill to ask for help when they need it and the habit of discussing their emotions. In addition to our Emotional Supports Program, FCSN will replicate other Freire Schools programs and strategies to address student mental, emotional, and social development and health:

- The **Dean’s Office and Academic Supports** programs focus on helping students learn the procedures and expectations for their behavior as developing academic scholars and citizens of the community. This team supports and cultivates a school culture where we lead with love and treat each other as human beings. This means valuing social awareness, relationship building, decision-making, and self-management. We help our students see the virtue in being vulnerable, knowing how to express one's emotions, listening to others, and daring to ask for help.
- Our **Peer Mediation Programs** provide a way for students, staff, and community members to engage in conflict resolution in a non-violent way. Students are trained in the mediation techniques and are empowered to assist their peers in creating solutions and conflicts as they arise — all with the aim of preventing violence of any kind and

cultivating a culture of support.

- Our successful and diverse **After-School Programs** are designed intentionally to help students to cultivate well-rounded interests, connect with their peers, develop leadership skills, and have fun. For example, at FCSW students can learn mindfulness in yoga, create in Art Club, enjoy the affinity and support of the LGBTQ+ Student Union, and learn to think strategically in chess/board game clubs — just to name a few clubs. Our vibrant after-school program (and our athletic programming) is a key part to social development for Freire students.
- **Summer Programming** has always been part of our educational model, but the pandemic prompted us to rethink how we approach summer opportunities, as we aimed to rebuild our communities and address student social and emotional development with high interest and highly supportive programming. We communicate transparently that our summer programs put student learning front and center, and do so in a way that empowers kids instead of feeding into the punitive summer school culture. The long-term effect should be programs that naturally extend learning and social development opportunities into the summer for more kids.
- While we talk about our **Restorative Practices** in greater detail later in the sections on school discipline, this is the way we humanize our discipline process and support student emotional development. Restorative practices are a collaborative process in which we aim to understand the harm caused by a misbehavior or act of violence and put it right. Restorative practices encourage our students to show love in the form of empathy as they reflect individually and as a group on how to constantly improve, heal, and value one another.

FCSN will refine and build upon these programs/strategies in order to best address the unique mental, emotional, and social development needs and desires of our new students.

3. *If applicable, describe any other student-focused activities and programs that are integral to your educational and student-development plans.*

In order to ensure that all students maximize their learning in key subjects and stay on track to graduate, we offer ongoing **credit recovery** opportunities to students who are in danger of failing a course. Students who end the quarter with a failing grade (under 75%) in an English or Math class in Quarter 1, 2, or 3 are invited to attend after-school credit recovery sessions during the following quarter. We also offer credit recovery during the summer in all subjects (described in detail in section 1.3.E.4). This credit recovery model allows students who are struggling to keep up with more advanced material being taught in the class they are struggling in, rather than falling further and further behind over the course of the school year. We provide credit recovery using online courses through Edmentum. Students participating in credit recovery have the opportunity to earn an English or Math credit toward meeting graduation requirements (1 credit can be earned per marking period). To receive credit, students must attend mandatory two-hour sessions after school twice a week and earn a 75% or higher in their credit recovery class.

Similar to the region's premier private schools, FCSW utilizes dedicated college counselors to shepherd all of our students and their families through the college admissions process. Freire Schools believes its students deserve the same in-depth, individualized college counseling services as the children of the affluent; therefore, a robust **college counseling program** has been integral to the Freire Schools model for more than two decades. Our college counselors help students and families with the college research, application, and financial aid processes. The college application process can be both exciting and stressful, so our counseling approaches this process from a social emotional lens, ensuring that students and their families do not just get into college, but also make the best decisions around students' individual interests, needs, and options.

4. For schools offering summer school. Describe the extra- or co-curricular activities or programming the school will offer, how often they will occur, and how they will be funded. Describe the program(s) to be offered. Identify how many students are expected to attend summer school and how will they be selected for participation. Identify how many hours and weeks of summer school will you provide, and how will it be funded. Explain how the school will provide Extended School Year services (ESY) for eligible students with disabilities.

FCSN will offer summer school for all classes in our curriculum so that all students have the ability to stay on track for graduation. We require that any student who fails (final grade under 75%) one or two classes and does not complete credit recovery courses during the year to attend summer school. Other students may also select and sign up for online and in-person courses that match their needs. FCSN students who attend summer school can choose to attend in-person, subject-specific summer classes led by our teachers and/or online credit recovery courses offered through Edmentum. Regardless of whether students choose online or teacher-led classes, all students will come to school in person. The number of students expected to attend summer school varies by year; on average, at FCSW, about 100 students attend credit recovery courses each summer and we expect about the same at FCSN once the school is enrolled at full capacity.

Based on FCSW's successful summer program, FCSN will run summer school and summer enrichment programming for seven weeks, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Each day will be broken up into three two-hour sessions, during which students can attend a combination of the enrichment activities, teacher-led summer school classes, and online credit recovery that suits their needs.

Our wide variety of summer enrichment activities are open to all students in all grades, from newly enrolling students through 12th graders who have just graduated. Currently at FCSW, summer enrichment activities are also open to selected students from other local schools through FCSW's partnership with LYTE Scholars. Summer enrichment activities are led by staff and community partners and reflect the expressed interests of our student body in a given year. For purposes of illustration, FCSW's summer 2021 programming included the following:

- Hiking and Kayaking at Lums Pond
- Bowling

- DIY Crafts
- Self-Care
- Black Student Union
- Creative Entrepreneurship
- Basketball
- Rowing, in partnership with Strive: How You Lead Matters
- Video Game Streaming, in partnership with Futures First Gaming
- DE Art Club, in partnership with the Delaware Contemporary
- Leadership Camp, in partnership with Strive: How You Lead Matters
- Fitness Camp, in partnership with Strive: How You Lead Matters
- Book Club
- College Application Boot Camp
- Cheerleading
- Movie Club
- Soccer
- Chess
- Getting Organized with Bullet Journals

In addition to summer school and summer enrichment programming, we will operate Extended School Year (ESY) programming for eligible students with disabilities in compliance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.6 so that these at-risk students receive extra instructional time and related services. The summer program is flexible by design so that it complies fully with IDEA and each student gets what they need based upon what was determined at their IEP meeting when ESY services were discussed. When making ESY eligibility determinations, we base those decisions on the factors listed at 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.6.5, including severity of disability, regression/recoupment, breakthrough opportunities, and postsecondary/vocational goals. In ESY classes, students work with their Special Education teachers to continue their academic learning from the previous school year, reviewing skills and building additional skills as needed to reach the goals outlined in their standards-based IEP. All ESY students are also eligible for summer enrichment activities, and have flexibility built into their ESY schedules so that they are able to participate in their desired enrichment activities. We consider the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) when making ESY placement decisions and may place a student in a regular credit recovery or enrichment program if it will meet the child's needs with or without accommodations.

1.3.F: Special Populations and At-Risk Students [14 Del. C. § 512(4)-(7)]

1. At-Risk Students

a. Identify the special populations and at-risk groups that the school expects to serve, whether through deliberate targeting or otherwise.

FCSN expects to serve a variety of special populations and at-risk groups, similarly to those FCSW currently serves—racially and culturally diverse students who may also come from

economically disadvantaged families, be placed in foster care, be confronting or recovering from trauma, or identify as LGBTQ+. The student population includes groups with special legal protections such as students with disabilities (IEPs or 504 plans), English Learners (ELs), and homeless students. It also includes other students who are at risk of academic failure or dropping out, such as students who are below grade level, struggle to attend school regularly, or face other barriers to full engagement at school. Our program is designed around the idea of a college-preparatory education that is accessible to any and every student; therefore, we provide extra supports to all students regardless of whether they are identified as part of a particular special population. Further, we provide interventions and extra support to serve the needs of students as they arise and that are based on the data that is collected from the team supporting each student.

b. Describe how the school will implement Response to Intervention procedures, including a plan for how data will be collected, progress will be monitored, and instructional decisions made related to student performance in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.12.0.

FCSN will employ a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) program as described in and required in Delaware regulation (As of July 1, 2021, Response to Intervention regulations have been removed from 14 DE Admin. Code § 925 and replaced with MTSS regulations; 14 DE Admin. Code § 508.). The regulatory call of MTSS is to identify when interventions are indicated specifically in written expression, reading, oral expression, listening comprehension, math, behavior, or social-emotional skills. As a college-preparatory secondary school, FCSN will apply a whole-child approach where we view these specific skills through the lens of overall college readiness as well. In recognition of the abundant factors that place so many of our students at risk of not mastering Common Core, NGSS, other Delaware State Content Standards, and the general demands of college readiness, we have a continuous monitoring plan and intervention opportunities in place for all students and consider all staff to be part of our monitoring team. We employ a responsive MTSS process throughout the school, continually monitoring the progress of all of our students with nationally normed STAR ELA and Math benchmark tests, curriculum-based formative and summative assessments, and discussions in grade level team meetings.

We deliver high-quality, standards-aligned instruction to fulfill a Tier 1 instructional program for all students. All Freire Schools students take STAR benchmark tests within the first four weeks of the school year, which are repeated quarterly throughout the school year (at least two additional times). At FCSN, any new students who enroll after the initial benchmark administration will take the tests within four weeks of enrollment. The STAR benchmark results are individualized to the student and provide a detailed breakdown of specific standards, skills, and concepts where a student may require a higher tier of intervention. See Appendix C for an example of how we engage students directly with their own STAR results.

To address results in the aggregate above the student level, if 20% of students in a classroom are not meeting our internal benchmark on a STAR screening, the Head of Academics will meet with the leadership team to consider the need for additional instructional supports for specific

teachers and/or the School as a whole (14 DE Admin. Code § 508.6.1.1.3). As a school-level problem-solving team, FCSN leaders can call on the Freire Schools Network Office (FSNO) staff for assistance with deeper data analysis to pinpoint areas for improvement as well as identifying appropriate schoolwide evidence-based interventions.

The student-level problem-solving teams at the core of our monitoring system are grade teams consisting of the core subject and special education teachers and the academic advisor assigned to that grade level, who may be joined by designated administrators or members of the culture team. Each grade team meets regularly to monitor the progress of all students in their grade and discuss any concerns they might have with the academic, behavioral, or social performance of any individual students. The grade team may contemplate intervention for a student based on benchmark scores, grades, attendance, disciplinary write ups, or upon referral by any staff member or the student's parent. If the team decides that Tier 2 interventions are warranted for a student, the special education teacher and academic advisor assigned to the grade level are then responsible for overseeing a Tier 2 intervention plan.

Tier 2 interventions may be delivered within a student's regular classes by the primary teacher or a special education co-teacher, within our after-school academic centers, or in a pull-out setting if that is most appropriate. After 6-8 weeks of Tier 2 intervention, the special education teacher will review the plan and the student's progress with the grade team. At this juncture, the team may decide to return a student to Tier 1, continue the current Tier 2 supports for additional time, modify the Tier 2 supports, administer additional assessments, or implement a Tier 3 intervention. Regardless of the decision, the grade team will discuss the student's progress again in another 6-8 weeks.

As with Tier 2 interventions, Tier 3 interventions may also be delivered within the regular classroom setting where possible, but often will involve pull-out or supplemental time either during or after the regular school day for one-on-one or small group instruction, time to meet with a dean or counselor, or other specific supports appropriate to the concern. The same protocol is followed after 6-8 weeks of Tier 3 intervention as in Tier 2. However, if the student is not making progress on a trajectory to meet targets after 6-8 weeks after appropriately increased intensity of Tier 3 supports, the grade team will call an instructional support team (IST) meeting which may result in referral for evaluation for special education services.

At all tiers, our goal is to strive to find effective push-in supports or accommodations supplemented with after-school help so that a student can remain in regular classes throughout the school day. Where needed, we will use targeted pull-out individual or small group instruction during the day. Depending on each student's individual needs, we may adjust the curriculum and scope and sequence for a student through differentiated instruction involving strategic small group work and using different types of individualized assignments to accomplish learning objectives.

c. Describe how the school will organize and use instructional support teams to engage in a problem solving process to ensure the behavioral and academic success of all students in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.11.9.

When a grade-level team that has been holding problem-solving discussions regarding a student for whom Tier 3 supports are not adequate and decides that further action is required, the grade-level team will convene as an instructional support team (IST). As an IST, the group will build upon the grade-level team to also include the parent, the Director of Special Education, and any other representatives necessary to round out appropriate qualifications for the student issue at hand. The IST will document the reason for meeting, analysis of relevant data, intervention design, progress monitoring, and evaluation. If a review of the actions taken to date suggest further targeted supports may be effective, the IST can recommend continuing such supports. If the IST concludes that it will refer the student for special education evaluation, the IST will compile a written recommendation to the Director of Special Education within 10 school days of the decision, who will notify the parent of the request for initial evaluation within 10 school days of the written recommendation.

2. Students with Disabilities

Charter schools are responsible for hiring licensed, certified, and highly qualified special educators as required by 14 Del. C. Ch. 1 and 14 DE Admin. Code § 900. School personnel must participate in the IEP Process including identifying students who may be eligible for special education services, evaluating students for special education services, developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and providing special education supports, services, accommodation, and modifications. Schools must comply with all applicable laws as outlined in the Compliance Certification Statement.

A. Identification

a. Describe how the school will ensure compliance with Child Find responsibilities. Explain how the school will identify students in need of special education services and the steps required to determine eligibility for special education services and avoid misidentification.

Note: At Freire Schools, we call our special education program “Student Services,” and our Director of Special Education is titled “Director of Student Services.” For clarity in reading this narrative, however, we are using the more widely used “special education.” However, you may find “Student Services” referenced in our supporting materials.

FCSN will fulfill all Child Find and identification responsibilities required by 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.11. One way that FCSN will fulfill its Child Find responsibilities is through the MTSS and IST process outlined above. The MTSS process is intended to be comprehensive and to flag students who are struggling for a variety of reasons that go beyond low test scores or grades, and encompass behavioral or social concerns as well. However, there is always a chance that evaluation is indicated for a student who has not been referred through the MTSS and IST

process. School administrators may see a need for evaluation based upon a student's records, or any staff member can always approach the Director of Special Education with a concern that a child may need to be evaluated. FCSN will post information about its special education program and the Delaware Procedural Safeguards Notice on the school website, and parents may always make a request for evaluation.

At FCSN, we will evaluate students in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.1-925.5. Parental consent is required prior to initial evaluation, and we make every attempt to obtain parental consent. If for any reason FCSN cannot obtain parental consent for initial valuation, the School may choose to pursue consent under the Procedural Safeguards or may stop the evaluation process. If parental consent is obtained, the School will conduct the initial evaluation and hold an eligibility determination meeting within the lesser of 45 school days or 90 calendar days from the date consent is obtained. When a student undergoing evaluation also demonstrates limited English proficiency, the evaluation team will work closely with a Teacher of English Learners to ensure that the student is not identified as having a disability as a result of limited English proficiency misidentified as a disability.

Once an evaluation has been completed, the next step is for the School to convene a group of qualified professionals and the parent (described further in response to question A.c. below) to meet and determine a student's eligibility for special education based upon the criteria outlined in 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.6. In order to be eligible for special education, a student must meet two tests: the student must both have one or more qualifying disabilities (as defined by 14 DE Admin. Code § 922.3) and, because of the disability, need special education and related services. Ideally all meeting members agree on the eligibility decision. However, in the case of disagreement, the Director of Special Education or other school designee will have responsibility for making a final eligibility determination and advising the parent of their due process rights. Ultimately, if a student is eligible, the parent must also consent to the provision of special education services. If the parent does not provide consent for services, the School will stop the special education process. If we have to stop the evaluation for or provision of special education services due to a lack of parental consent, we will strive to provide a student with all appropriate supports in our MTSS program below the level of special education. Students found ineligible for an IEP may in some cases be determined eligible for a 504 plan.

If a student is determined to be eligible for special education and the parent consents to the School providing services, the team discusses the student transitions to become a formal IEP team. We strive to make the most appropriate classification of primary disability through rigorous, high-quality evaluation, thorough review of the student's records and interventions to date, and comprehensive discussion with members of the team, including the student and their parents. Through these steps, as well as keeping in mind that a student may have more than one disability, we avoid misclassification of a student's disability, which is one aspect of misidentification.

Another important aspect to the risk of misidentification is the potential for overidentification. We are very attentive to the requirements of 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.73 and § 927.46

regarding overidentification and significant disproportionality, as well as USED and DDOE guidance, such as the 3/10/21 Delaware guidance and Procedures for Calculating Significant Disproportionality. As a network that serves largely Black and Brown students, we understand the implications of improperly classifying a student as having a disability when the underlying cause of that determination may simply be a lack of sufficient standards-based instruction or racial or other prejudice contributing to the eligibility determination. We take care to ensure each eligibility determination is rigorous, accurate, and bias-free. And once students are enrolled in special education services, we use our progress monitoring process with fidelity to ensure students who may be ready to exit are promptly considered for exiting the program following applicable procedures.

b. Describe the multi-tiers of evidenced-based academic and behavioral interventions and supports that will be provided prior to identification.

Please see our response to 1.3.F.1.b above regarding RTI/MTSS. We will implement an MTSS program that follows the requirements of 14 DE Admin. Code § 508 and convene ISTs pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.11.9.

c. Describe the IEP team who will be determining eligibility including required roles.

A meeting held to determine eligibility for special education is by nature prior to the inception of an IEP and thus an IEP team. However, the eligibility meeting team must be composed of a group of qualified professionals and the parent, and the group may include the same individuals as an IEP team would include. All IEP teams at FCSN will include the membership required under 14 Del. Code § 925.8, specifically the student, their parent(s), at least one regular education teacher of the student, and at least one special education teacher of the student. The IEP team will include an LEA representative, typically the Director of Special Education (called Director of Student Services at Freire Schools), who will be authorized to speak on behalf of the School in the meeting. If the individuals listed above for any reason cannot fully interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, a professional who can do so will be added to the IEP team. In addition, if either a parent or the School determine there are other individuals who have special knowledge or expertise regarding the student, the parent or school may invite such individuals to join the IEP team. If a student undergoing an eligibility determination also has limited English proficiency, a Teacher of English Learners may be part of the eligibility determination team and eventually the IEP team.

B. Program Plan

a. Describe the school's plan for ensuring compliance with state and federal statutes and regulations related to the identification, evaluation, and education of students with disabilities. Include a description of the school's specific action steps to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Specify the programs, strategies, and supports you will provide for students with basic, intensive, and complex needs.

FCSN will have a qualified Director of Special Education (called Director of Student Services at Freire Schools) whose responsibility is to oversee compliance with IDEA, 34 C.F.R. Part 300, 14 Del. Code § 3120-3125, 14 DE Admin. Code § 922-929, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This individual will develop relationships with special education associates at DDOE and colleagues in other charter and district schools in Delaware. In addition, the Freire Schools Network Office will lend expertise in special education; the ability to draw on knowledge from the special education leaders at the three existing high schools in the Freire network; capacity to research regulations, precedent, and best practices; and relationships with outside experts knowledgeable in special education, including attorneys. The Director of Special Education will also work closely with a Teacher of English Learners when a student who has or may have a disability also demonstrates limited English proficiency. FCSN's processes for identification and evaluation are described above and our programming is described below.

b. Describe how the school will provide a continuum of educational placements for students with disabilities. Include a description of the instructional strategies and supports that will be implemented to ensure placement and meaningful progress in the least restrictive environment. In addition, describe how students who require a more restrictive setting will be served within the school in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.27.0.

FCSN will provide a continuum of placements that enables each student to attend school in the Least Restrictive Environment in compliance with IDEA and 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.14-923.20 and § 925.13. We follow an inclusion model of education for our IEP students to the greatest extent possible, supported by a special education teacher assigned to each individual grade level. The scope and sequence documents we provided as Attachment 4 include examples of scaffolds we use within the general education curriculum such as pre-teaching vocabulary, intensive vocabulary support, close reading strategies, chunking texts, writing conferences, graphic organizers, extra visual aids, strategic student pairing, incremental due dates, guided note catchers, cue cards, and sentence starters. Using these strategies and other research-supported differentiation and accommodations, we will provide a continuum of services that address different levels and types of needs including co-teaching, pull-outs, small group instruction, behavioral intervention, related services, emotional support groups, etc. Some students may require a higher amount of daily pull-out support individually than others (i.e. inside the regular classroom from 40% or more but less than 80% of the school day). Occasionally it may be appropriate for a student to be inside the regular classroom less than 40% of the school day where we provide most of the instruction individually or in small groups in separate classrooms with participation in a few strategically selected regular education classes. The Director of Special Education undertakes a comprehensive review of the needs of all special education students and builds special education teacher schedules to provide for a balance of push-in co-teaching inside regular education classrooms and time for pull-out instruction based upon student need. In the rare event that a student's disability is so severe that we cannot meet their needs at our building, we will place the student at a public or private day or residential facility. In all cases, our commitment is to ensure that students are placed where their needs can best be met.

c. Describe how the school will ensure that students with disabilities have access and make meaningful progress in the general education curriculum and Common Core State Standards.

We consider a student with a disability to be on the same path to college readiness, including mastering the Common Core, NGSS, and other Delaware Content Standards, as any student without a disability. We monitor the progress of all students, including students with IEPs and 504 plans, using teacher-developed standards-aligned curriculum-based tests, IXL monitoring tools connected to content standards according to IEP goals, STAR benchmarks, DeSSA Biology and Social Studies, and the PSAT and SAT. The only exception would be when use of the DeSSA-Alternate Decision-Making Tool indicates that a student qualifies for alternate assessments. We use these assessments to monitor the progress of students with disabilities quarterly towards mastering content standards in the same way we do for students without disabilities. In addition, we supplement the monitoring for meaningful progress for special education students with additional assessments where appropriate; please see our response to question C.a. below.

d. Describe how the school will provide multi-tiers of academic and behavioral supports for students with disabilities.

Please see our response to question B.b. above regarding continuum of placements. FCSN will seek to educate each student with an IEP or 504 plan in the Least Restrictive Environment. Based upon individual student need, special education teachers may provide supportive or differentiated instruction inside the regular education classroom (including modified lessons, assignments, or assessments) or in small group or individual settings outside the regular classroom. In addition, we will provide students with related services to the extent necessary to meet needs. Occupational therapists, speech therapists, counselors, behavior interventionists, or other professionals will work with students individually or in small groups.

e. Explain how the school will ensure parent participation in the IEP process in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 900.925.22.

FCSN will meet all of the requirements of 14 DE Admin. Code §925.9 in attempting to ensure that we have parent participation in the IEP process, including proper advance notice, collaboration on scheduling, use of parent input and student input questionnaires. Particularly since the onset of the pandemic, we have seen the value in employing alternative means of meeting participation per 14 DE Admin. Code §925.14 to make it easier and more convenient for parents to attend IEP meetings. In those instances, we can hold a Zoom meeting or phone call, or hold the meeting in a more convenient location for the parent. In the rare case where we cannot convince a parent to attend an IEP meeting, we keep records of phone calls and correspondence sent to parents in advance of the meeting and will then hold the IEP meeting without a parent in attendance if necessary.

f. Describe how the school will ensure that IEP accommodations are provided for students with disabilities on the Delaware System of Student Assessment (DeSSA) and on the Alternate Assessment.

We take the administration of assessments seriously and seek to ensure that all our students are fully supported during test administration, including following all IEP provisions. Our administrators familiarize themselves with the DeSSA annual Accessibility Guidelines and follow appropriate practices, IEP provisions, and applicable requirements of third parties such as the College Board. We do not anticipate that we will have many students who will participate in the DeSSA Alternate Assessment, as these assessments are for students with only the most severe impairments. However, we are prepared to serve those students and to provide all applicable assessments, including the Delaware Comprehensive Portfolio Summary (DCPS) in very exceptional cases. We train our special education teachers in the administration of Alternate Assessments as well as the interpretation of results in evaluating a student's progress relative to their IEP and to the state standards.

g. Describe how the school will ensure that IEP services, supports, and accommodations are implemented by all staff working with students with disabilities

The full-time Director of Special Education (known as Director of Student Services at Freire Schools) is tasked with this responsibility, with the supports and methods described in response to questions B.a., B.c., B.d., and B.f. above and C.a., C.e. and D.b. below. The Director of Special Education must be a qualified professional, and this person will also have extensive support from the Freire Schools network.

h. For students with disabilities who are age 14 or older, or who are entering the eighth or a higher grade, explain how the school will address transition planning/provision of transition services.

As FCSN will begin at 9th grade, all of our students with IEPs will be eligible for transition services. In accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code §925.7.2, the IEP for each student will address transition services aligned to individual postsecondary goals. While competitive employment in an integrated setting is the ultimate end goal, we believe that all students, including students with disabilities, will have access to more employment options through college completion. FCSN is a school open to any and every student and we respect the postsecondary preferences of students. We encourage all students to make decisions throughout high school that will not create barriers to pursuing a college education. If a student desires to participate in a vocational program after high school completion, their standards-based IEP will reflect that path and their support team will ensure that that student is provided the opportunity to prepare for that path. Certain students may benefit from integrated/supported employment, vocational training opportunities, or life skills programming as part of their transition services. Some transition services may be provided on site during the school day, while others may occur out of school time or in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or other outside organizations. In accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.15, we will continue to educate

students with IEPs until their 21st birthday if they desire, and we will provide a Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards in lieu of a High School Diploma upon graduation when a student has been able to fulfill the requirements of their IEP but not all Delaware and FCSN graduation requirements.

C. Monitoring and Accountability

a. Describe how the school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of students with disabilities to ensure the attainment of each student's goals set forth in the IEP and to ensure mastery of the Common Core Standards. Include a description of how the school will address students not making progress on IEP goals or toward mastery

In accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.7.1.3, each student's IEP must articulate how the student's progress toward meeting annual goals will be monitored. The Director of Special Education, in conjunction with general and special education teachers and other staff, completes quarterly progress monitoring for each student with an IEP at the end of each academic quarter. As described in response to question B.c. above, other than the small number of students participating in Alternate Assessments, students with IEPs participate in state and local assessments in the same manner as any other student and teachers review student-level results of those assessments. Just as they would with any other student, our grade level teams may raise a concern about a student with an IEP during a team meeting as part of the MTSS program and recommend additional supports on a trial basis or for the IEP team's consideration.

We may identify that a student is not making sufficient progress toward achieving their IEP goals or toward mastering content standards through any of the means described above or in other ways. If that happens, the Director of Special Education will review the student's situation and may recommend a short-term intervention to the special education teacher, grade level team, or appropriate support professional, and may concurrently or subsequently contact the parent or request an IEP team meeting. If the student continues to not make sufficient progress, the IEP team will meet to consider adjusting the specialized instruction and related services outlined in the IEP to see if additional, different, or increased supports would be better suited.

b. Describe how the school will ensure that required participants, including parents, will attend IEP meetings.

Please see our responses to questions A.c. and B.e. above regarding participation of the student, parents, and others and to question C.d. below regarding general education teachers. We will follow all applicable requirements and practice a general philosophy of the more participation in IEP meetings the better, as an IEP will be stronger when it is built upon input from a diversity of perspectives. Therefore, we always encourage all members of an IEP team to participate in meetings.

c. Describe the strategies that will be used when parents do not respond to school staff attempting to schedule IEP meetings, or when parents cannot or do not attend IEP meetings

Please see the response to question B.e. above.

d. Describe how the school will ensure participation of general education in the IEP meeting. For students who turn 14 or enter the 8th grade during the IEP year and who are participating in a career and technical education program, describe how the school will ensure that a CTE teacher/career technical teacher coordinator attends the IEP meeting.

The Director of Special Education will explain the importance of active participation in IEP meetings to all general education teachers and again to specific teachers when they are put on an IEP team. While we always strive for live participation of general education teachers during IEP meetings, where necessary we may agree with the parent that a general education teacher may be excused from a specific IEP meeting or may submit written input in advance of the meeting, in compliance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.8.5. FCSN does not plan to include CTE programming in its college preparatory model.

e. Describe the school's system of accountability to ensure compliance with IDEA, provision of special education services and procedural safeguards, along with a process to monitor student records and staff practices for regulatory compliance across the school.

As described in response to question B.a. above, the Director of Special Education will be responsible for oversight of FCSN's special education program with the support of the Freire Schools Network Office (FSNO). FSNO staff provide compliance guidance on internal procedures and provide internal monitoring of students records and staff practices for compliance. Leadership at the FSNO ensure that the Director of Special Education is familiar with Delaware and Federal statutory and regulatory requirements around special education. In addition to mandatory training that the Director of Special Education will complete pursuant to 14 Del. Code § 3125A, FSNO leadership can provide additional training for school-based leaders and staff when there are changes to regulations or when internal reviews or DDOE compliance monitoring indicate that re-training is called for. We train all staff on Procedural Safeguards and provide parents with access to the Procedural Safeguards notice at all appropriate junctures.

D. Staffing and Professional Development

a. Describe how the school will employ qualified special education staff, including, but not limited to, certified and highly-qualified special education teachers, and related service providers (including but not limited to Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech/Language Pathologist, and School Psychologist). Include a list of the staff positions and a description of the duties for each position.

FCSN will comply with 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.56 and other applicable requirements to provide appropriately qualified personnel in its special education program. The school will

make use of the following professionals to fully support our students with disabilities (may be expanded as needed to meet student needs):

- Director of Special Education (Director of Student Services): a full-time employee responsible for oversight and compliance of the special education program
- Special Education Teachers: full-time employees certified to teach special education and responsible for providing special education instruction and services, monitoring student progress, and participate in grade team meetings and IEP meetings
- School Nurse: a full-time employee certified to provide school nursing services and responsible for healthcare, medication administration, or other medical needs
- School Psychologist: a certified professional who provides evaluation services and reports; services will be provided on a contract basis until the School reaches a scale where it is feasible to hire a full-time provider on staff
- Paraprofessionals: certified paraeducators employed on an as-needed basis who assist regular education and special education teachers in supporting special education students, including paraprofessionals who focus on behavioral supports
- Occupational Therapist: certified part-time contractors who provide occupational and physical therapy as related services
- Speech & Language Pathologist: certified part-time contractors who provide speech and language therapy as related services
- Counselor: may be an employee or contractor who holds one of a variety of credentials appropriate to the situation to provide counseling, therapy, or other emotional support services (may be provided through FCSN's emotional supports program described in response to question 1.3.E.2 above)

b. Describe how the school will ensure that all staff (including but not limited to administrators, special education teachers, regular education teachers, guidance counselors, and support staff) are adequately trained and properly implementing state and federal law related to the identification, evaluation, and education of students with disabilities.

As the school's special education designee, the Director of Special Education will participate in training offered by the Delaware Department of Education, particularly the required annual Policies/Procedures/Procedural Safeguards training as well as others including the special education leadership meetings. The Director of Special Education will also ensure that relevant school staff attend other training offered by the Delaware Department of Education.

Further, the Director of Special Education collaborates with the Head of Academics to build time into the professional development schedule for the summer and throughout the school year devoted to special education training for all staff and targeted audiences such as special education teachers. The Director of Special Education collaborates with the FCSN school leadership team, the FSNO, and outside experts as necessary to stay abreast of regulatory developments and new promising practices in special education and will collaborate with these other parties as necessary for support in developing or facilitating professional development for school staff. We will cover the essentials of key topics such as Child Find (including MTSS and ISTs), evaluation, and implementation of standards-based IEPs (including meeting attendance,

accommodations, modifications, and progress monitoring) annually with all staff.

3. English Language Learners

Charter schools are responsible for the identification of English language learners, the provision of English language services, and the annual assessment of English language proficiency as required by 14 DE Admin. Code 920. Additionally, charter schools are responsible for hiring certified English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or bilingual educators to provide services to English language learners. Paraprofessionals and tutors may serve English language learners only under the supervision of a certified ESL or bilingual teacher. In addition, ESL/bilingual school personnel must participate in the IEP Process of students who are dually identified for both Special Education and English language learners (SWD/ELL).

a. Explain how the school will identify English language learner students in need of English language services, including the steps required to screen and assess the English language proficiency level and the timeline for completion.

Upon student enrollment, we will collect the Delaware Home Language Survey from the family of each new student entering FCSN in compliance with ESSA and 14 DE Admin. Code § 920.2. If the student's first language, the student's language used most often at home, or the language the parent speaks most often to the student is anything other than English, we continue with the next step of the identification process, which is a records review. In the records review, the School may determine that the student is either an Active EL, Transitioned/Re-Classified EL, or Never-EL. If we find a valid language assessment (WIDA or Delaware Alternative EL Identification Protocol within the last 12 months), we will base our placement decision on those results. If we are not able to acquire results of a valid prior assessment in a timely way, we will proceed with a WIDA screener. If a student was Re-Classified but did not meet exit criteria (described below in response to question d), we will classify the student as an EL and administer a screener if we do not have valid assessment results. For Never-ELs, unless we have a record of a prior WIDA screener determining ineligibility or the student scored proficient in ELA on the most recent DeSSA administration, we proceed to administering a screener.

When a screener is indicated, a qualified and trained professional will use the statewide Delaware-approved WIDA screener (or in rare cases the DE Alternative EL Identification Protocol) for the 9-12 grade-level cluster, except in the case of 9th graders enrolling prior to December 31, for whom we will use the grades 6-8 screener. The screener, aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards, assesses the four domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing and generates a composite score used to determine EL entrance (see response below to question d for more information). We will always conduct the assessment no later than the 25th school day after the student enrolls so that we are able to notify parents and plan for services as soon as possible, and always within the timeline required by law. We send parent notifications in the home language of the parent and include the assessment, current English proficiency level, program placement, exit requirements, expected graduation rate, and parent rights. In the event a parent asks to exercise their right to waive language

services, we explain the benefits of the program to ensure the parent understands. If the parent ultimately does send a written notice of waiver, we still administer the annual ACCESS test until the student reaches a 4.7 and make every effort to ensure the student receives equal access to education without formal participation in our Language Instruction Education Program (LIEP).

b. Explain how the school will schedule the contact hours for instruction based upon the English language learner's proficiency level.

A Teacher of English Learners determines the appropriate number of contact hours for each student level based upon individual English Language Development (ELD) level. While this can vary depending on individual need, typically students at Level 3 or higher require no more than 1 hour per day. Logistically, we schedule contact hours to maximize impact and minimize disruption. We schedule pull-out instruction outside of a student's core classes, whereas we seek to schedule any push-in, sheltered, or co-teaching instruction in a core class or classes that will have the most benefit to a student's English language development. Please see our responses to question c, d, and g below for more information on assessment and programming.

c. Describe the program model(s) the school will use to deliver the English language services to students.

A Delaware-certified Teacher of English Learners (14 DE Admin Code § 1562) oversees the identification, assessment, placement, and programs of instruction for English Learner students. This includes design (14 DE Admin. Code § 920.3) and annual evaluation (14 DE Admin. Code § 920.5) of the School's overall LIEP in addition to the specific programming tailored to each EL student's individual needs. We consult the Delaware English Learner Guidebook when structuring and adjusting our LIEP and align all language instruction for ELs with the five WIDA English Language Development Standards: (1) Social and Instructional Language, (2) Language for Language Arts, (3), Language for Mathematics, (4) Language for Science, and (5) Language for Social Studies. The goal of our LIEP is for our ELs to promptly attain proficiency with both the English language and academic content areas. We accomplish this through both formal instruction to increase English language proficiency and instruction in academic subjects which is designed to provide ELs with access to the regular curriculum.

FCSN does not plan to offer in-house dual language immersion or heritage language programs. We are typically able to best meet EL students' needs with ESL push-in, ESL pull-out, and blended push-in and pull-out instruction. This model allows for substantial differentiation based upon the ELD levels of different students and for targeting specific WIDA Standards. Depending on the individual and overall needs of our EL student population, a Teacher of English Learners may train general education teachers to offer Sheltered English Instruction or Co-Teach directly with them. We would offer an English Language Development Class if a sufficient number of EL students with appropriate need were to enroll, and we would provide a Newcomer Program in cases where a student comes into high school with notably limited English proficiency.

It is important to note that our support for ELs goes beyond instruction. Promoting cultural diversity is an important part of the Freire program, and we strive to ensure that all students celebrate their own culture and the cultures of others around them. EL students may in some cases also be immigrant, migrant, refugee, or internationally adopted students. We use the Title I, Part C Agricultural Work Survey to help identify migrant students and connect them with community services. We work to break down any barriers EL students may have to full participation in the life of the school, including extracurricular activities, counseling services, field trips, and other special activities, whether those barriers are linguistic, cultural, economic, logistical, or otherwise.

d. Describe the minimum English proficiency level scores required for enrollment into the ESL/bilingual program and the minimum exit level criteria to transition out of the program.

The initial WIDA Screener or annual ACCESS generates a composite score that corresponds to the students ELD level:

- Level 1 (Entering): Minimal social and academic language with visual support
- Level 2 (Emerging): Some social English and general academic language with visual support
- Level 3 (Developing): Social English with some specific academic language with visual support
- Level 4 (Expanding): Social English and some technical academic language
- Level 5 (Bridging): Social English and technical academic language with grade level material
- Level 6 (Reaching): Social and technical language working with grade level material at the highest level

While the Delaware exit score is a 4.7, due to the fact that composite scores on the initial WIDA screener are reported only in whole or half numbers, any student who scores less than a 5.0 will be considered an EL. Once placed into the LIEP, as an EL's language skills increase, we gradually transition them to less intensive programming as they move toward qualifying to exit.

Once a student achieves a 4.7 or greater on the annual ACCESS, they have satisfied Delaware's exit criterion and will no longer be considered an EL. However, we continue to monitor exited ELs for at least two years post-exit. If the School, through grade level teams, ISTs, or another means, identifies that an exited EL is struggling with English proficiency, we can provide additional supports through our MTSS program. In the event the student demonstrates a persistent language barrier after being exited, we will re-test the student using the WIDA screener and follow the steps as we would for a new EL student, including parent notification.

e. Describe the school's plan for addressing parent involvement for English language learners, including immigrant students.

We observe the requirements of 14 DE Admin. Code § 920.7 and ensure that our communications with parents, including initial and annual EL placement notices, report cards,

and other information made available to all parents is provided in English or, if the parent cannot understand English, in a language the parent can understand. We welcome parent participation in our school and ensure that parents who speak non-English languages can be provided an interpreter that will help them to participate in the life of the school.

f. Describe how the school will ensure that English language learner students receive instruction and support to access and make meaningful progress in the general education curriculum and Common Core State Standards.

While English language instruction is considered a Tier 1 placement within our MTSS program, EL students enjoy full participation in the benchmarking, monitoring, and interventions we offer to all students. With very limited exceptions described below, EL students participate in all assessments, including teacher-developed standards-aligned curriculum-based tests, STAR benchmarks, DeSSA Biology and Social Studies, and the PSAT and SAT. Where needed, we introduce students to accommodations in advance of testing, so they are familiar with them during the actual assessment. We do provide language accommodations for ELs in testing when those same accommodations have been used regularly in the classroom and provided that decisions are made on an individual basis appropriate to the student's proficiency and needs. Active EL students in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools may be granted an individual exemption from the SAT Reading or DeSSA-Alt ELA test.

EL students' equal participation in formative and summative assessments allows us to monitor their progress in the general education curriculum and Common Core and NGSS Standards in the same way we do for all other students. When a grade team or IST determines that a student who is an EL needs a Tier 2 or 3 intervention, the team will include a Teacher of English Learners in the decision making and intervention design processes. This helps ensure that interventions through the MTSS program and appropriate ESL instruction happen in concert and do not conflict in the student's schedule or unintentionally try to compensate for a misidentified root cause. We may use tools like the Student with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) Questionnaire to help identify causes and choose interventions. In addition, the WIDA screener corresponds with standards that include the Common Core and NGSS, allowing us to design individualized language instruction matched to those WIDA English Language Development standards that are core subject-based. In designing that instruction, we may use resources such as Colorín Colorado to bolster standards-alignment within English language instruction.

Finally, we make sure that we afford EL students equal opportunity to participate in elective, AP, and dual enrollment courses, enrichment programs, summer school, and differentiated instruction within the classroom at the same level as all students.

g. Describe how the school will ensure that all English language learners, including those dually identified as students with disabilities who are also English language learners, will be assessed annually for English language proficiency.

Pursuant to ESSA and 14 DE Admin. Code § 920.4, we administer the ACCESS annually to every EL student. Our administrators are highly attentive to this requirement and ensure that there is a plan for each EL to be scheduled for testing during the annual window. EL status is tracked in eSchool, which we can use to generate a list of ELs who need to be tested. If an EL has significant cognitive disabilities requiring extensive individual instruction and participates in the DeSSA Alternate Assessment, the IEP team may determine that the student will take the Alternate ACCESS with a trained professional.

h. Describe how the school will ensure that English language learners, including those dually identified as students with disabilities who are also English language learners, will be provided services for both programs.

In any case where a student with limited English proficiency or an identified EL is going through the special education evaluation, identification, or re-evaluation process, the special education team collaborates closely with an EL professional. Likewise, the EL identification process is an important juncture to consider whether there are any indications of a potential disability. It is critical to identify whether the root cause of a student's challenges is truly a disability, limited English proficiency, due to status as a Student with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), or a combination of factors. In the case where an EL is also a student with an IEP, we always consider the student's language needs as they relate to the IEP, in compliance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 925.11.2.2, and complete the English Language Service Discussion for ELs with Disabilities Form annually. In developing standards-based IEPs for such students, we consider English Language needs, include the WIDA Screener or ACCESS results as data, and include any necessary English Language accommodations, but do not include benchmarks, goals, or services related to English Language Development. A Teacher of English Learners may also be included as a member of the IEP team. We provide LIEPs appropriate to individual English proficiency levels for English Learners with Disabilities (SwD/EL) in the same way as we do for students without IEPs. Such students may simply receive specially designed supports within their LIEP just as they would within the general education program. To that end, the student's primary special education teacher works closely with the Teacher of English Learners (consultative services) for all SwD/ELs.

4. Gifted Students. Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of gifted students, including:

a. The specific research-based instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities;

We do not specifically target gifted students in recruitment; our schools are open to any and all students. We expect students from a variety of backgrounds to enroll at FCSN, each with their

own unique needs and strengths. Among the students who enroll may be students who are capable of a high performance by virtue of certain outstanding abilities—general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts ability, and/or psychomotor ability. These students may require differentiated educational programs or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their individual’s full potential. When a student is identified by a professionally qualified person as meeting the definition of a gifted student under 14 Del. Code § 3101, we provide appropriate differentiation.

The Head of School is responsible for designating a staff member to oversee any gifted programming we provide. In making identifications for gifted education, we base decisions upon evaluation of the pertinent evidence by the Head of School or their designee, a classroom teacher familiar with the student’s schoolwork, and, when appropriate, a credentialed school psychologist. To determine the full range of a student’s capability, a person recognized as an expert in the gifted or talented category under consideration, and/or an individual who has in-depth understanding of the student’s linguistic or cultural group participates in the evaluation of the evidence unless there is no doubt as to the student’s eligibility. Teachers, parents, or students may make nominations for gifted education regardless of a student’s socioeconomic status, first/home language, cultural background, and/or disabilities.

We follow the research-based practices of acceleration (allowing students to take higher levels of courses than their peers), flexible grouping and providing accelerated learning choices within regular classrooms, allowing students to choose their own learning paths and activities within school or in internships or after-school activities, allowing students to tutor others at our after-school academic centers, participating in dual enrollment courses, independent study under a teacher’s supervision, and similar activities that stretch them to their potential (Smutny, J., 2000, *Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom*, ERIC Digest, US Dept of Education). No matter the specifics of a gifted student’s program, we will ensure that the instruction they receive is integrated with the general education program and covers all Delaware academic content standards, including Common Core and NGSS.

According to Brown and Wishney, “*Equity* in school curriculum, instruction, and assessment has become a belief in equality of outcomes and that all students, regardless of their ability levels should receive identical instruction” (Brown, E. & Wishney, L., 2017, *Equity and Excellence: Political Forces in the Education of Gifted Students in the United States and Abroad*, *Global Education Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1). We take a distinctly different view: we believe that every student achieving mastery of all academic standards should be the floor, not the ceiling. Our focus is on providing high-quality standards-aligned instruction using a culturally relevant curriculum for every student and supplementing that instruction with counseling and mental health supports. We add differentiation, including for gifted students, on top of the foundation of total content mastery for all students.

Lastly, gifted students of color are often underidentified, overlooked, or denied supports needed to address their unique socio-emotional needs, especially for Black students (Scott, M.,

2012, Socio-Emotional and Psychological Issues and Needs of Gifted African-American Students: Culture Matters, Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning, Vol. 2, No. 2). The Freire Schools Network's strong track record of supporting students of color and students' mental health and emotional needs positions us to be responsive to any such needs (see our response to question 1.3.E.2 above for more information).

b. How the school will provide qualified staffing for gifted students; and

We assign each student an academic advisor, who is responsible for overseeing a gifted education plan where applicable. We provide information to teachers, parents, administrators, and counselors regarding gifted learners and their social and emotional development. An academic advisor who is assigned to a gifted student will receive appropriate specialized training in developing and monitoring plans for and working with gifted students. In the event a teacher is specifically providing gifted education, they pursue certification as a Teacher of Students Who Are Gifted or Talented pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 1572.

c. How the school will assess and monitor the progress and success of gifted students.

We monitor the progress of all students, including gifted students, using teacher-developed standards-aligned curriculum-based tests, STAR benchmarks, DeSSA Biology and Social Studies, and the PSAT and SAT. One of the components of a gifted education plan is continuous progress, so the academic advisor and classroom teachers will consider additional monitoring tools beyond those we use for all students. Grade teams discuss the progress of gifted students in the same way as they do for all students and other exceptional students, such as those with IEPs. When any student is not making progress, including a gifted student, the team can recommend additional supports. For a gifted student, this could look like providing more differentiation or reexamining the student's gifted education plan.

5. Homeless Students. Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of homeless students. Describe the training that the staff members will receive to meet the needs of homeless students.

FCSN will meet all of the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and 14 DE Admin. Code § 901 in order to ensure that all of our homeless students are appropriately identified by the School so that they are provided the resources that they need to fully benefit from the educational opportunities that are provided by the School in a manner similar to their non-homeless peers. Specifically, the School will appoint a trained LEA Homeless Liaison on the staff at the School who will be responsible for coordinating with local agencies and communicating with parents to ensure that the students are identified as homeless as quickly as possible and resources are coordinated in the community to support those students. The Homeless Liaison at FCSN will attend training in the laws that apply to homeless students and in coordinating services for homeless students, including the trainings and meetings offered by the SEA Homeless Coordinator at DDOE. We will partner with local agencies that serve those students (homeless shelters, food banks, etc.). Our goal will be to ensure that our homeless

students are not stigmatized nor seen as in any way deficient in comparison to their non-homeless peers. The Homeless Liaison will be a member of the culture team as we expect this to be the best fit with the primary special needs of homeless students. However, this person or any staff member may identify that a student experiencing homelessness is in need of academic or in-classroom support and work with the student's assigned academic advisor to find supports or refer the student to the grade-level team for discussion in the MTSS program.

1.3.G: Student Recruitment and Enrollment [14 Del. C. § 512(6) and (8) and 14 DE Admin. Code 275.4.4.2]

1. Describe your plan to recruit students in your pre-opening year, including the strategies, activities, events, responsible parties and benchmarks and timelines that will demonstrate suitable progress over time. (Note! Be sure to reference <https://www.schoolchoicede.org/>.)

FCSN's plan to recruit students in our pre-opening year will closely follow the successful model currently in use at FCSW. Student recruitment will be managed by FCSN leadership with support from the Freire Schools Network Office as needed. Student recruitment strategies and activities will include the following:

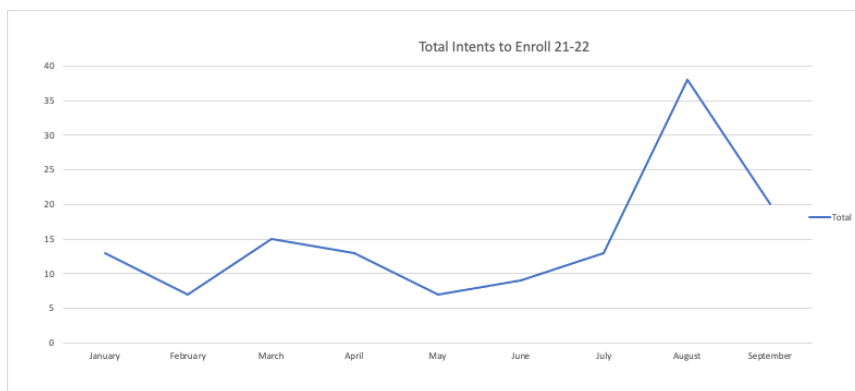
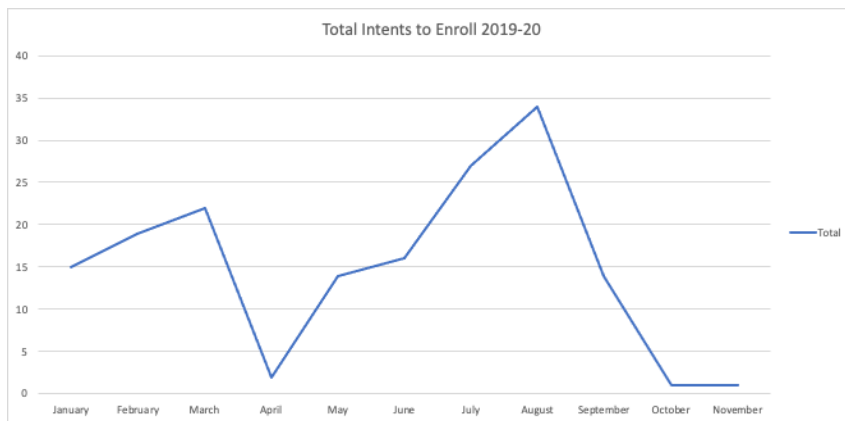
- Partnering with local middle schools to connect with prospective FCSN students
- Participating in virtual and/or in-person high school fair events for middle school families
- In-person outreach in community spaces
- Partnerships with community organizations and local businesses to help spread the word about FCSN
- Outreach to current FCSW community and previous FCSW applicants, as well as the network of interested families built up prior to the pre-opening year
- Physical mailings to eligible students and families
- Open houses/tours of FCSN's campus, when available
- Physical and online advertisements

While FCSN will not begin accepting official applications until the SchoolChoiceDE.org application opens in November of 2022, we have already begun recruitment in earnest as part of gathering parent support for the charter application. We will continue recruiting potential students continuously until we first open and beyond for future years. All recruitment materials, events, and activities will direct families toward the SchoolChoiceDE.org application, which is the only way that students can apply to enroll at FCSN.

Based on how many applications have been received by the time the SchoolChoiceDE.org application closes in mid-January of 2023, FCSN leadership will determine whether to hold an admissions lottery. If more applications have been received than there are spaces available, we will hold a lottery in late January or early February and notify families whether they were selected in the lottery by late February. If, by the time the Choice Application closes in mid-January, fewer applications have been submitted than there are spaces available, no lottery will

be held and FCSN will immediately begin accepting Intent to Enroll forms from families. FCSN's other key admissions recruitment benchmark is April 1 of each year, by which time 80% of FCSN's total enrollment for the following year must be confirmed per 14 Del. Code § 506(c)(1).

Based on our experience at Freire Wilmington, we would expect approximately 45% of all new enrollments to occur in the last three months leading up to the first day of school. While we are engaging families throughout the early months of the admissions process, the evidence shows us that our families are most likely to take action right before school starts, with the highest share of enrollments coming predictably in August.



2. Explain the plan for student recruitment and marketing that will provide equal access to any family interested in the new school. Specifically describe the plan for outreach to families in poverty; academically low-achieving students; students with disabilities; linguistically diverse families and other youth at risk of academic failure. The response should include the following:
- a. A brief description of the recruitment strategies that the school will employ to attract each of the students described above to the school; and
- b. A brief explanation of the efforts, resources, structures, or programs that the school will take to retain these students and how the school will monitor the efficacy of such efforts, including disaggregation of student performance data for each subgroup. Identify your target re-enrollment rate for each year.

FCSN's mission is centered around providing equal access to a high-quality education to students from all backgrounds; as such, our plan for student recruitment and marketing strives to attract and provide equal access to all families. Our student recruitment outreach to local community centers includes a focus on partnering with federally qualified health centers that predominantly work with low-income families to spread the word about FCSN. In addition, our student recruitment outreach via mail targets all eligible students and families. Our messaging in all outreach and marketing emphasizes that FCSN is a tuition-free public school, and that the Freire Schools model is based around connecting all students, regardless of prior academic achievement, with the supports they need for success on their own terms. Special Education staff are available during open house events for prospective families, and at prospective families' request, to answer questions about FCSN's programming and supports for students with disabilities. FCSN's website is connected to Google Translate and can be automatically translated into any of Google's available languages; FCSN's website will also have this feature when it is fully built out. SchoolChoiceDE.org, through which all prospective FCSN students will apply to enroll, features the same translation ability through Google Translate. In addition, the first page of FCSN's enrollment packet directs families to language and translation services, Language Line, to help families whose primary language is not English navigate the enrollment process. Freire Schools also offer individual, group, and family counseling at no cost to all Freire Schools students, families, and staff, allowing many students in need of emotional support to find personal and academic success. Overall, FCSN's culture will adhere to the Freire Schools model by prioritizing the individual needs of each student and family, ensuring that all youth at risk of academic failure have access to the supports they need to succeed.

In addition to families in poverty, students with disabilities, and linguistically diverse families, we want to be mindful of other youth at risk of academic failure due to classifications that can sometimes be harder to identify or reach. These can include a variety of unique cultural backgrounds, students who are behind grade level, youth confronting trauma, students in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, or LGBTQ+ youth. For all of these special populations, our recruitment strategy emphasizes the comprehensive, individualized support we offer each student through programming such as MTSS, academic advising, emotional supports, and other tools described throughout this application—1.3.A.5-7 (extra supports in the curriculum), 1.3.E (supplemental programming), 1.3.F.1.b (MTSS), 1.3.F.3.c (EL service models), 1.3.H.2 (school culture systems), and 1.3.H (school culture values and supports). For

students who enroll, these features that we emphasize in recruiting then become how we implement our retention strategy. Through providing a high level of effective supports, our goal is to help each and every student achieve their full potential, and we believe that when students realize the ways we can help them reach their potential, they want to stay with the Freire program.

Our work to monitor the efficacy of our efforts to retain at-risk students will include regular review of disaggregated student performance data for each subgroup, as well as careful attention to overall reenrollment rates. After FCSN reaches full enrollment capacity and is offering grades 9-12, our target reenrollment rate for each year will be 86%, in keeping with FCSW's average re-enrollment rate of 84% for the years during which FCSW has been operating at full capacity and where retention has improved each year FCSW has been in operation.

In order to retain at-risk students, we will closely monitor student performance in order to intervene early. When students and family members feel supported and confident that they can succeed at our school, they will be less likely to look elsewhere. In order to monitor the efficacy of our efforts to retain students, we will carefully review overall and disaggregated reenrollment rates and do our best to assess why individual students or groups of students are choosing to enroll in different schools. This analysis will inform our programming, potentially leading to new or improved efforts around student supports, family outreach, school climate initiatives, and any other root causes we identify. After FCSN reaches full enrollment and is offering grades 9-12, our target reenrollment rate for each year will be 86%, in keeping with FCSW's average re-enrollment rate of 84% since operating at full capacity and where retention has improved annually.

3. In Attachment 8 (Parent Support Survey), provide evidence of demand for the proposed school among prospective parents/guardians.

Please see Attachment 8.

4. Describe the ongoing student recruitment work that you will do once your school has opened. Identify the ways in which it will be different than your pre-opening year in terms of the strategies, activities, events, persons responsible and benchmarks.

Overall, ongoing student recruitment work for FCSN will closely resemble the recruitment work we will undertake during our pre-opening year, with a few differences. After FCSN has opened, student recruitment will continue to be managed by FCSN leadership with support from the Freire Schools Network Office as needed.

As we build up a community of currently enrolled students and their families, student recruitment efforts will include outreach to that community and invitations to spread the word about FCSN. We will also begin to be able to include data about FCSN's results and testimonials from current students in student recruitment and marketing materials once the school is open.

Other recruitment activities and events will remain largely the same, including partnering with local middle schools to connect with prospective FCSN students, participating in high school fair events for middle school families, in-person outreach in community spaces, partnerships with community organizations and local businesses to help spread the word about FCSN, physical mailings to eligible students and families, and physical and online advertisements. Regular open house events featuring tours of FCSN's school building will also be a part of our strategy, and after the school's opening we will include opportunities for prospective families to speak with current students and staff.

FCSN will begin recruiting students for the coming school year in the fall of the year before, and will begin accepting applications when the SchoolChoiceDE.org application opens in November of that year. All recruitment materials, events, and activities will direct families toward the SchoolChoiceDE.org application, which is the only way that students can apply to enroll at FCSN. As in the pre-opening year, FCSN leadership will determine whether to hold an admissions lottery each year based on how many applications have been received by the time the SchoolChoiceDE.org application closes in mid-January of the year before, and will follow the same admissions timeline detailed in section 1.3.G.1 above.

FCSN's other key admissions recruitment benchmark is April 1 of each year, by which time 80% of FCSN's total enrollment for the following year must be confirmed per 14 Del. Code § 506(c)(1). In contrast to the pre-opening year, after FCSN is open, this 75% benchmark will include already-enrolled returning students in addition to newly enrolled students.

5. *Provide, as Attachment 9, the school's Enrollment Policy and Withdrawal Policy*

Please see Attachment 9.

6. *Provide, as Attachment 10, the school's Remote Learning Plan (See attached guidance, p. 48).*

Please see Attachment 10.

1.3.H: School Culture [14 Del. C. § 512(6)-(7) and 14 Del. C. §4112D]

1. *Describe the culture or ethos of the proposed school and how this culture or ethos will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.*

For more than two decades, Freire Schools has developed, refined, and implemented its educational program based on current research on what is best for students. But we have learned over time that it is our values, more than any collection of program elements, that define who we are as a network of schools and make us a uniquely strong, creative, and collaborative Freire Family. At FCSN, like at all Freire schools, we believe:

- **Love binds our Freire Family and drives everything we do.**

The thread that runs through all of our values, and the programs that put these values in action, is Freire Schools' belief in the humanity of everyone in our Freire Family and the love we have for each other. Freire Schools takes a proactive approach to creating a strong community culture based on mutual respect, openness and honesty, where every individual is seen and valued. We show our love by insisting that every member of our community be accepted as they are, without judgment, and be supported in inhabiting their fullest self. Our connections create our community. As a Freire Family, our shared struggles, joy, challenges, and successes give us strength.

Leading with love and treating each other as human beings means valuing social awareness, relationship building, decision-making, and self-management. We know the virtues of being vulnerable, knowing how to express one's emotions, listening to others, and daring to ask for help. At Freire Schools, love manifests itself in many ways including in our Emotional Supports program, the way we integrate social justice into our curriculum, and our use of restorative practices to identify and heal harm.

- **Every student has the power to build the future. Preparing all kids for college ensures their futures are limitless.**

Kids are at the center of all that we do, and we believe that they have unlimited potential. We build our school culture around supporting every individual student's growth into a self-actualized citizen of the world. We prioritize opportunities for students to find, develop, and share their voices. We prepare our students to seize their power to build the future by raising the academic bar and providing a college-preparatory education to every student. We believe that meaningful and rigorous college-preparatory content sets conditions for students that empower them for a life of leadership and to actualize the goals they set for themselves. You can see our college prep mission in action when we emphasize deeper learning in our classrooms, when we give students robust hands-on learning experiences, and when we emphasize acceleration over remediation.

- **A safe, supportive, and uplifting community must be a diverse and antiracist community.**

Freire Schools believes that our diversity makes us stronger. We place a high value on the wide range of backgrounds, lived experiences, and ways of thinking that each of us brings to the table. We prioritize student and staff voice. We embrace and celebrate our differences, because we know they make us stronger as a community and as individuals.

Freire educators intentionally inspire, uplift, and celebrate our students, promote diversity in culture and perspective, and foster humanity for all. This allows students— especially students who have historically been oppressed— to see themselves and their potential in the texts they read, the tasks they complete, and the activities in which they participate.

As part of our commitment to antiracism, Freire Schools has begun interrogating the presence of racism in our work and our schools. With our new Teaching and Learning Continuum (See Appendix A and Section 1.3.A. above), our commitment to raising the academic bar for all kids, and our developing culture of generative conflict, we are beginning to create an educational program in which Freire Schools students and staff are unencumbered by institutional racism, held to high standards, and supported and uplifted every step of the way.

- **We are all works in progress, committed to our growth as individuals, as schools, and as a network.**

Freire Schools believes that learning is a process, not a product. We embrace a culture of continuous improvement for our students, our teachers, and leaders. On the school and network level, that means we believe in the power of regularly reflecting on our work – asking ourselves and each other: how are we doing, why are we performing this way, and what are we doing about it. We use data to drive these discussions and to hold ourselves accountable. In our classrooms, we embrace the growth mindset with our “Power of Yet” — an understanding that test results are simply an indicator of a student’s mastery of standards on a particular day, not as a final statement of their capacity to perform at standard. That is, we understand that a student who does not succeed on a quiz or test has not mastered the assessed concepts *yet*. Students must develop the confidence that with extra work, they can improve and master concepts that were more difficult at an earlier stage in their learning process. And our schools need to provide kids with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery on assignments. Finally, our commitment to growth extends to our educators, as Freire Schools invests significant resources in recruiting, developing and retaining staff who believe in the power of student voice and are empowered to help students grow inside and out of the classroom. Just as we expect our students to be growing and learning every day, our program is designed to ensure that all adults at Freire Schools are learning daily.

- **Safe and peaceful schools free our kids to take risks and dream bigger.**

Freire Schools campuses are peaceful communities. Our highest priority is making sure that students feel safe and engaged in our classrooms and throughout our schools, and that each of us has the tools and skills we need to resolve conflict peacefully. Our peaceful schools allow students to focus on themselves and their education and feel safe and emboldened to take the emotional and personal risks necessary for deeper learning. In this environment, we view conflict as an opportunity for learning, growth, and positive change.

In practice, this means supporting students in accessing internal peace through counseling services and other individual supports, as well as teaching strategies for recognizing and resolving interpersonal conflicts. Our restorative practices are an increasingly central part of our peaceful communities, and our Nonviolence Policy and Code of Conduct (see Appendix E for a draft and response to 1.3.I.1 for information on how this policy is currently being refined

to become restorative) will clearly communicate behavioral expectations with the goal of preventing violence and humanizing, rather than criminalizing, our students.

- **Freire = Family.**

At Freire Schools, we have a saying: “Freire = Family.” We are successful in connecting as a healthy and supportive family when we tap into our shared humanity, let love guide our decisions, fight for an antiracist future, value our diversity, commit to growing every day, create safe and peaceful spaces that inspire bravery, and never doubt our students’ power to succeed in college and build the future.

These core elements of the Freire Schools culture have been forged through years of hard work and learning at our four existing schools by students, staff, and parents. Just as these values guided FCSW’s success, we believe that they will lay the foundation for success at FCSN. When we base our culture on love — on mutual respect, understanding, and empathy — we are able to really listen to each other and are able to communicate honestly, respect each other, and seek to understand. By doing so, we create the safety needed to take risks and the peace needed to learn.

2. Explain the systems, practices, and traditions that the School Leader and staff will implement to foster this culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents, starting from the first day of school. (Note! You will be asked to describe your discipline policy in the next section).

To actualize our Freire = Family motto, FCSN will replicate a number of systems, practices, and traditions from FCSW and other Freire Schools. These include our robust after-school and summer programming (described later under supplemental programming), our peer mediation program and restorative practices (detailed below under discipline), and the following:

- **New Student Clinic & Orientation** (Values: College Prep & Peaceful Schools): Before the school year kicks off each year, our campuses hold a clinic for all new students that introduces our newest Dragons to the Freire culture — our values, academic expectations, and behavioral expectations. Then each grade level has an orientation day where we handle logistical matters (e.g. distributing class schedules and Chromebooks), review values and expectations, meet grade-level staff, and participate in community building activities. The New Student Clinic and grade-level orientations begin fostering school culture before school starts and ensure that, on the first day of school, all students know what the expectations are and arrive ready to learn.
- **Academic Advising** (Value: College Prep): We believe that all students can thrive in a college prep environment if provided with robust academic, social, and emotional supports. Part of this is our Academic Advising program, in which each student has an academic advisor who helps prevent academic failure by linking students to the

academic supports in place at school and coordinating support at home. They form close relationships with students and their families and earn their trust as advocates and confidants. They also support students by celebrating academic success.

- **Celebrating Student Success** (Values: College Prep & Growth): Freire Schools finds opportunities to celebrate student success all year, including acknowledging students who have grown during their time at Freire. You see this in our schools in our Honor Roll posters in our lobbies and student work decorating every hallway. FCSW has also started the tradition of quarterly grade-level assemblies where we recognize student achievements including Dragon of the Month, College All-Star, most school spirit, most improved, etc. FCSN is excited to replicate these traditions and build new ones to celebrate the many ways our Dragons “Breathe Fire!”
- **Emotional Supports** (Values: Love & Peaceful Schools): Our Emotional Supports program makes individual and/or family therapy available to any member of the student body. Therapy is provided on site during or after school hours and is provided to students and their families at no cost. In addition to traditional therapy, the staff of the Emotional Support Team also provides group therapy to students on an as needed basis around issues such as grief or anger management. This program helps remove social and emotional barriers to learning, normalizes therapy as a natural part of life, and helps develop in kids the lifelong skill of asking for and receiving help. This program also helps students address past and current trauma that could lead to disciplinary infractions.
- **Student Government Association** (Value: Power to Build the Future): Student Government provides a vital opportunity for students to develop their voices and leadership skills and to be the change they want to see at Freire Schools. The student officers and representatives elected across all grades are frequently asked to represent the School at community outreach activities and are actively involved in developing student activities and events (e.g. Homecoming Spirit Week) that promote a positive school culture.
- **Blackout Experience** (Values: Power to Build the Future and Antiracism): Each February, FCSW marks Black History Month with an annual Blackout Experience, a showcase of student diversity and talent. What began as an evening of student performances has grown over the years to a weeklong series of events and workshops in celebration of Black history, excellence, and joy leading up to a grand showcase of music, dancing, fashion, poetry. Events have included Trivia Night, Self Determination Workshop, Poetry Slam, Paint Night, and a Fashion Show. FCSN hopes to grow this tradition at its new campus.
- **Generative Conflict** (Value: Antiracism & Peaceful Schools): Conflict that creates new possibilities and connections rather than shutting them down is a powerful tool for deconditioning binary, either/or thinking within ourselves and embracing our different cultures, experiences, and viewpoints as we build a path forward. As such, Freire

Schools has committed to cultivating generative conflict values and skills within Freire Schools' culture, staff, and students. The capacity for healthy, generative conflict is essential to antiracist work and healthy organizations. It is more than just a way of preventing disciplinary infractions among kids; it fundamentally changes the culture in which adults in the building address conflict so that we can move from a place of "me" to a place of "we."

While Freire Schools has developed values and programs that are such a part of who we are as a network that we refer to them as our "DNA," one of our strengths is the autonomy we give school leaders to develop innovative programs that meet the needs of their students and families. As such, we fully expect that FCSN will both refine these traditions and systems and develop new ones, both for their school and to be shared with the wider Freire Schools community.

3. Describe the key elements of the school's bullying prevention and anti-hazing policies. Explain how the school will develop this culture and use scientifically researched-based practices for students, educators, administrators, and parents starting from the first day of school.

Our policy is compliant with the provisions of 14 Del. Code § 4164 regarding bullying and 14 DE Admin. Code § 624 regarding cyberbullying and it defines and prohibits bullying and cyberbullying (see Appendix E). Pursuant to statute and policy, we will establish a bullying prevention committee responsible for design and monitoring of a school-wide bullying prevention program. Research shows that some of the critical practices for meaningful bullying prevention are moral engagement (Campaert, K., Nocentini, A., Menesini, E., 2017, The Efficacy of Teachers' Responses to Incidents of Bullying and Victimization, *Aggressive Behavior*, Vol. 43, No. 5, 483–492) and having an MTSS program or other system of comprehensive socio-emotional supports (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016, *Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice*, The National Academies Press). One of our key values as stated above is Safe and Peaceful Schools, which intertwines with our values of Love and Freire = Family. Research shows that moral disengagement can predispose a student to bullying another. Through our student culture initiatives including emotional supports, peer mediation, and generative conflict, we actualize our values of love and family, preventing moral disengagement and thus bullying.

Any school personnel must immediately report any suspected bullying to the administration and students and parents are encouraged to report bullying as well. Retaliation for reporting bullying is prohibited. The bullying and cyberbullying policy is included alongside other school policies in the Student & Family Handbook that we send out at the start of each school year. All staff participate in the DDOE bullying prevention and criminal youth gang detection training to meet the requirement for three hours of training every three years. When we receive any report of bullying, we notify DDOE and the parents of all involved students of any reported incident within five working days. The Deans team promptly investigates to determine whether bullying occurred, including a determination of whether there was alleged or actual targeting wholly or in part due to the target's race, age, marital status, creed, religion, color, sex,

disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or national origin. If a claim of bullying is substantiated, students who participate receive a consequence which may include a behavior contract, suspension, or recommendation for expulsion. Any recommendation for expulsion is made in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 614 and § 616; see Section 1.3.I regarding student discipline below for more information.

While 14 Del. Code § 9301 et seq. applies only to institutions of higher learning, pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 1.2.1.5 our high school athletes must observe good sportsmanship including the Code of Interscholastic Athletics' prohibition on hazing. We prohibit any hazing, and the positive school culture programs we have in place to build a sense of love and family which help prevent bullying do the same to help prevent hazing.

4. Explain how the school culture will serve and support students with special needs, including students receiving special education services, English Language Learners, homeless and migrant students, and any other students at-risk of academic failure.

At the core of Freire Schools' DNA is our belief that ALL kids have limitless potential to build the future and that all students can and will learn. Built into this belief in success for all is an understanding of and commitment to providing every student, including students with special needs, whatever supports they need in order to succeed in high school, college, and beyond. Every choice we make about which teacher to hire, what textbook to use, how to utilize our resources, or which sports and after-school programs to offer has been considered through the lens of supporting all students to achieve.

Another component of our DNA is the belief that we are all works in progress committed to our growth as individuals. We embrace learning as a process, not a product, and a culture of continuous improvement. On the teaching and learning level, this means embracing the "Power of Yet," the understanding that an assessment only measures mastery of standards and a particular day and should not be a final statement of a student's capacity to perform at standard. When students do not succeed on an assessment, we believe that they just have not mastered the assessed concepts yet. So, we encourage teachers to provide all students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery on assignments.

Finally, as a college-preparatory secondary school, FCSN will apply a whole-child approach with a continuous monitoring plan and intervention opportunities in place for all students, including special needs students, and in which we consider all staff to be part of our monitoring team. We employ a responsive MTSS process throughout the school, continually monitoring the progress of all of our students with nationally normed STAR reading and math benchmark tests, IXL monitoring tools connected to content standards, curriculum-based formative and summative assessments, and discussions in grade level team meetings. Students with special needs, including students receiving special education services, English Learners, homeless and migrant students, and any other at-risk students will be served through the implementation of the scientifically-based practices discussed in the responses above, particularly with the MTSS program. A sampling of interventions in our coordinated system of supports that will support

the whole child development of our students, especially our special needs students, include:

- Mandating that all new incoming students attend a “clinic,” and all students attend a grade-level orientation before the start of school. Students learn about school rules and culture and meet their teachers and many of their peers. This allows us to focus immediately on teaching and learning on the first day of school.
- Instituting hour long basic skills math class (Intensive Math) for all incoming students with a need for it, that is grouped (flexibly) by ability. The curriculum for these two courses has been developed by a group of our senior math teachers. This curriculum is reviewed and adapted frequently based on student needs.
- Co-teaching where possible, with emphasis on Math and English classes.
- Ongoing, focused, differentiated classroom teaching with frequent formative assessments.
- Academic Advisors work directly with parents, students, and teachers to bring resources together that help provide targeted interventions for students in need.
- Academic Centers after school four days a week, typically for writing, math, and science. Students can get individualized and personalized help from talented teachers and student tutors on specific assignments and general skills development.
- Special education students also may have Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Plan (PBIS) developed in accordance with a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), which take into consideration academic, physical and medical, mental health, and family/community support in developing plans for preventing problem situations, providing instruction in how to develop positive behaviors, acknowledging desired behaviors, and coordinating systems of care. We recognize the PBIS plans can help reduce disciplinary referrals, increase instructional time, improve social emotional development, increase student engagement — all of which can lead to improved learning outcomes.
- One-on-one college counseling for all juniors and seniors.
- Freire has a breakfast, lunch, and after-school snack program. All food meets federal guidelines.
- Peer mediation program where students are trained in the skills of mediation in order to mediate conflict presenting their peers, all with the aim of preventing violence of any kind as well as restoring the community where harm was done.
- Individual therapy to any and all students who request it, as well as family therapy, both at no cost to families.
- A one-to-one computing program, where every student is provided a Chromebook for use in school and outside of school, plus access to advanced technology in the building.
- Robust after-school and summer programs to enrich learning, engage students in their particular areas of interest, explore students to new opportunities, and allow kids to create and grow.

Our culture supports an environment where we are all learners, we are all growing, and we are all encouraged to ask for help when we need it. These interventions are just some of the ways Freire Schools provide that help, and they have proven successful at FCSW and in our Philadelphia high schools. Our culture and these interventions will ensure that every student at

FCSN has access to the programs and services they need in order to be successful.

1.3.I: Student Discipline [14 Del. C. §512(6)-(7) and (11), 14 Del. C. § 4112F]

1. What will be the key elements of the school discipline policy, and how will it support the school culture that you describe above? Include plans regarding limitations on seclusion and restraint with respect to all students, including training and reporting requirements in accordance with 14 Del. C. § 4112F and related regulations at 14 DE Admin. Code § 610.

Everything we do inside the discipline realm comes from a place of love and learning. Holding each other accountable is an act of love. With this as our foundation, three primary policies will govern the discipline policy at FCSN: (1) Code of Conduct, (2) Formal Hearing/Expulsion Policy, and (3) Nonviolence Policy and Commitment to Peace. Other relevant policies include Bullying and Cyberbullying (see our response above), Anti-Hazing, Teen Dating Violence, as well as Corporal Punishment, Seclusion, and Restraint; Positive Behavior Support; and Discipline of Students with Disabilities. The Code of Conduct details the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations that govern the conduct of all students during the time they are under the jurisdiction of the School. Disciplinary procedures including student and parent rights compliant with 14 DE Admin. Code § 614 and § 616 are detailed in the Hearing/Expulsion Policy. We include all of the relevant student- and family-facing policies, including student rights and responsibilities, in our Student & Family Handbook, which we post on our website and distribute and explain to all students and families annually pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 605. Please see Appendix E for a draft student handbook for FCSN. This handbook draft is based upon what we currently do at FCSW and will be updated as appropriate between now and the fall of 2023.

FCSN, like all Freire campuses, will adopt a Nonviolence Policy and Commitment to Peace (NVP). Nonviolence has come to be a way of life inside Freire Schools, driven in large part by the students themselves at our flagship school in Philadelphia who worked with school leadership in 1999 to develop our NVP. This policy envisioned our schools to be places where teachers could safely teach and students could securely learn and affirmed to our students, staff, and parents that Freire Schools is committed to safety and that all community members are bound together in trust and mutual respect.

The NVP has been refined over the years, and we are currently in a network-wide review and revision process in alignment with our antiracism efforts. Going into the 2021-22 school year, all Freire schools adopted an Interim Nonviolence Policy in which we introduced restorative practices as a way to respond to acts of violence and proactive supports to prevent violence. This school year, a network-wide working group of students, Culture Team leaders, and school and network leadership will continue the review of our NVP, reflect on the implementation of restorative practices in our schools, and use qualitative interviews of students and staff and quantitative data to revise the NVP for 2022-23 and years to come. This is the version FCSN will adopt. The goal of the revised NVP is to prevent violence and ensure that our policy and practices humanize rather than criminalize our students and to develop restorative support

systems as part of our commitment to peace. In developing our revised NVP, we are guided by the following non-negotiables:

- Step 1: Everyone is and stays loved
- Step 2: Prevent, teach, practice, develop/educate students and staff
- Step 3: Humanize (See, Hear, and Believe) while holding high expectations
- Step 4: Teach and learn (instruction and curriculum must be meaningful)
- Step 5: If violence still occurs, build humanity, learn from and with, and restore while holding accountable
- Step 6: Educate more deeply with a 6-8-week course for those who continue to violate the NVP.
- Step 7: Everyone is and stays loved

The word “discipline” comes from the Latin “disciplina” meaning “instruction given, teaching, learning, knowledge.” Discipline at FCSN will have an intentional teaching and learning element, helping students learn from their actions and take ownership of their decisions and resulting consequences/benefits. Programs that incorporate learning, accountability, and student voice include:

- **Restorative Practices:** A loving community must develop the ability to address breaches in trust and the harm that they cause in a loving way. Freire Schools is increasingly adopting restorative practices into our response to disciplinary infractions at our schools. These restorative practices are a collaborative process in which we aim to understand the harm caused by a misbehavior or act of violence and put it right. It encourages our students to show love in the form of empathy as they reflect individually and as a group on how to constantly improve, heal, and value one another. Examples of this at FCSW which FCSN will draw upon include restorative circles, how we deliver consequences with students in disciplinary situations, and the After-School Intervention program.
- **Peer Mediation:** One of Freire Schools’ signature programs with regard to school culture (and an example of a proactive student support) is our Peer Mediation program. Freire uses a program based on mutual respect, de-escalation, and conflict resolution that was developed in-house to specifically support our positive culture and peaceful community. The program provides a way for students, staff, and community members to engage in conflict resolution in a nonviolent way. Students are empowered to assist their peers in creating solutions to conflicts as they arise. Freire community members can refer themselves, other students, or other staff members to peer mediation. Students and staff members are trained in the mediation program at the start of every school year by the school’s trained staff members. Please see Appendix D for a copy of our Peer Mediation Program Manual.

Other proactive student supports include New Student Clinic, instruction in conflict resolution (including generative conflict), and connecting students and families with resources such as family therapy. Our staff will approach discipline from a place of empathy, looking at each disciplinary situation to gain understanding of why kids made the decisions they made so that

they can guide students to learn from their mistakes.

Seclusion and Restraint: In accordance with 14 Del. Code § 4112 F and 14 DE Admin. Code § 610, FCSN will have a policy that establishes standards and procedures to ensure the safety of all individuals around using seclusion or restraint. We completely prohibit any corporal punishment (per 14 Del. Code § 702) or use of chemical restraints. Mechanical restraints or seclusion are also completely prohibited unless the School has obtained a waiver from DDOE for a particular student. Staff members may use physical restraints only if they have been properly trained, they use only the amount of force necessary, there is a risk of significant and imminent risk of bodily harm, and other conditions of 14 DE Admin. Code § 610.3.2 are met. However, in rare instances where needed, we may still use reasonable and necessary force with students to protect the bodily safety of the student or others. In order to be qualified to use physical restraints, a staff member must, in addition to restraint training, receive annual training in the use of crisis prevention and intervention techniques. We also designate a staff member to be responsible for reporting any use of physical restraint to DDOE, and that person must complete initial and repeat training in restraint reporting as provided by DDOE.

2. *How will the discipline policy be practiced in the classroom in order to ensure that students are working on task and focused on learning?*

The most important thing we can do to minimize disciplinary issues and ensure that students and staff are working on task and focused on learning will be to support staff in ensuring that all classes are meaningful each and every day. A positive learning environment that sets high academic expectations, keeps all students engaged in their learning, and maximizes time on task encourages students to step up and take ownership of their learning. This, in turn, prevents and minimizes behavioral issues that might otherwise lead to disciplinary action. We seek to create a meaningful learning environment worthy of our kids at FCSN.

Freire Schools is also breaking down the divide between instructional staff and support staff, with all staff members viewing themselves as educators responsible for using their positions to raise the academic bar for kids and amplify our mission. As such, our Culture Team, who is directly responsible for implementing the School's discipline policy, will receive professional development on what is expected of classroom instruction when content is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. While our Culture Team members are not expected to be instructional experts, they will know what core actions should be observable in a classroom. When those actions are not present — and the teaching and learning environment is no longer meaningful, and thus, vulnerable to negative student behavior — they will be authorized to reach out to instructional leaders so the teacher can receive support.

Finally, students are more likely to focus on learning and avoid behavioral interruptions when behavioral expectations are communicated clearly, frequently, and visibly and when students can observe rules being enforced fairly and consistently. Behavioral expectations are published in the annual Student & Family Handbook, posted in classrooms, and reviewed frequently in morning announcements. The Culture Team will be charged with working proactively with kids

to ensure they understand. And, like all Freire Schools campuses, FCSN will develop its own system for rewarding positive behavior.

3. How will you ensure that minority students and students with disabilities are not disproportionately represented in disciplinary procedures such as suspensions and expulsions? How will you measure or track this data?

Freire Schools is a family where we primarily serve Black and Brown students and are committed to antiracism within our community and to doing our part to build an antiracist future. One of the most significant ways that racism has played out in schools is through disproportionate discipline, particularly of Black students. We recognize that it is critical to be intentional about disciplinary practices for all students, and particularly students of color, to prevent potentially lifelong consequences like funneling children into the school-to-prison pipeline. The intent of new statutory provisions at 14 Del. Code § 703 beginning in 2019 shared the same overarching goal. The annual reports DDOE generates per 14 Del. Code § 703 regarding out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, alternative school assignments, and in-school suspensions disaggregated by subgroup are important, as is similar monitoring by DDOE per 14 DE Admin. Code § 923.70. Potentially impacted student subgroups are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, grade level, EL status, disability status and the goal is to have fewer than 15 suspensions per 100 students in any subgroup. In accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 927.46, we follow all DDOE processes for the collection and examination of data to determine if significant disproportionality based on race and ethnicity is occurring in the incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions, for students with disabilities.

While end-of-year reports provide a very meaningful reflection point for School leaders as well as for DDOE to consider intervention, waiting until that point puts the School in a reactive posture rather than a far-preferable proactive position. By entering disciplinary events in eSchool, we are able to easily run disaggregated reports periodically throughout the year. The FSNO performance management team provides extra person power and data analysis skills to support our school leaders. When reviewing discipline data, we are able to compare trends to prior school years as well as to other schools in the Freire network to give school leaders multiple performance reference points. If there are any nascent worrying trends pointing to discipline that may become disproportionate or at a high number of removals overall, the Dean of Students can convene with school leaders and other stakeholders to probe for causes and implement responsive practices or training. We also periodically review policies, practices, and procedures for equity across identities and will make adjustments or provide re-training for staff even when our data has not exceeded a particular regulatory threshold. In doing so, we consider USED and DDOE guidance, such as the March 2017 OSEP Questions and Answers on IDEA Part B — Significant Disproportionality and the 3/10/21 Delaware Guidance and Procedures for Calculating Significant Disproportionality. We also rely on the best research and resources when developing and adjusting our practices, such as The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools (Amstutz and Mullet, 2005).

4. Who will be responsible for implementing the school's discipline policy? What position will be responsible for electronically reporting discipline incidents in accordance with state requirements?

Just as we view all staff as educators, we expect all staff members to contribute to developing and maintaining a nonviolent and peaceful school community and implement FCSN's discipline policy. The Dean of Students will be directly responsible for leading the School's discipline and culture efforts. As the school grows, the Dean will be joined on the Culture Team by additional support staff (e.g. counselor, restorative engagement coordinator, additional deans). This team will be expected to collaborate with the Emotional Support team, especially in providing the proactive supports needed for a nonviolent community. The Dean of Students will collaborate with the Director of Special Education whenever a student with a disability makes a serious infraction or a series of problematic infractions to ensure compliance with relevant requirements (see our response to the next question for more information). The Dean of Students will also be responsible for electronically reporting discipline issues to DDOE's School Climate Office in accordance with state requirements. The Freire Schools Network Office will ensure compliance and provide support to them.

5. How will the school ensure that staff are adequately trained and properly implementing state and federal law related to the discipline of students with disabilities? Include a description of the school's specific action steps to ensure compliance with the disciplinary provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Delaware statutes and regulations.

(Note! If approved, you will be required to submit a student Code of Conduct prior to opening in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code § 600.)

Our discipline policies and practices comply with requirements including 14 Del. Code § 701 and 14 DE Admin. Code § 614 and § 616 for all students, 20 U.S.C. 1415(k) and 34 C.F.R. § 300.530 et seq. for special education students, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 104 for students protected by Section 504.

Whenever we propose a disciplinary removal for a student with a disability that would constitute a change in placement as defined by 14 DE Admin. Code § 926.36, we follow all required procedures. This applies when the proposed removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days or there have been a series of removals totaling 10 cumulative school days and that constitute a pattern or impact the student in any of the ways listed in § 36.1.3. We conduct a manifestation determination as required by 14 DE Admin. Code § 926.30 and, pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 926.3, provide prior written notice to the parent no less than five days before the proposed date of placement. If the outcome of a manifestation determination is that the student's behavior was a result of their disability or the School's failure to implement the IEP, we first either conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and develop a new Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Plan (PBIS Plan, also referred to as PBSP) or, if applicable, revisit the student's existing PBIS Plan. Then, unless special circumstances apply or the parent

agrees to the change in placement, rather than impose the disciplinary change in placement, we support the student in returning to their existing educational setting. Regardless of whether the student ultimately changes placement, we continue to provide for participation in the general education curriculum and progress toward meeting the goals set out in the IEP in the least restrictive environment that meets the individual needs of the student.

The Dean of Students (and other members of the culture team once hired) will take the DDOE-provided courses “Introduction to Mandatory Reporting & Discipline Regulations” for staff new to this area or “School Climate & Discipline Program Refresher & Update Training” for experienced staff. Culture staff also take advantage of web tutorials on the Climate & Discipline DDOE webpage. FSNO compliance staff work with the Dean of Students and the culture team first to ensure that the School’s discipline policies meet all requirements, then to ensure that key school leaders fully understand how to implement discipline in a compliant manner. The Dean of Students, responsible for compliance with the disciplinary provisions for all students, works closely with the Director of Special Education, who is responsible for compliance with disciplinary provisions specific to students with disabilities. Together, the Dean of Students and the Director of Special Education provide training to all other administrators, teachers, and staff on a recurring basis so that all School employees appreciate the seriousness of appropriate discipline and have a sufficient understanding of key compliance components. This fits in with our whole-school approach to culture and discipline as described in response to question 2 above.

1.4 Performance Management

14 Del. C. §§ 512(4)-(7)

1. 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 contract.

Please see section 1.3.B, Student Performance Goals, for details regarding our academic goals under the DSSF. Operationally and financially, our goals are to achieve overall ratings of “Meets Standard” on the Organizational and Financial Performance Frameworks. FCSW has achieved this every year since opening and we expect to be able to continue doing so at FCSN.

Each summer, the Head of School will analyze academic, school climate, and stakeholder engagement data from the prior school year. Based on the strengths and weaknesses identified and using the DSSF as a guide, they will set academic goals for the upcoming school year and create an action plan to drive progress toward those goals. The goals and action plan (incorporated in our Title I Schoolwide Plan annually) will be presented to the FSNCC Board of Directors for discussion at the start of each school year. At each regular Board meeting, the Head of School will give a status update on performance, using a consistent dashboard that tracks progress for each goal. Internally, the School leadership team will meet regularly with the FSNO for 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 will be 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. Further, with the addition of a second school, the FSNCC Board will create an Education Committee for the joint Board to provide oversight on academic performance to include at least one Board member and the Head of School of each campus (non-voting) or other duly appointed instructional leader from each campus.

Data for these meetings will typically be accessed through a “live” dashboard tool that enables leaders to drill down to the individual student level and see trends for different cohorts and subgroups. At the end of each academic year, the School leaders will 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 will also review the annual DSSF results and the School’s Annual Report to DOE at a Board meeting each fall throughout the term of the charter contract.

2. 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.

FCSN will collaborate with the Freire Schools Network Office (FSNO) Performance Management Team (PMT) to collect and analyze academic achievement data. The PMT is composed of a Director of Performance Management (Lilian Wehbe Kobeissi) and a Director of Data Analytics (Tammy Khieu) supervised by the FSNO Managing Director (Leigh Botwinik) and frequently supported by the IT Systems Administrator (Del West). The primary data sources will be Renaissance Star benchmark assessments in math and reading, Study Island benchmark assessment in biology, DeSSA Biology, DeSSA Social Studies, PSAT and SAT tests, and unit tests in core academic subjects. This data will allow leaders and teachers to track progress towards goals, identify academic standards/skills that need reteaching, and identify students who need academic intervention. The PMT is responsible for providing the assessment platforms and data information systems that make the collection and analysis of data as efficient as possible and compiling dashboards and reports that will be shared with the school community at Board meetings. The Head of Academics is responsible for ensuring smooth test administration and working with teachers to use this data to improve instruction.

3. 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.

We pride ourselves on our ability to act swiftly to make adaptations and adjustments to programming and instruction based on student data. In particular, during our first few years of operation, FCSN will be engaged in a near-constant process of refining and improving our curriculum and program in order to best serve our students. We hold high expectations for students and staff and take corrective action as a result of identified needs. If FCSN does not meet student academic achievement goals at any level, the Head of School will collaborate with the rest of the school leadership team and the FSNO to reach a solution best for the School. This process will involve 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.

4. 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.

FCSN will utilize the applications found in the Department's IMS, including eSchool and IEP+, to collect data on student demographics, attendance, school climate, student grades, test scores and more. We feed these data into a school performance dashboard, provided by the FSNO, that allows school leaders to monitor the data in real time. In conjunction with the FSNO, 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 FSNO 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 to review performance against the DSSF academic, organizational, and financial frameworks. FCSN leaders will take advantage of professional development and documentation provided by DOE and the FSNO, which has experience supporting FCSW with these data systems.

5. Describe how the School Leadership Team will oversee and monitor compliance with statutory requirements as measured by the Organizational Framework. Include any additional organizational goals and targets that the school will have. State the goals clearly in terms of the measures or assessments that the school plans to use.

The Board of Directors, school leaders, and FSNO will work together to ensure that FCSN maintains a safe school environment and is legally and operationally compliant in all respects. Our goal will be to achieve an annual overall rating of "Meets Standard" on the Organizational Performance Framework. The FSNO will take a leading role in monitoring changes or additions to statutory requirements, sending notices and reminders to school leaders, and reporting to governmental entities. The FSNO will also take a primary role in implementation for indicators in the area of governance including ensuring compliance with rules around Board composition, public meetings, Board member training, and the conflict of interest policy. The Head of School will take a lead role on implementation for indicators pertaining to the educational program, including fidelity to our mission, maintaining appropriate instructional minutes, student participation in all appropriate assessments, and implementing MTSS, as well as those pertaining to students' rights and teacher certification, and those pertaining to the facility, transportation, health and safety. Once per year, the FSNO will conduct a formal site visit alongside the Head of School to evaluate compliance in one or more areas covered by the organizational framework. This process, along with any feedback received from the Charter

Schools Office during the charter evaluation process, will ensure that any areas for improvement are identified and addressed in a timely manner. The Board will monitor organizational performance through regular reports by FCSN and FSNO leaders at public Board meetings.

6. Describe any mission-specific academic goal(s) that the school plans to use. State your mission-specific goal(s) clearly in terms of the measure(s) to be used, the rationale(s) for each measure, and the targets that you plan to use to assess student academic performance against these goals. (Note! mission-specific goals are optional unless you are proposing to serve students at-risk of academic failure.)

With our focus on providing a college-preparatory education, our mission-specific academic goal and target is for 85-90% or more of students to receive admission to one or more colleges or universities.

7. If you are proposing to serve students who are at-risk of academic failure, pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 275.4.2.1.5, describe the expected performance of each student on the State's mandatory assessments in each grade during the initial charter period and what, if any, portion of the Performance Framework (see links below) shall or shall not apply to the school, or shall be modified to more appropriately measure the performance of the school.

As described throughout our application, the Freire Schools program is built upon the idea of a college preparatory education that is accessible to any and every student. Among these are students entering high school behind grade level, students behind on credit accumulation, students with disabilities, students experiencing housing insecurity, migrant students, economically disadvantaged students, trans and gender nonconforming students, ELs, and students with other experiences. We believe these students will comprise the majority of our students, and therefore the overall performance goals are also the goals for these groups of students collectively (See our response to question 1.3.B.1 for our student performance goals). In addition, we are not pursuing an admissions preference for students at risk of academic failure under 14 Del. Code § 506(b)(3)(d) nor exemptions from or modification to any part of the performance framework under 14 DE Admin. Code § 275.4.2.1.5. As we believe at-risk subgroups will make up the majority of our students without a need for any preferences, exemptions, or modifications to serve these populations, we will not have any separate performance goals for at-risk subgroups.

1.5 Staffing**14 Del. C. § 512(6)****1.5.A: Staff Structure [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]**

1. Provide, as Attachment 11, organizational charts that show the school governance, management, and staffing structure in Year 1 and at full expansion.

The following are attached in response to this question:

Attachment 11a: FCSN Year 1 Org Chart

Attachment 11b: FCSN Year 4 Org Chart

Attachment 11c: Freire School Network Office Org Chart

Attachment 11d: Accompanying FCSN Position Descriptions

2. If the school is part of a network of schools and/or would contract with a Charter Management Company or other education management provider, clearly show the network/provider's role in the organizational structure of the school. Explain how the relationship between the Board and the school administration will be managed.

FCSW currently contracts with Freire Schools Collaborative (what we call the Freire Schools Network Office, or FSNO), a nonprofit Charter Management Organization. When this charter application is approved, FCSW's corporate entity will change its name to Freire Schools New Castle County (FSNCC) and its Board will oversee both FCSW and FCSN. The Board of FSNCC will then enter into a similar, separate contract with the FSNO for services to FCSN. The CEO of FSNO, the Board President, and Heads of School work closely to keep the relationship between parties legally sound and thriving. The FSNO's role is reflected in the organizational charts provided as Attachment 11 and described further in Attachment 25 (CMO supplement).

As reflected in the org charts and Attachment 25 (the CMO Supplement, which includes a draft contract), the FSNO will not exercise direct control over the day-to-day management of the School. The Board contracts with the FSNO to bolster its oversight capacity, coach and grow leaders, and provide specialized back-end support. Please see Attachment 25 for more information.

1.5.B: Staffing Plans, Management, and Evaluation [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]

1. Explain the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees, including whether the employees will be at-will and whether the school will use employment contracts. If the school will use contracts, explain the nature and purpose of the contracts.

We employ all faculty, staff, and leaders at-will without employment contracts. We extend offer letters which lay out the salary, start date, end date of the school year, whether the position is 10 or 12 months, core requirements, and performance expectations for continuing employment. Our offer letters as well as our Employee Handbook establish that all employment is at-will.

We follow all applicable federal law prohibiting discrimination in employment, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 (ADA), the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) and applicable implementing regulations of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). We also follow applicable Delaware laws, including the Delaware Discrimination in Employment Act (DDEA), Persons with Disabilities Employment Protections Act (PDEPA) and other applicable provisions of 19 Del. Code Chap. 7.

In addition, we follow all applicable federal law regarding employment practices and pay withholding such as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the Social Security Act (SSA), the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA), and applicable implementing regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor. We also follow applicable Delaware laws, including the Volunteer Emergency Responders Job Protection Act, Delaware Whistleblowers' Protection Act, Workers' Compensation (19 Del. Code Chap. 23), Unemployment Compensation (19 Del. Code Chap. 33), and 14 Del. Code § 1333 regarding parental time off for birth or adoption.

2. Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system. Explain the school's strategy for retaining high-performing educators.

Salaries: Based on our history with FCSW and an understanding about the competitiveness of the teacher job market, we have budgeted the average teacher salary at FCSN at \$50,000, with most teachers anticipated to start around \$42,000 and more advanced teachers starting at \$58,000. For all staff, salaries range from \$25,000 (paraprofessional) to \$125,000 (administration), with an average of \$50,000. Exact starting salary is based on a number of factors including prior experience, education, and content area. Salary increases will be based on the record of personal and institutional progress on performance goals and contingent on

the availability of funds. Salary increases most frequently occur at the time of annual reviews but can occur at any time. From time to time, the organization is in the position to give bonuses. For example, in the 2020-21 school year, FCSW awarded staff mid-year bonuses in recognition of the critical work they were doing in keeping kids learning and connected during COVID-19. The parameters of bonuses vary.

Benefits: FCSN employees will be considered employees of the State of Delaware and will thus be eligible for the state's comprehensive benefits package, including group health insurance (medical, dental, and vision) at no cost and 12 weeks of paid parental leave. Pensions will be established through the DE pension system in accordance with law.

Educator Retention: At Freire Schools, we have always prioritized retaining our high-performing teachers and staff, and teacher retention strategies have become critical to our school's success with the pandemic exacerbating the teacher shortage nationwide. From supporting teacher well-being to promoting teacher engagement, FCSN will employ retention strategies that have proven successful at FCSW and across the Freire Schools network, including:

- Rewarding teachers and staff for high performance with additional compensation and growth opportunities. For example, Freire Schools launched the Freire School Leader Fellowship for staff interested in exploring leadership as well as current leaders developing their leadership skills. Sixteen fellows from across the network are participating in ten sessions this year on a variety of topics including vision/mission leadership, change leadership, achieving personal/professional balance, and special education.
- Developing staff so they feel equipped to execute our academic program, support students socially and emotionally, and contribute to a positive school culture. This includes intentional professional development and coaching of newly hired staff, promoting professional learning communities for instructional staff, and extensive diversity, equity, and inclusion training.
- Creating a teacher pipeline. In 2020-21, Freire Schools launched a teacher residency program to recruit and develop Freire Schools alumni and other recent college graduates interested in entering the education profession. Residents learn what it means to be a teacher by working at a Freire Schools campus while completing a two-year teacher preparation program at Relay Graduate School of Education culminating in earning teacher certification and a master's degree. With an emphasis on Freire Schools alumni, who know Freire Schools better than anyone else, this residency program is a key part of our recruitment and retention plan as well as our efforts to recruit more Black and Brown instructional staff.
- Monitoring teacher retention and attrition carefully so that we understand the factors contributing to attrition. This includes holding exit interviews when staff leave, as well as our new strategy of holding "stay interviews" among staff who decide to return each year to get a sense of why employees stay and what might prompt them to leave.

3. Describe the plan and timeline for recruiting and selecting the teaching staff and other educators/professional staff. Describe the school's plan for meeting the educator certification requirements of the Delaware Charter Law, 14 Del. C. § 507, which includes ensuring that non-certified educators are participating in a Delaware approved alternative certification program. Describe any pre-service training that prepares new educators while providing an additional staff screening period for the School Leadership Team.

Freire Schools has a multitude of partnerships within Delaware and surrounding areas which aid in the recruitment and hiring of certified, qualified teachers and professional staff. These partnerships range from local universities to community organizations that share our mission of using education as a tool for social justice and student advocacy. Regardless of whether we are able to have an in-person presence at these institutions, our open positions and events are shared with the Career Services departments at universities in the surrounding areas, and posted on Handshake, a networking platform for university students and alumni. Additional platforms that we heavily utilize for sourcing and job posting are LinkedIn, Frontline Education (formerly named Applitrack), Indeed, and Google for Jobs. We conduct university and community outreach in tandem and have established a consistent flow of communication with community organizations and non-profit organizations including Teach for America and City Year.

Through our strengthened university partnerships, we have established a “grow-your-own” pipeline with Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay GSE). The Freire Schools Teaching Residency Program allows us to onboard Freire Schools alumni who are recent college graduates, as well as competitive external candidates, onto our team for a two-year commitment while they obtain certification from Relay GSE. During the first year of their program, residents receive mentorship from one of our certified teachers, while completing concurrent coursework from Relay GSE to obtain a Secondary Content certification. During the second year, residents become full-time teachers, and are able to integrate their learning while completing their final year in Relay GSE. In order to ensure the accessibility of this program, we provide a tuition contribution for each resident to obtain certification. This program increases new hire training, support, and retention, while introducing a subset of teachers who are already familiar with Freire Schools’ culture and the lives of our students. Our current students gain well-informed mentorship, while our residents gain access to mentorship and certification to pursue a career in education.

To ensure that we are hiring quality candidates, we use a rigorous yet streamlined four-step interview process. After candidates apply to job postings and provide their resumes and additional pertinent information (like current certifications), the FSNO Talent Team first screens applicants and ranks them on a scale from 0 (unqualified) to 3 (top prospect). For each vacancy, our ideal candidate has the appropriate Delaware certification as well as a minimum of two years of experience working with diverse student populations. Our second step is to invite candidates who meet our requirements to a phone screening, which probes for four pillars: mission fit, coachability, ability to overcome adversity, and teacher presence. After successful interviews, candidates progress to the third step, which is a demonstration lesson and final

interview conducted by our leadership team and a subset of teachers, students, and staff. The FSNO Director of Talent Acquisition provides rigorous hiring bias training for all leaders to ensure that candidates have a safe and equitable interview experience. As the fourth and final step of the interview process, we gather professional references, verify credentials in DEEDS, and extend an offer. We conduct this comprehensive hiring process within 14 days of application to ensure a swift turnaround on a decision for each candidate. In turn, this optimizes candidates' experience, promoting the retention and cultivation of our strongest candidates.

We expect all professional staff in certificated roles to have appropriate Delaware educator certification and meet all other relevant legal requirements. If an incoming educator does not have certification or is not already enrolled in an approved alternative certification program, we require a copy of the employee's undergraduate transcript and documentation of any prior experience and Praxis results. We also require such employees to complete a written certification plan which will include enrollment in a program like Relay GSE, University of Delaware's ARTC or MPCP, Delaware State University's ARTC MAT, or Wilmington University's ARTC in special education. Our certification plans outline the steps an employee will take to become certified, and failure to adhere to the plan can result in termination of employment. FSNO's Talent Team works closely with school employees who are on certification plans to keep up with graduate credit accumulation, summative evaluations, and engagement with mentoring. The Talent Team also monitors DEEDS regularly to ensure that all steps are being documented with DDOE.

Just as FCSN's incoming students participate in a New Student Clinic prior to the start of the school year, incoming staff members participate in a week-long orientation program in August prior to schoolwide professional development. At this orientation, we introduce incoming staff to Freire Schools values and the core aspects of our culture for both staff and students. The program also gives new staff members the opportunity to ask questions and get to know school leaders and mentors. Freire Schools' teacher induction program continues throughout the first year of a staff member's work. We provide newly hired teachers with a coach throughout their full first year as well as a variety of effective professional development sessions with their school and the larger network-wide community.

We have already begun informally recruiting staff for FCSN and have identified the three primary school leaders. If this charter application is approved, staff recruiting will be fully in motion by late 2022 and continue through spring of 2023 so that by July 1, 2023, we have filled all positions for FCSN's first year of operation.

4. Outline the school's procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including the school's process for conducting criminal background checks.

Any decisions that we make regarding the hiring and dismissal of staff are driven by the best interests of our students and the desire to provide a safe, engaging school environment for students and staff. We outline our hiring process in detail in response to question 3 above. All

offers of employment are contingent on checking the DSCYF Child Protection Registry and receipt of SBI/FBI State and Federal Criminal Background Check per 31 Del. Code § 309 and 14 DE Admin. Code § 745. This also applies to any contractors or volunteers who would have direct access to students. Should these checks indicate any questionable record, the Head of School makes a determination regarding the fitness of the individual to work in a position where they will have direct access to students. The Head of School will consult with the FSNO and legal counsel when necessary. Employees must also submit a payroll form, I-9, and W-4, and sign off on our Employee Handbook, Confidentiality Commitment, Sexual Harassment Policy, and Anti-Bullying Policy.

We are committed to a progressive discipline policy that allows FCSN's school leaders to respond to violations of school policies in a consistent, appropriate, and nondiscriminatory manner. Depending on the nature and severity of a violation of school policy, we reserve the right to administer including a written warning, suspension, and/or termination as either a first or subsequent step in the disciplinary process.

5. Describe how the School Leadership Team will use the Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS) as required by Delaware Code and regulations or propose an alternative system. Also, explain how the school will use educator evaluation processes to provide support for educators and ultimately make decisions about retention, promotion, and advancement.

Explain how the school will handle unsatisfactory educator performance, as well as educator changes and turnover.

FCSN proposes to use the same alternative evaluation system for educators that is currently approved and in place at FCSW. This system uses a tool called the Deeper Learning Rubric (DLR), which evaluates teachers on five domains: Relationships, Community of Learning, Meaningful Materials & Instruction, Student Thinking & Engagement, and Demonstration of Learning. Further, the alternative evaluation system also utilizes DPAS Component V as a core method of determining success via measuring student outcomes. This system provides extensive feedback for teachers as well as coaching and opportunities for growth, and is a core component of how leaders decide on retention, promotion, and advancement. As detailed in the alternative evaluation system, educators who continue to struggle on any domains will receive differentiated support, including further coaching and observation and a written improvement plan. Continued unsatisfactory performance may result in termination. A copy of the DLR/DPAS is included as Appendix B.

These evaluations are also opportunities for positive feedback for strong teachers, and retention conversations during these meetings are critical to preventing staff turnover. When turnover does occur, the FSNO has a strong teacher recruitment team that is ready to quickly fill positions with strong teachers as described above.

Finally, other specialists and administrators will be evaluated using the state's DPAS evaluation system for specialists and administrators.

6. Explain how and when the Board will evaluate the Principal/School Leader. What evaluation tool will be used? What key performance criteria will be examined? How will student academic growth be factored into the Principal/School Leader's evaluation?

The Board contracts with the FSNO to support the school leader evaluation process. One of the FSNO's key areas of responsibility is accountability of school leaders. The FSNO will have responsibility for developing and training the Leadership Team as well as supporting the Board in evaluating the Head of School.

The Freire Schools Leadership Evaluation consists of both qualitative and quantitative metrics. Qualitatively, the evaluation tool has six domains: Effective Administration, Positive Culture, Interpersonal Skills, Academics, Operations, and Overall Leadership. Please see Appendix G for a copy of the complete rubric. Quantitatively, in the evaluation process we also consider specific school outcome data, including academic performance (based on the SAT, PSAT, DeSSA Social Studies, DeSSA Science, and STAR interim assessments), academic growth on all these assessments, survey data of students and staff, and student culture metrics such as suspensions and attendance.

7. What mechanisms or options will the Board leverage to address unsatisfactory leadership performance, should it occur, as well as turnover? What cut points within established metrics might trigger different courses of action in regards to the oversight of the Principal/School Leader?

The FSNO provides ongoing advice, coaching, and mentoring to the Head of School and leadership team on issues of leadership and management. If the Board reveals concerns about leadership's performance in its annual evaluation, or if the FSNO observes unsatisfactory performance, the FSNO will create necessary interventions. The Freire Schools Leadership Evaluation tool rates each metric on a four-point scale: Exceed Expectations, Meets Expectations, Needs Some Improvement, and Needs Much Improvement. Generally, any score of "needs some improvement" on a competency under one of the six domains of the Head of School Evaluation will trigger interventions (e.g. increased coaching, requirement for external professional development). Multiple competencies in the "needs some improvement" category, "needs some improvement" competencies that do not improve in a specified time period, or competencies ranking as "needs much improvement" are considered more severe and will warrant more extensive corrective actions and possible consideration for termination. Any Head of School action that puts student health and safety at risk, is unlawful or unethical, or jeopardizes the School's ability to meet its mission will also prompt a Board discussion of disciplinary action or termination.

In the event of turnover in the leadership team, the FSNO will determine selection criteria for a new school leader, recruit candidates, facilitate interviews involving multiple stakeholders (e.g. Board, staff, students, families, school leaders from other Freire Schools campuses), and recommend the nomination of a candidate to the FSNCC Board of Directors. The Freire School

Leader Fellowship is helping us develop a pipeline of talented and committed school leaders that will allow us to maintain mission continuity in the event of leadership turnover, and the FSNO will provide extensive coaching and mentoring for any new school leader.

1.5.C: Professional Development [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]

1. Describe the professional development plan, including standards and opportunities that will be offered to the staff. Identify who will be responsible for developing, leading, and evaluating professional development at the school. This description should explain how professional development for the faculty will support the educational program and build capacity to improve student achievement. The plan must include the following:

a. A schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what the focus will be during this induction period and how educators will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods;

b. The expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and an explanation of how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing plan will be structured to accommodate this plan. Specify when educators will have time for common planning or collaboration and how such time will typically be used;

c. An explanation of how professional development will be aligned with the interim (e.g. classroom, diagnostic, formative) assessments and staff evaluation processes, and how it will be adjusted during the year to address areas of need that are identified;

d. An explanation of how the professional development program will be evaluated to assess its effectiveness and success.

e. An explanation of the school's system for providing coaching and professional development for the School Leader. Explain how the school will know what coaching and professional development the School Leader needs.

A full scope and sequence of professional development, including timeline and focus areas, has been included as Appendix H1. A graphic explaining our inquiry cycles is included as Appendix H2. The Freire School Leader Fellowship, explained below, is included as Appendix H3. An example of PLC priorities and initiatives is included as Appendix H4. The Year 1 school calendar is included as Attachment 6 to show how professional development is incorporated into the year. Further details on specific aspects of professional development are below.

New Staff Induction: New Staff Induction starts prior to the beginning of the school year as new teachers and staff come together with administrators and selected veteran teachers for a week-long new staff training. This week focuses heavily on new teacher training, in which teachers come to know and understand Freire Schools' values as well as the core tenets of

teaching and learning through the lens of the Deeper Learning Rubric. This prepares them for the college-preparatory-level rigor that is expected in the curriculum.

At the conclusion of the week, teachers are assigned a mentor who will work with them all year. The content covered during new teacher training is built upon throughout the year during regularly scheduled sessions between the new teacher and their mentor, as well as professional development geared toward new teachers. Mentors work closely with new teachers to review student data, including exit tickets, results on common benchmark exams and other formative and summative data to compare to peers; lesson plans; and observation feedback; and to provide guidance and assistance where necessary and helpful. New teachers also participate in ongoing professional development alongside veteran teachers via regularly scheduled professional development sessions and professional learning communities. Depending on their role, non-teaching staff are either assigned a mentor or are closely coached through regular meetings with their supervisor to ensure success.

For Year 1, since all teachers are new to FCSN, new teacher induction has been rolled into the full-staff professional development taking place in August. Topics are outlined in Appendix H1.

Full Staff August Professional Development: In Year 1, all teachers and staff will have eleven days of professional development that are seven hours each from 8:00 to 3:00 (in future years with returning staff, full staff PD will be shortened to eight days). Topics are detailed in Appendix H1. Overall, the core focus areas include: Academics (focused around the deeper learning rubric), Student Culture (focused on equity, relationships, and creating common routines and structures), and core topics to meet the needs of exceptional learners (for instance, school leaders and special education designee will attend the Special Education Policies, Procedures, and Procedural Safeguards training offered by the DDOE, and then share that information with staff). FCSN school leaders and FSNO staff will lead training, sometimes supported by leaders from other existing Freire schools.

School Year Professional Development: Once the school year is underway, we structure the school calendar to include seven full days of professional development throughout the year (see school calendar in Attachment 6). These seven days are structured in inquiry cycles, with three cycles occurring throughout the year. Inquiry cycles are structured protocols that allow teachers and staff to ask the right questions of their practice, learn strategies and techniques, form and implement action plans, assess results, and then continue the cycle again for continuous improvement. These learning cycles will in particular align around interim assessments (e.g. STAR Benchmarking assessments, as well as diagnostic and formative assessments). In each inquiry cycle, data from these interim assessments and other measures is collected in order to inform selection of core strategies and priorities. Further, teachers analyze results of these assessments and adjust teaching accordingly. The professional development schedule is flexible and may be changed according to the specific needs revealed through the interim assessments.

In addition to these full days, staff meetings occur for an hour after school once a week, with

time devoted to common planning and collaboration for departments and/or grade level teams following the schedule shown in Appendix H1. To highlight one use of this time, department teams will meet every other week in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) focused on excellent teaching and learning in their content area. We believe that some of the most impactful professional development is focused on a teacher's specific content area. Thus, our PLC's dive deep into standards, rigorous questioning, individual texts, and lesson planning. Tools such as the Achieve the Core Instructional Practice Guides are often the foundation of these sessions, and help our teachers see a vision of great instruction and are used by coaches to conduct walkthroughs. Partner organizations, like Rethinc or Learning Lab are brought in to help facilitate sessions, and often teachers will meet in community with teachers across the whole Freire network to collaborate on teaching the units that all are simultaneously teaching. For an example of this work in PLC's, see Appendix H4 for the Freire Network ELA PLC Values, Priorities, and Initiatives.

Assessment of Professional Development: School leadership, supported by FSNO staff, will evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development program as a whole. The adult learning experiences that occur during professional development need to transfer into observable changes in classroom instruction and, by extension, increases in student performance. We gauge the effectiveness of professional development using indicators such as classroom observations and evaluations, state assessment scores, interim assessments, graduation rates, and college matriculation rates.

For professional development focused on school culture, we measure effectiveness by reviewing student and staff culture survey data, as well as other metrics such as school attendance and disciplinary infractions. Staff members also rate the effectiveness of professional development at the conclusion of each day. School leadership will use these critiques to improve future professional development.

Professional Development for the School Leader: As described in response to questions 1.5.B.6-7, the FSNO will support professional learning and growth for the Head of School. This professional learning will be aligned to Freire's six leadership domains: Effective Administration, Positive Culture, Interpersonal Skills, Academics, Operations, and Overall Leadership. When developing our school leaders, we also pull from other resources, including the Learning Forward professional standards for education leaders, Leverage Leadership, the Management Institute, and others.

Professional development will take place in a variety of times and places, including regular weekly check-ins with leadership at the FSNO including CEO Kelly Davenport and other staff who are former school leaders and experienced in leadership development. Further, the Head of School will participate in the school leader cohort of the Freire School Leader Fellowship, a program where school leaders across the network come together roughly every two months to learn, grow, and collaborate on a range of topics including Leading with Vision, Academic Leadership, and Distributed Leadership. A sample scope and sequence of this program is included as Appendix H4. This Fellowship also includes the aspiring leaders cohort referenced

earlier in this narrative.

Freire school leaders also regularly visit one another's schools, as well as other schools in the area, to learn from colleagues. Finally, the school leader will also participate in a variety of other conferences and professional development of their choice that support their growth objectives throughout the area and across the country. Past examples include the Delaware Vision Conference, Lead for Delaware, Deloitte's Courageous Principals training, Schools to Learn From, and more.

1.6 Governance and Management.

14 Del. C. §§ 512(1)-(2), (6) and (9)

1.6.A: Charter Management Company

(Note! If the applicant plans to contract with a Charter Management Company, the applicant must complete the Charter Management Company and Highly Successful Charter School Operator Supplement in addition to the application narrative. The Supplement includes the Highly Successful School Operator Capacity section as well as the Portfolio Review and Performance Record section.)

FCSN plans to contract with a charter management company (i.e. Freire Schools Collaborative) as described in Section 2.8.

1.6.B: Legal Status and Governing Documents [14 Del. C. § 512(2)]

1. Identify the name of the organizing corporation, date of incorporation, and names of the corporation's officers and the office held by each.

The organizing corporation is currently named "Freire Charter School Wilmington, Inc." and was incorporated on October 1, 2013 with Kelly Davenport as its incorporator. The corporation currently operates Freire Charter School Wilmington. If the new charter application for Freire Charter School Newark is approved, the corporate entity will change its name to Freire Schools New Castle County (FSNCC) and oversee both FCSW and FCSN. The current officers are Clint Walker, President; Sheela Dattani, Vice President; John Kane, Treasurer; and Tara Terry, Secretary.

2. Attach a copy of the Articles of Incorporation, a copy of the Board bylaws, and Board policies of the corporation as Attachment 12.

Please see Attachment 12.

3. Provide, as Attachment 13, the completed and signed Compliance Certification Statement.

Please see Attachment 13.

4. Provide, as Attachment 14, the completed and signed Application Certification Statement.

Please see Attachment 14.

1.6.C: Governing Board [14 Del. C. §§ 512(1)-(2), (6) and (9)]

1. Governance Philosophy. Explain the general philosophy of governance that will guide the proposed school, including the nature and extent of involvement by key stakeholder groups. Please make sure to distinguish management versus governance responsibilities.

At Freire Schools, everyone who is part of our organization is an educator who believes that all students can achieve, graduate from college, and be agents of positive change. Every member of the school community utilizes their role and relationships with students to amplify this possibility. The FSNCC Board of Directors (a joint Board governing FCSN and FCSW) is central in amplifying our students' possibilities by setting FCSN's mission and evaluating progress toward it, exercising its fiduciary responsibility with integrity, and ensuring that the School is academically strong, fiscally sound, and well-managed in the long term.

The Board's primary role is governance, focusing on keeping the mission thriving as well as serving as the ultimate fiduciaries of the School. Using the National Association of Independent School's "Trustee Handbook" (DeKuyper, 2007) as a guide, as well as DDOE's Board training through Education Board Partners and WestEd, the Board will: adopt a clear statement of FCSN's mission, vision and strategic goals, and establish policies and plans consistent with this statement; review and maintain appropriate bylaws that conform to legal requirements; assure that the School and Board operate in compliance with applicable laws and minimize exposure to legal action; recognize that its primary work is long-range and strategic; conduct annual evaluations for the School, Head of School, CMO, and the Board itself; engage proactively with the Head of School in cultivating and maintaining good relations with school constituents as well as the broader community and modeling the School's values at all times; accept accountability for the financial stability and financial future of the institution; participate actively in fundraising; and advocate for the school with external constituencies.

Generally, management of the School (e.g. staffing, executing the academic program, school operations) is delegated to the Head of School and other School leadership, supported by the FSNO. A culture of frequent communication between the Board President and the Head of School ensures the space for clarifying roles and responsibilities so that redundancy is avoided when the governance and management functions overlap (e.g., finance, student discipline). It also ensures that the Board and school leadership are aligned on common objectives when working independently.

The FSNO supports the Board as it executes its governance function. This includes administrative support, including advertising, preparing documents for, and posting the record of Board meetings, and ensuring Board members are up to date on clearances, training, etc. It also includes quality assurance support, including providing regular data on the school program and facilitating the Head of School and Board evaluations. This support also includes ensuring the Board is aware of any changes to law or policy and ensuring steps are taken to ensure compliance.

While the Board holds the governance function of the School, good governance requires the voice of all stakeholders. Just as we have done at FCSW, the FCSN founders understand the responsibility for decision making is to be shared by students, parents, school personnel, the community, and the Board. It is the intersection of each of these stakeholder groups (students, parents, staff, and the Board) and how their voices are sought and heard by school leadership that will govern the School.

Parent Involvement: In accordance with 14 Del. Code § 512(1), we will reserve voting spots on the Board for a minimum of one parent representative from FCSN and one from FCSW. Parents and students will also be invited to participate in task forces and as advisors on issues that arise. FCSN will also encourage and support our families in forming a general parent group and/or advisory groups focused on special education, English learners, or other specific needs.

Student Involvement: Kids are at the center of all that we do, and we believe that they have unlimited potential. We build our school culture around supporting every individual student's growth into a self-actualized citizen of the world, and we prioritize opportunities for students to find, develop, and share their voices. Involvement in school governance is one of the ways we encourage students to develop their decision-making and participation skills to benefit them and their community. Regularly scheduled Board meetings have time allotted for a student update, and we plan to add a student representative from each campus on the FSNCC Board in a non-voting capacity. FCSN students will be encouraged to form a student government just as FCSW has, facilitated and overseen by a FCSN staff member. The student government will be charged with obtaining and presenting input from the collective student body on school affairs; developing and implementing an agenda of activities in support of school priorities, coordinated with school leadership and the Board of Directors, to further the student body's interests and goals; advancing and improving the School; and meeting with elected officials and community members when requested to share the FCSN and Freire Schools mission and vision and their experience at FCSN. These opportunities prepare students for the types of organizations in which they will participate in college as well as in society.

Moreover, as Freire Schools stands firmly behind nonviolence and teamwork, FCSN students will learn to embrace generative conflict. Generative conflict is conflict that creates new possibilities and connections rather than shutting them down. It is a powerful tool for deconditioning binary, either/or thinking within ourselves and embracing our different cultures, experiences, and viewpoints as we build a path forward. Students will develop the skills for resolving conflict and tension, both of which are inevitable inside the functioning of any governing body. As these students are called upon to lead their peers and connect with the governance of the School, they will apply these skills directly in their interactions.

Staff Involvement: Our Board of Directors will include one member who is currently a certified teacher at FCSN, in addition to the Board member who is currently a teacher at FCSW, and we will designate a portion of each regularly scheduled Board meeting for staff member(s) to update the Board.

2. Structure and Composition. Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the Board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that will be represented on the Board. Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that:

a. The school will be an educational and operational success; and

b. There will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders.

Structure: Freire Charter School Wilmington, Inc. is the charter applicant, and we propose that FCSW operate as a multiple charter holder to be named “Freire Schools New Castle County” with one Board of Directors governing two separate charters — Freire Charter School Wilmington and the newly proposed Freire Charter School Newark.

Composition: Per its bylaws, the Freire Charter School Wilmington Board of Directors (to be renamed FSNCC) is to be composed of not less than five (5) and not more than eighteen (18) members. Currently the FCSW Board is composed of nine (9) voting members. Included in the voting members are two members who are parents of students currently enrolled at FCSW (currently Tara Terry and Evelyn Davies) and one member who is a certified teacher at FCSW (currently Nathan Moser).

The bylaws require at least one Board member to be a parent of a student enrolled in each school operated by FSNCC and at least one certified teacher from each school operated by FSNCC. This will exceed the minimum legal requirement of “a teacher from at least 1 of the charter schools operated by the Board and at least 1 parent of a student enrolled in a charter school operated by the board” (14 Del. Code § 512 (1)). Not only does this requirement satisfy the legal requirements for stakeholder representation on the Board, but parents and staff representation on the FCSW Board has been critical to the success of FCSW, especially in ensuring that the School is operating in fidelity to the mission and meeting evolving student needs.

When recruiting Board members, we seek individuals with diverse personal and professional guidelines, including individuals with expertise in one or more of the following areas: K-12 education, finance, law and compliance, real estate and construction, nonprofit or business management, government relations, communications, and parent and community engagement. Individuals who reside in the community we serve and those with prior governance experience are desirable, and a commitment to the Freire Schools mission and educational equity is required.

The specific interests and qualifications of the FCSW Board members who will govern the joint Board are listed in our response to question 1.6.C.3. In summary, currently among the nine voting members, we have six Board members experienced in business management, four experienced in finance and accounting, four members of the community FCSN will serve, three with legal experience, three with nonprofit governance experience, three with expertise in fundraising, two parents, two with experience in higher education, two experienced in working with government, one experienced in school operations, one with a talent for parent and

community engagement, and one certified educator experienced with both curriculum and instruction and in working in a charter school.

A Board that is best suited to ensure the educational and operational success of the School is one that incorporates stakeholder voice, includes the diversity of experiences noted above, and strikes the balance between senior and newer members (see continuity plan below). FCSW's committed and talented Board has led FCSW successfully through its first renewal; helped FCSW earn "meets standard" marks on the Organization and Financial Performance Frameworks; and been central to FCSW's success in navigating the pandemic and ensuring continuity of education for our students during this challenging time. With the new members we add as we develop FCSN, this Board will be well poised to ensure the educational and operational success of both campuses.

Powers & Duties: The joint Board of Directors will maintain controlling legal power and responsibility for both charter schools — FCSW and FCSN. The Board of Directors will discharge its power and responsibility by functioning primarily as a policy-making body and delegate day-to-day administration to the Head of School, and through the Head of School to the Leadership Team. Inside its policy-making role, the Board will follow DeKuyper's list of Board duties and powers as described in the governance section directly above.

3. *Roles. Describe the primary roles of the Board and how it will interact with the Principal/School Leader and any advisory bodies. List all currently-identified Board members and their intended roles, and summarize their interests in and qualifications for serving on the school's Board.*

The primary roles of the Board are detailed in the previous two governance responses, and, in summary, include: providing the strategic vision for the School, hiring leaders to run the School, holding those leaders and the FSNO accountable for academic and operational success, and providing financial oversight.

The Board of Directors will be linked to daily actions, decisions, data, and results mainly through the connection between the Head of School, Freire Schools Collaborative CEO and senior leadership, and the Board President. The Board will conduct a yearly evaluation of the Head of School, and the Head of School and Board members will likewise conduct an evaluation of the Board's function, all vis-à-vis the goals set forth by the School inside its governance process and led by the FSNO.

The FCSN Head of School sits on all Board committees in a non-voting capacity, and the Freire Schools Collaborative CEO serves on all committees in an advisory capacity. In this way, the two will work with the President of the Board to ensure the School's governance supports its mission. Furthermore, the Board President will serve on the network-wide CEO's Council, which is composed of the Board President from each Freire school plus select Board members with relevant history with Freire Schools and/or expertise. The CEO's Council exists to support the Freire Schools Network CEO on new or strategic issues while at the same time providing an

opportunity to develop Board leadership. Heads of School are frequently called upon to attend these meetings. Recent topics have included COVID-19 response (including vaccination requirements and handling staff burnout), new school development, and diversity in hiring. The Board President also sits on a network-wide Advancement Committee, which sets the fundraising direction for our schools.

The proposed Board members who will govern FCSN are the nine existing voting members of the FCSW Board, who are all members of the FCSN Founding Group. Their experience, qualifications, and affiliations were detailed in response to question 1.2.c. and are summarized in this chart below:

Name	Public K-12	Charter	School Governance	Curriculum & Instruction	Business Management	School Operations	Parent/Community Engagement	Alumni	Certified Educator	Parent	Community Member	Legal	Finance/ Accounting	Higher Education	Fundraising	Government	Nonprofit Governance
Sheela Dattani	X		X		X		X			X	X	X			X		
Evelyn Davies	X		X		X					X	X		X				
John Kane	X		X		X								X				
Nathan Moser	X	X	X	X					X								
David Singleton	X		X		X	X					X			X		X	X
Mark Stellini	X		X		X						X			X			X
Tara Terry	X		X													X	
Clint Walker	X		X		X							X	X		X		X
Nathan Will	X		X									X	X		X		
	9	1	9	1	6	1	1	0	1	2	4	3	4	2	3	2	3

4. As Attachment 15, provide a completed and signed Charter School Board Member Information Form for each proposed Board member.

Please see Attachment 15.

5. As Attachment 16, provide a completed and signed Charter School Board Member Disclosures Form for each proposed Board member.

Please see Attachment 16.

6. Procedures. Explain the procedure by which Board members have been and will be selected. How will the Board fulfill its responsibilities? What will be the planned frequency and focus of meetings? Identify any standing subcommittees the Board expects to have. Describe how the school and Board will comply with Freedom of Information Act, 29 Del. C.Ch. 100 (related to public bodies, public records, and open meetings).

Board Member Selection: The founding Board of Freire Schools New Castle County (FSNCC) would be the current Board of the corporation as currently named (Freire Charter School Wilmington, Inc.). By virtue of their service on the Board already overseeing FCSW, all members are experienced with Delaware charter school board service. The qualifications of each member are described in Section 1.2.A. New Board members are recruited when a need is identified by the Board, including an experience gap or a vacancy in a required staff or parent seat. Board members, FSNO leadership, and School leadership compile a list of possible candidates. After initial outreach, interested prospects meet with the Board President, Head of School, and FSNO leadership for a mutual interview and school site visit. They are also asked to submit a resume. If it seems like a mutual fit, the candidate's resume is shared with the full Board, and they attend the next Board meeting to be interviewed and voted on. Board members are elected for a term of three years.

Fulfilling Board Responsibilities: Board member responsibilities are clearly communicated to all members through our policy on Board of Directors Expectations (see Attachment 12 for a copy). The seven core expectations are as follows:

- To set and carry forth the mission, vision and strategic plan for the School in collaboration with all stakeholders.
- To assure the financial health of its schools.
- To provide organizational continuity.
- To provide philanthropic support.
- To act as ambassador for Freire within the larger community.
- To make a commitment of time to and participation in the Freire community.
- To exercise prudence and demonstrate good faith in all activities related to the Freire Schools network.

To fulfill these responsibilities, Board members are first and foremost expected to prepare for and regularly attend Board meetings. We communicate specific ways in which Board members are expected to fulfill each responsibility above. For example, to exercise prudence and demonstrate good faith in all activities related to the schools under the Board's control, Board members are expected to act with integrity respect and with the best interest of the School, maintain confidentiality of sensitive information, immediately disclose any conflict of interest that may exist or may arise and refrain from voting on any matters that may result in a conflict of interest, and to fulfill all personal responsibilities set by law or the Board itself such as completing disclosure forms or obtaining background checks.

Meeting Frequency and Focus: Per our bylaws, the Board will hold an Annual Meeting and at least quarterly meetings each year. The FCSW Board, which will become the FSNCC Board and

govern both FCSW and FCSN, traditionally holds its Annual Meeting in June, as well as five other regularly scheduled Board meetings during the school year. Special meetings can also be called by or at the request of the Board President or by request of at least 25% of the Board. During FCSN's start-up period, the Board may need to meet more frequently, and Board meetings may need to be longer. The meetings for the two charter schools will happen at the same time and place (alternating between the two campuses once it is safe enough to again meet in person). Within that meeting, Board members will vote on items for FCSN and FCSW separately.

Subcommittees: The FSNCC Board will have two standing committees: a Finance Committee and an Executive Committee. The Finance committee consists of three Board members (the Treasurer and two at-large members) and, in a non-voting capacity, the Heads of School and the Freire Schools Collaborative CEO and Chief Financial Officer. The Finance Committee assists in the preparation, review and evaluation of annual budgets and financial reports and completion of annual audit by an independent auditor.

The Executive Committee is composed of five Board members (the four Board officers and one Board member at large). The Executive Committee has the authority of the full Board to support School and network leadership in managing the organization, with some restrictions as spelled out in the bylaws (e.g., the Executive Committee cannot amend the bylaws, remove a Board member, authorize the sale of property, etc.).

The Board can also duly appoint other committees at any Board meeting at which a quorum is present. For example, with the addition of a second school, the FSNCC Board will form an Education Committee for the joint Board to provide oversight on academic performance to include at least one Board member and the Head of School of each campus (non-voting) or other duly appointed instructional leader from each campus.

Freedom of Information Act: The Board of Directors complies with all laws and regulations including 29 Del. Code Ch. 100, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Among other requirements, it will make current and existing documents open to public inspection as required under FOIA. It will also designate an individual to receive any and all such requests and reply within the parameters set forth in the law. We hold all Board meetings in public and post the dates of Board meetings on the School's publicly accessible internet website and at the front of the School. We also post the names of Board members and their contact information. If the agenda has been determined, it is posted on the website and in the School at least seven days before each meeting. If a meeting must be scheduled or rescheduled with less than seven days' notice, we post that notice at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting with an explanation. Agendas are never posted less than six hours before the start of a meeting. Recordings of meetings are posted on our website within seven days of each meeting, and minutes are posted on the website after approval.

7. School Oversight

a. Describe how the Board will approach its oversight role. Describe the metrics or progress indicators that the Board will consider in its analysis of the school, as well as how the Board will receive this information (i.e., dashboard) and from whom (i.e., Principal/School Leader, Business Manager, committees). Be sure to include both the academic, financial and operational metrics, and the frequency with which the Board will review these metrics.

The Board will be responsible for providing oversight to the two charter schools' academic programs, operations and finances. It does so by following best practices for Board governance (DeKupyer; Education Board Partners) and by creating systems that allow for effective oversight. This includes Board meetings that are efficient, substantive, and productive and that raise strategic issues for discussion. This also includes a system for regularly reviewing and analyzing metrics. Each year, the School's leadership, FSNO leadership, and the Board develop a set of financial, operational, and academic metrics measured vis-à-vis the DDOE's required metrics as well as additional metrics we have determined are critical to meeting our mission, raising student achievement, and overall school success. The FSNO shares key indicators of the School's health and wellness with the Board at every Board meeting using dashboards and reports.

With respect to oversight of academics, the Board reviews an academic performance dashboard to monitor progress for key academic metrics. Many metrics remain consistent across all years of the charter term, while some new metrics may be added from year to year. For example, this year's academic FCSW dashboard is organized around three network-wide priorities that flow from our newly articulated commitment to antiracism: (1) raising the bar academically — percentage of students proficient in math and reading and percentage of students on track for college; (2) creating a more racially just Nonviolence Policy — percentage of students attending 90% or more of instructional days, count of out-of-school suspensions; and (3) using generative conflict to find a path forward — number of staff generative conflict conversations occurring. Tracking generative conflict conversations is a new metric, while academic achievement as measured by internal benchmark assessments is a constant.

To provide oversight of financial health, the Board uses a financial dashboard that includes all metrics from the Financial Performance Framework as well as some metrics of our own (e.g. current cash balance, cash flow by year, percentage of revenues collected and expenses spent to date, accounts payable aging, and FTE (current, budgeted, vacancies). For oversight of organizational compliance, the Board reviews and votes on the annual Organization Framework report provided by the Charter Schools Office. Some metrics are also reviewed at other times during the year. For example, teacher certification is addressed when the Board reviews the school's Teacher Equity Plan. The Head of School and FSNO monitor the metrics included within the Organization Framework in an ongoing fashion and if they discover any need to adjust budget or programming to meet the standards set by the State, the issue is brought to the Board for discussion and input. The FSNO also provides regular Board updates on governance metrics such as Board training status.

Across all domains, what remains constant is a culture of continuous improvement and the Board's commitment to request and the FSNO to provide the comprehensive data the Board needs to ask questions and assess the organization's health in a regular fashion.

b. Describe the financial policies and procedures that the Board and administration will implement and follow in order to ensure that the school remains fiscally solvent and that appropriate internal controls are implemented.

A strong system of internal controls provides reasonable assurance a school will be able to achieve its objectives and remain fiscally solvent. The Board of Directors and Freire Schools Collaborative have documented, approved, and successfully implemented internal control policies for all key transaction cycles (e.g. revenue cycle, expense cycle), financial reporting, and grants for FCSW and will do the same for FCSN. Policies include an internal control framework/control environment, risk assessment, information and communication requirements, control activities, and monitoring. We have internal control policies for: Financial Reporting, Procurement, Expenses and Cash Disbursements, Payroll, Revenue Recognition and Cash Receipts, Cash, Capital Assets, General Journal Entries, Debt, and Federal Grants. Internal control policies will focus on ensuring proper segregation of duties, compliance with the State of Delaware budget and accounting policy manual, timely reconciliations and financial reporting, federal grant compliance, and monitoring by School administration and the Board of Directors. Our system of fiscal policies and internal control procedures are designed to reduce the potential for misuse of the School's assets or misstatement of account balances.

Most day-to-day accounting activities are performed by the centralized FSNO finance team, while School administration and the Board of Directors provide oversight and monitoring. The Head of School or another designated School leader must approve all expenditures in the FSF system before they are paid. Key components of financial oversight include reviewing internal control policies on a periodic basis, reviewing and approving monthly financial reports, reviewing and approving annual budgets (both initial and post-unit-count), and reviewing and approving annual audited financial statements.

These financial policies and procedures extend the system already in place at FCSW and have been central to that school's financial strength. FCSW has received "meets standard" ratings in the financial management and oversight domain and overall on the DDOE Financial Framework in all the years in which that framework was used to assess FCSW's performance.

c. Describe an, at a minimum, annual process for evaluating whether financial allocations have effectively supported the school in carrying out its mission and meeting its goals.

One of the chief conditions for a school to effectively carry out its mission and meet its goals is fiscal soundness. With that aim in mind, we are committed to maintaining the highest standard of financial health, including meeting the Financial Performance Framework standards established by the DE Department of Education, including near term indicators, sustainability

indicators, and compliance with financial management and oversight requirements. At all regular Board meetings, the FSNO prepares a financial report with a dashboard that reports how the School is performing against both its budget and the ratios measured in the Financial Performance Framework. Our annual budgets and monthly financial reports include projections for how the School will perform on all financial ratios at the end of the fiscal year. By tracking progress throughout the year, we ensure that we can identify and correct issues promptly to ensure standards are met.

After the close of each fiscal year (typically at the September Board meeting), the Board again reviews the School's performance against these ratios as well as the detailed audit report. At the first Board meetings of the school year, the Board also reviews academic performance data from the prior school year. The Board reviews both academic and financial data with the intent to spark conversation about how our expenses are supporting our academic and mission goals.

d. Identify the enrollment threshold that would compel the Board to delay opening the school and explain why.

If our enrollment falls between 99% and 80%, we will be able to reduce staffing and other variable costs proportionally and still be successful in carrying out the School's mission and meeting its goals. As required, we have created a workable 80% budget. While we are confident this will not be the case, should enrollment fall anywhere below 80%, it would become increasingly difficult to maintain fidelity to our mission, and we would likely need to request a delay to our opening. Again, we are committed to ensuring this does not happen.

e. Describe how the Board and School Leadership Team will utilize the school's mission in everyday practice and decision-making?

At the center of FCSN's mission is our commitment to preparing all kids for college and empowering them to build the future. Simply put, this means that kids are the center of all that we do, and we believe they have unlimited potential. College prep means truly preparing students for "Graduation x2" — ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to graduate from high school AND persist in and graduate from college.

The Board is responsible for setting this mission and ensuring it is being implemented and advanced with fidelity. When the Board recruits new members and school leaders, their belief in and ability to execute on this mission is at the forefront of all election and hiring decisions. In fact, we find that it is our mission that attracts our committed Board members and talented school leaders to our organization in the first place.

This mission is at the heart of all decision making. The Board is devoted to ensuring that the organization is financially and operationally strong enough to execute on this mission, and that our academic outcomes support our college prep goals. The Head of School is held accountable to delivering on the mission and vision, and is charged with hiring and developing the staff who will contribute to advancing this mission.

In addition to the data dashboard listed above, a deeper dive of postsecondary data is presented to the Board annually. This includes a report each June of college application rates, acceptance rates, and scholarships and aid earned by students, as well as a review of college matriculation and persistence data prepared by the National Student Clearinghouse each fall/winter.

To ensure that we are working toward the same goal, staff and Board members have clearly delineated roles that articulate each person's responsibilities toward delivering on the mission and vision. For example, on the mission-related topic of college prep education, the Board's responsibilities might include approving performance goals and monitoring progress, initiating partnerships with local universities to support innovative programming at the School, ensuring funds are allocated to college prep activities, and raising funds to support scholarships and other programs. Leadership roles related to college prep include researching and selecting curriculum, developing teachers, implementing a college counseling program, and ensuring student supports are available and accessed. Inside the evaluation of staff and the Board, there are also direct questions around how well they are contributing toward the mission and vision, which promotes a cycle of continuous growth toward mission attainment. And of course, our kids, both in our classrooms and as alumni, provide living proof to our Board and leadership of how well we are succeeding in empowering students to build the future. Please see our response to question 8 below regarding Board improvement for more information about the Board's self-accountability.

f. Describe the School Leader contract. Identify whether there will be performance targets in that contract and, if so, what they are.

As part of the Head of School's employment agreement, the Board President in collaboration with FSNO leadership set metrics each year that the Head of School is evaluated against as part of their performance assessment and to be considered for salary increases. These metrics vary based on network and school priorities and the individual Head of School.

8. Board Improvement. Explain the plan for increasing the capacity of the Board. What kinds of orientation or training will new Board members receive? Describe how the Board will evaluate itself and what steps it will take to continually improve its capacity to govern. Describe how current and future Board members will comply with any statutory or regulatory requirement related to the training of Board members.

We provide new Board members with our Board of Directors Expectations Policy (see Attachment 12 for a copy), which includes several relevant provisions:

- Becoming knowledgeable about the School and its needs and mission (5.1)
- Mentoring new Board members during their first year (6.4)
- Being informed about and remaining current on the duties of public charter school boards and their operating environment (6.6)
- Fulfilling all personal responsibilities set by law or by the Board itself (7.4)

New Board members spend time with the Board President, the Head of School, and members of the FSNO leadership team to ensure they understand the School's mission as well as expectations for Board membership. They also have the mentorship of existing Board members to help understand how the Board functions and how each individual member leverages their own strengths within the group. All new Board members also take the DDOE-provided online financial responsibility training required by 14 Del. Code § 1803 within three months of election to the Board per 14 DE Admin. Code § 734. New Board members now have the opportunity to receive initial governance training per 14 Del. Code § 512 (15) through taking the series of three online courses provided by Education Board Partners and WestEd. When new members join the Board, staff at FSNO provide information on how to access the online courses and follow up with members to ensure they complete them.

The Board uses a combination of strategies for ongoing governance training beyond the initial training as well as general development and strengthening of best practices. Through the Delaware Charter School Network (DCSN)'s partnership with the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA), we can provide the whole Board with periodic robust, customized training. The Board also greatly benefits from membership with DCSN to receive, among other things, legislative, regulatory, and operational updates. When dealing with legal matters or policy questions, the Board may call on the School's legal counsel not only for representation but also for training and advice. The FSNO team includes experienced and knowledgeable leaders in charter school governance, leadership, instruction, finances, operations, advocacy, philanthropy, and more. Leaders such as the FSNO CEO and CFO can provide training and guidance both formally and informally. The FSNO provides periodic training in routine or special topics — for example, the Board will participate in training this year related to our antiracism efforts.

The Board constantly seeks to improve its effectiveness and capacity. First and foremost, the Board conducts a routine self-evaluation process where each Board member can share reflections on the Board's performance as a whole and also reflect on their individual performance related to each area of the Board of Directors Expectations Policy. A copy of our Board self-evaluation is included as Appendix I. After Board members take the survey, FSNO staff compile the results and share them with the Board. The Board President may then bring the results up for discussion at a regular meeting or retreat and propose actions in response to the survey results. Occasionally as needed, we may call on outside consultants or experts to help evaluate and strengthen the functioning of the Board.

9. *Board Continuity. Describe how, and on what timeline, new Board members will be recruited and added. Explain how the Board will screen successor members of the Board to ensure continuing compliance with the requirements that the Board be qualified to operate a charter school and to implement the school's proposed educational program.*

Seasoned Board members provide continuity to decision-making and long-term planning, while new members can fill gaps in the Board's collective expertise and bring new energy, ideas, and

partnerships to the school. Currently in its seventh year of operation, FCSW has achieved a balance between senior and newer members. The average FCSW Board member has served approximately 3.5 years on the Board, and two members (Clint Walker and John Kane) have served since FCSW's beginning (Clint joining the year before FCSW opened and John joining in its first year of operation).

With the approval of this charter application, the members of the FCSW Board will also govern FCSN as the renamed FSNCC Board of Directors, adding at least two new Board members (a FCSN parent and a FCSN teacher) in FCSN's first year of operation. Clint Walker is committed to leading the Board at least until FCSN reaches full stability and success, likely through its first charter term. During this time, Clint and the FSNO will continue to develop the capacity of the other Board officers, so we have strong candidates to provide Board leadership continuity when Clint leaves and ensure that our Board is always qualified to operate our schools.

When the Board is seeking new members, potential members are identified and recruited by the Board officers, Head of School, and FSNO leadership. They work together to ensure that Board members are recruited and selected based on each person's ability to contribute to the school's mission and strategic vision and/or fiduciary duties. Once potential Board members are identified, they go through a series of steps such as: submitting a resume, meeting with the Head of School for a school site visit, interviewing with a member of the Executive Committee, attending a Board meeting, etc., before being voted on by the Board of Directors. Board members serve three-year terms. It typically takes about two months to select a new Board member, from identifying a new prospect to them joining the Board. We are always looking for new members who can add value to our existing Board and help us advance our mission.

10. Ethics and Conflicts of Interest. Describe the Board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest and compliance with the State Code of Conduct.

Our Board abides by the applicable provisions of 29 Del. Code Chap. 58 regarding conflicts of interest and the state code of conduct. We have a conflict of interest policy in place (see Attachment 12) to ensure that the Board is knowledgeable about the required provisions, enacts them with fidelity, models them for the wider School community, and promotes a culture and set of policies to hold each other, school leaders, and school employees to high ethical standards. Per this policy, FSNCC Board members will have a duty to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest prior to any consideration of a relevant transaction and must physically excuse themselves from any related discussions except to respond to requests for information about the potential conflict of interest. The minutes of any relevant meeting should reflect the disclosure and that the Board member was not physically present for the discussion. This policy applies to staff members as well, with a similar procedure to ensure that the staff member discloses the potential conflict of interest and does not participate in any discussion regarding the proposed transaction. Board members are also prohibited from engaging in any business transaction with FCSN or being employed in any capacity by the School.

1.6.D: Advisory Bodies [14 Del. C. §§ 512(1)-(2) and (6)]

1. Describe any advisory bodies or councils to be formed, including the roles and duties of these bodies. Describe the following: the planned composition of the advisory body; the strategy for achieving that composition; the role of parents, students, and educators (if applicable); and the reporting structure as it relates to the school's governing body and leadership.

In compliance with 14 Del. Code § 1508 and 14 DE Admin. Code §736, FCSN will establish a Citizens Budget Oversight Committee (CBOC). The CBOC observes the legal requirements of having at least five members, including educators, parents, and a DDOE representative with at least two members of relevant background; use of an application form; and financial responsibility training for members. We will observe the requirement of 14 DE Admin. Code §923.25 to offer to facilitate a parent council for parents of students with disabilities and will encourage and support families to do so. FCSN will also establish a bullying prevention committee per 14 Del. Code § 4164(b)(2)(d), a suicide prevention committee per 14 Del. Code § 4165(b)(3), and a school safety team per 29 Del. Code § 8237(d)(1). While none of these councils, committees, or teams will be considered committees of the Board of Directors, any of these groups may raise important feedback that the Board will consider and act upon as appropriate.

1.6.E: Grievance Process [14 Del. C. § 512(9)]

1. Explain the process that the school will follow should a parent, student or staff member have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school.

We are providing a combined answer to questions 1 and 2 (See below).

2. Identify the goals of the Board of Directors in terms of monitoring and resolving staff and parent complaints.

The overall goal of the Board of Directors with regard to grievances is to be proactive rather than reactive. We do this by maintaining open communication, seeking feedback continuously, fostering an engaged and supportive school community, and engaging in the generative conflict process. This proactive approach has been largely successful in the school being able to hear and address concerns before they rise to the level of necessitating a formal grievance filed with the Board or an external oversight agency. However, in the event our proactive measures are insufficient and a staff or parent complaint cannot be resolved through working with the School administration, the Board is committed to hearing out complaints, treating them with due seriousness, and doing whatever is possible within the School's mission to resolve the issue.

As described above in response to question 1.6.C.6, we comply with the open meetings

provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (29 Del. Code § 10004 and § 10006A) and give appropriate public notice and open all Board meetings to the public. As described in our FOIA Open Meetings Policy (see Attachment 12c), we begin each regular Board meeting with a call for any public comment. Any parent, student, or staff member has the opportunity to attend meetings and share comments, including objections to any practices of the Board or management they may have. As described above in response to questions 1.6.C.1-2, we take a number of steps to ensure parent, staff, and student engagement during Board meetings.

As described in Article II, Section 14 of our bylaws (see Attachment 12a), we encourage students to attend meetings of the Board. When preparing for a regular meeting of the Board, the Head of School seeks out students to attend, speak about their experience attending the School, what they like, and what they think could be improved. Board members and the student then have an opportunity to engage in conversation and ask one another questions. This provides a built-in, regular opportunity for students to raise any concerns they may have about the School with the Board.

Our annual Student & Family Handbook includes a section on parent concerns (see Appendix E), which begins by stating: “If a parent or family member has a concern, we want to know about it.” This section also encourages parents to contact school staff and school leaders, and makes a commitment to a timely and personalized response. If the concern is not resolved at the school level, the parent/guardian may bring a complaint to the Board of Directors. Similarly, the Employee Handbook (Appendix F) includes both an Open Door Policy and a Grievance Policy whereby employees may bring an issue to the School administration or file a formal written grievance with the Board. Any member of the community, including parents and staff, can contact the Board President directly or the Head of School can facilitate an introduction. If appropriate to give full consideration to the complaint, we can set aside time on an upcoming Board meeting agenda to discuss the issue.

If there is ever an allegation of misconduct, illegal activity, or other serious nature, the Board will conduct an appropriate investigation, potentially call on an external investigator, and make any required notifications to relevant authorities. The Board takes all measures to preserve a complainant’s (and subject’s) due process rights as may be required under the law. We provide contact information for relevant authorities to the community, such as USED’s Family Compliance Office in our FERPA Policy, the School Criminal Offense and Bullying Ombudsperson in our Bullying Policy, and the Delaware Department of Labor Office of Anti-Discrimination in our Employee Handbook. We also provide parents with special education due process information where required by regulation or as otherwise appropriate.

1.7 Parent and Community Involvement

14 Del. C. §§ 512(1) and (6),

1.7.A: Parent Involvement

1. Describe the role of any parents/guardians and community members involved in developing the proposed school.

We have actively engaged community members in developing FCSN. In the earliest stages, when we were assessing the feasibility of a new school and identifying a location in which our new school could make a positive impact for Delaware families, Kelly Davenport, Clint Walker, Paul Ramirez, and Nate Durant met with many community leaders. This included meetings with elected officials, leaders in the state and local education sector, business leaders, and philanthropic leaders. We used their input to guide our location selection and inform our program design. As our plan progressed, we then ensured that our Founding Group included residents from the local community who would have sustained involvement in developing and operating FCSN. We have eight members in our Founding Group who live in areas that our school would serve including a FCSW alum, school leaders, and Board members. Included among these eight community members are four parents of school-aged students who live in the area. These members will play an important role as we continue our parent outreach in anticipation of enrolling our first class in fall 2023, especially Evelyn Davies, who is a member of the FCSW Board and accustomed to elevating parent voice into our decision-making. Input from community members and parents has been embedded into this application and into the blueprint for FCSN.

2. Describe the outreach that you have conducted to engage prospective parents/guardians in the area you are proposing to serve.

As a school aiming to serve all students, FCSN has launched a diverse marketing and outreach campaign to reach as many New Castle County parents/guardians as possible (including marketing materials translated to Spanish). Using available grant funds, FCSN has launched a website and social media accounts, promoted the school on social media, sent out four mass mailers to families with school-aged children, encouraged current FCSW families to refer friends and family to the new school, reached out to previous FCSW applicants asking them to help spread the word, rented signage at the Christiana Mall with a link to access more information online, engaged with our current after-school program partners at FCSW, and reached out to area businesses that work with youth (e.g. soccer club, martial arts studios, orthodontists and pediatricians, and restaurants). We also reached out to the area K-8 and middle school charter schools to lay the groundwork for creating a pipeline to FCSN. We also collaborated with DelawareCAN, who interviewed FCSW students and parents to create a video resource for prospective parents. A successful school includes parent outreach as an ongoing activity, and this robust outreach plan was only our first phase. In the new year, we will continue to engage parents, and are planning to hold a virtual session(s) to provide additional information and

answer questions. Our plan is to engage families who have already indicated interest in enrolling at FCSN to lead some of these sessions and reach out to their networks for other prospective families.

3. Describe how you will engage parents/guardians in the life of the school, in addition to any proposed governance roles described above. Describe how the school will build family-school partnerships to strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities that the school will offer to parents.

In order for FCSN to maximize every teaching and learning opportunity, there needs to be strong communication between the School and parents. As a college preparatory program, FCSN will meaningfully involve parents in their child's academic experience as well as the college application and selection process. We will ensure parents have all the information they need to actively support their child's academic progress through phone calls from teachers and academic advisors, progress reports, parent-student-teacher conferences, and the Home Access Center, which allows parents and students to view student registration, schedules, attendance, assignment, and grade information. We will offer parents numerous opportunities to participate in programming around the college application, selection, and financial aid process. We know that sports, extracurricular activities and leadership opportunities strengthen a child's college application. To help parents ensure that their child takes advantage of all that FCSN has to offer, we will send a weekly newsletter to parents throughout the school year and use apps like Remind and School Messenger to send emails and text messages.

We anticipate that FCSN will qualify for a Title I Schoolwide program, as FCSW does. As part of participating, FCSN will share information about the purpose and requirements of Title I programs and solicit feedback about how to spend Title I dollars as well as barriers to parent participation at an annual Title I family meeting. In order to facilitate access to family programming throughout the year, events will be held at different times, both during the traditional workday and in the events or on weekends. As the School implements Title I programming, the planning committee will take into account family feedback shared at parent meetings, feedback through parent surveys, and suggestions made directly to staff.

As part of Freire Schools' antiracism work, we have defined our vision for what parent involvement will look like at the highest embodiment of antiracist practice. It reads, "Families and community members are partners in the design of our educational program, participating in building experiences and coursework that best serve our students. Freire students and families see themselves as knowledgeable contributors in Freire education and know that community input and feedback will be valued and incorporated in the decisions made within our classrooms and network." FCSN is fully committed to finding meaningful and mutually-enriching ways for parents to participate in our school's academic decision-making, from participating in annual school planning efforts, to surveying parents annually and sharing the data afterwards, to providing opportunities for parents to review and give input when new curricula are selected.

Finally, parents will have a role in school governance via reserved spots on the Board of Directors and on the CBOC.

1.7.B: Community Involvement

1. Describe how community members are represented on your Board and in your Founding Group?

Community representation among our Founding Group is detailed in our response to the Founding Group membership question under Section 1.2. Specifically, eight Founding Group members live in the community FCSN will serve.

Community representation on the FSNCC Board is detailed in our response to question 2 under the Governing Board question under Section 1.6. Specifically, we currently have four Board members who live in the community FCSN will serve. As we add a FCSN parent and FCSN teacher, we anticipate that that number will increase.

2. Identify what community resources will be available to students and parents. Describe any partnerships that the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships.

We seek to build a wide range of partnerships that will enhance students' academic and extracurricular learning and enrichment opportunities, create community service and partnership opportunities for FCSN students, support key student services such as mental health supports, and more.

FCSW has had a strong track record of success in partnering with organizations for in-school programming. For example, FCSW worked with educational institutions like the University of Delaware and Wilmington University to offer dual enrollment college courses to students. As a 21st Century Learning Community Learning Center, FCSW has developed numerous partnerships with local nonprofit organizations who provide extracurricular opportunities that enrich the student experience. Examples of these organizations include Code Differently, Flyogi, and Chess Guru. We hope to expand our partnerships with these organizations in order to offer FCSN students a similarly diverse set of offerings.

FCSW also has had great success in making referrals for additional services offered outside of school, for example, helping students and their families access additional mental health services through Christiana Care. FCSN will continue to make these important connections to local anchor institutions and community partners so that we can meet the needs of the whole child.

Finally, we have found great value in our connections to civic leaders, policy advocates, and institutional funders who help make introductions to new partners and share information about

available community resources. Examples include the DE Charter Network, First State Educate, DelawareCAN, and the Longwood Foundation, and we are pleased to have their support for this new charter application.

3. Describe any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that would enrich student-learning opportunities.

We have begun solidifying commitments from organizations that can enrich the student experience and provide essential services to our school. The following are organizations for which we have a letter of support or MOU attached to our application.

Name of Partner/Organization	Description
Back to Basics Learning	English language learning provider.
Charter Schools Development Corporation	Potential lender for facility.
DelawareCAN	Statewide education advocacy organization.
Delaware Charter Schools Network	Statewide charter support and advocacy organization.
Delaware Contemporary Art Museum	Runs an after-school creative arts club for students.
First State Educate	Statewide education advocacy organization.
Hope School Services	Provides speech language and occupational therapy.
Lehane's Bus Service	Bus service provider.
Longwood Foundation	Charitable foundation.
LYTE	Provides mentoring and leadership development for students.
PS#5 LLC/Community Education Building	Food service provider.
Relay GSE	Graduate School Partnership and Residency Program partnership for teaching staff.
REthinc	Provides DEI and instructional professional development and coaching for staff.
Teach for America Delaware	Teacher pipeline and new teacher development provider.
The Wave/Community	Provides mentors for students for social-emotional support,

Education Building	academic support, and project-based career learning after school and over the summer.
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4. Provide, as Attachment 17, evidence of support from community partners, which may include letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts, and should specify the resources to be committed or contributed from the partner, as applicable.

Letters of support and MOUs are included as Attachment 17.

1.8 Start-up and Operations

14 Del. C. §§ 512(1), (8)-(10), and (12)-(13)

1. Start-Up Plan. Provide, as Attachment 18, a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals, which is aligned with a sound Start-Up Budget.

Please see Attachment 18 for a comprehensive start-up and opening plan which covers early planning through the first charter renewal.

2. Describe what you anticipate will be the challenges of starting a new school and how you expect to address these challenges.

At the Freire Schools Network as a whole, we have the savvy, expertise, and perseverance to remain academically, organizationally, and financially successful and sustainable no matter the challenges. Our adaptability while providing the highest quality education is one of our greatest strengths. We have consistently demonstrated adaptability in the face of evolving conditions over the past two decades, including during the pandemic. Our team dealt with the pandemic's ramifications as deftly as any other school or school system, securing Chromebooks for every student and getting virtual learning up and running in April of 2020, then revamping our virtual learning program to the highest level for the 2020-21 school year. Our team also has experience opening three new charter campuses over the last eight years, including FCSW. With our experience in hand and lessons learned from opening three new locations, we have a strong plan in place to ensure that we achieve our goals with opening FCSN.

As with any school amidst the ongoing and ever-worsening national teacher shortage, we expect hiring certified teachers to staff a new school to be one of the challenges we will face. FSNO has addressed this by hiring a full-time Director of Talent Acquisition in 2019 to focus on recruitment for all Freire schools. FSNO will also add a new Employee Relations Coordinator this winter, who will be working specifically on our teacher pipeline initiatives including our teacher residency program. We have already selected three extremely strong leaders to anchor the staff at FCSN. Nate, Darren, and Khyle will work alongside the FSNO talent team to begin recruiting staff — especially teachers — an entire year before the school opens and intensify those efforts in the winter before. Through operating FCSW, our team has developed experience and relationships working with certification programs and the Licensure & Certification office at DDOE to help new teachers successfully navigate the certification process. Starting in the first year of operation, staff retention will also be key. The teacher retention strategies we detail in response to question 1.5.B.2 (i.e. compensation, growth opportunities, developing our teacher pipeline, monitoring retention and attrition) will help us greatly in mitigating the challenges of hiring.

We have been successful at enrolling FCSW to capacity, and Nate Durant has been a key part of that success. We know that enrollment is an ever-present potential challenge, but we act with

this knowledge and make sure to devote the necessary time and resources to student recruitment. See section 1.2.C.1 for more information on Nate's success in this area and section 1.3.G for more information about our recruitment strategies.

Finally, school transportation, like hiring, is a well-known challenge. As described in response to question 4 below, we have never failed at transportation at FCSW. We have a proven track record of innovative problem-solving in the area of student transportation, pioneering the use of DART cards to get our students to high school at FCSW, a practice that has since been adopted as an option across Delaware. As with the other challenges, the first step is being cognizant of the level of threat that each potential challenge poses to being able to operate the School successfully. We are hyper-aware of the state of school transportation challenges and are continually thinking through new ideas, options, and partnerships to pursue.

3. Complete the Start-Up (Year 0) Budget in the Budget Sheets. Complete all pages in the Budget Sheets, and provide as Attachment 19 (see link in Section 1.10 Budget and Finance).

Please see Attachment 19 within the Budget section.

4. Transportation. Describe how students will be transported to the school pursuant to 14 Del. C. § 508, including any provisions that the school will provide; how students who reside outside the district in which the school will be located will be transported to the school; and how students with special needs will be transported if specialized transportation is required by the student's IEP.

Describe the plan for oversight of transportation operations (e.g., whether the school will provide its own transportation, contract out for transportation, request that a district provide transportation, or a combination thereof) and who on the school staff will provide this daily oversight.

The Freire Schools network has a successful history of implementing innovative solutions to the challenges of student transportation, particularly within Delaware with the opening of FCSW. FCSW pioneered the strategy of purchasing DART passes for students so that they can use public transportation to get to school, which has now been adopted as an option statewide. This provides students greater autonomy than taking a school bus and a more independent experience that helps them prepare for college outside the classroom. The flexibility of a public transportation schedule allows students to stay after school to get extra help or engage in extracurricular activities without the constraints of a school bus departure time.

While our proposed location is directly on a DART route (a short 0.3 mile walk from the DART route #10), we know that outside a dense urban area, public transportation will be less convenient for many students. We will therefore also contract with a school bus company to provide yellow bus transportation to students for whom that will be the best option. Our school bus routes will make use of hub stops in order to expand the reach of the yellow bus service to as many families as possible. We are certainly aware of the school bus driver shortage and are

being extremely proactive in thinking about the need to provide for this. We have already secured an MOU with Lehane's Bus Service, the provider for FCSW, stating their willingness to also serve FCSN in the future.

Especially in a more suburban area and with a spacious parking lot, we also expect some families to drop off and pick up their students, as some FCSW families already do. Space constraints at FCSW prevent us from allowing students to drive to school, but this may be an option at FCSN with the ample parking our proposed location affords. We also know that certain students will require special transportation as a related service in their IEPs or as part of 504 plans. Whether individual door-to-door, small van, or aide-accompanied, we have special transportation partners we work with at FCSW and will use the same model to meet any additional transportation needs of students with disabilities. While our proposed location is located in the Christina School District, we expect to draw students from multiple districts and there will be no distinction between transportation options for students who live in the Colonial, Red Clay, or other districts.

Managing transportation will be a team effort. The Dean of Students will have primary responsibility for overseeing transportation with the oversight and support of the Head of School and FSNO. When posting RFPs for school transportation, reviewing bids, and interviewing vendors, the FSNO team does the legwork so that school leaders can focus on key information and hold targeted interviews with potential vendors if necessary. The FSNO also supports the purchasing of DART passes, which are then distributed by the administrative assistant under the supervision of the Dean of Students. To allow us to make preliminary plans, families select their preferred option for transportation before the start of the school year. The Dean of Students is the liaison between the School and any transportation vendors regarding route adjustments, delays, incidents, training, and other similar matters. The FSNO supports oversight of safety compliance aspects the vendor is responsible for, such as driver background checks and drug tests, driver training, equipment and insurance, and drills.

5. Safety and Security.

a. Describe your plan for safety and security for students, staff, guests, and property.

b. Explain the types of safety and security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ to provide a safe and healthy environment in accordance with 14 Del. C. § 512(12) and the safety provisions included in the Compliance Certification Statement.

c. Explain your process to create and maintain the required emergency preparedness plan that is in compliance with the Emergency Preparedness Guidelines established by 29 Del. C. § 8237 and 14 DE Admin. Code § 621, and approved by the Department of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS). Identify which position will have primary responsibility for this plan.

The Board of Trustees and the FSNO team work together to ensure that the Head of School is building and maintaining a safe learning environment and keeping strong emergency plans in place at all times. The Head of School may designate individuals to serve in various roles to

support a strong school-centered emergency management program for FCSN. In compliance with 29 Del. C. § 8237(d)(1), FCSN will have a dedicated school safety team responsible for the development and implementation of a Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP). For us, the responsibilities of the school safety team go beyond emergency preparedness to also include suicide prevention, bullying prevention, and day-to-day measures to help keep all members of the FCSN community safe.

As the person primarily responsible for school culture, the Dean of Students is also the point person for school safety, with support from the Head of School and the FSNO Operations Manager. The FSNO Operations Manager supports the School's administration in preparing the CSSP, assisting with writing and revising the plan as well as sharing best practices in school safety both generally and from across other schools in the Freire Schools network. The FSNO Operations Manager currently works with the Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS) to ensure that FCSN's CSSP is compliant and up to date and will do the same to support FCSN. The FSNO helps coordinate network-wide professional learning around school safety so that the leaders at each of our schools are knowledgeable about the best practices for prevention, response, and compliance. Having well-trained, knowledgeable leaders is the foundational step in ensuring school safety.

The next step is ensuring that our physical facilities are safe. That begins with the design, permitting, build-out, and inspection process to ensure that the overall design of the school building is geared toward safety and building materials are fire-rated and free of hazards like asbestos, lead, or mold. It also includes installing proper fire alarm and fire suppression (sprinkler) systems and designing for safe egress. FCSN will have a relationship with a licensed fire protection company, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and Christiana Fire Co. Station 12 to ensure that we are compliant on annual system inspections. We comply with 14 Del. Code § 4109 (a) and 16 Del. C. § 6612 (i), equipping our schools with adequate numbers of fire extinguishers, leaving all egress doors unlocked from the inside during school hours, and holding fire drills once every month while school is in session. We also hold lockdown drills twice a year and tabletop exercises annually per 29 Del. C. § 8237(f). Physical security measures include a designated check in location at the primary point of entry, a key control system with designated personnel having different levels of access, and internal and external video surveillance, flood lights, and alarms.

FCSN will collaborate with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) at DSHS to develop, submit, and annually update a CSSP that is tailored to our facility. It will include procedural outlines for school evacuation scenarios, lockdown scenarios, medical emergencies, mental health emergencies, school visitors, security protocol, and keeping classroom doors locked. In responding to a critical incident, the plan will provide for responding with the following priorities: (1) Save Lives, (2) Incident Stabilization, (3) Property Preservation, (4) Recovery. The CSSP will primarily be designed for use by management personnel at the school level; however, it will be important for all staff to be aware of their responsibilities in an emergency. In addition to the emergency plan itself, assessments, resources, site mapping data, training programs and resources are contained in the Navigate EMS system. The plan and

access to Navigate EMS will be distributed to the appropriate personnel.

Another integral action to ensure safety is to take the steps required by law to screen out individuals who may have a criminal or child protection history that should prevent them from having direct access to children. Employees, Board members, contractors, bus drivers, volunteers, and student teachers must have criminal background checks and child protection registry checks in compliance with 14 DE Admin. Code §§ 275.12, 745, and 746, 31 Del. Code § 309, and 11 Del. Code Chap. 85.

Other important safety measures will be to:

- Establish an MOU with the New Castle County Division of Police.
- Comply with school bus safety regulations of 14 DE Admin. Code Chap. 1100 and applicable federal standards, including drug screenings and evacuation drills.
- Maintain a chemical hygiene plan per 14 DE Admin. Code § 885.
- Secure Property & Casualty insurance as described in Attachment 20, including annual coverage review with our insurance broker and, where appropriate, purchasing lines of coverage that go above and beyond the state's minimum requirements.
- Design HVAC systems with MERV-13 filters, a high volume of fresh air intake, and/or devices like ionizers as recommended by professionals.
- Follow practices described elsewhere in the application, such as training on the use of physical restraints, MTSS, peer mediation, generative conflict, and others.
- Ensure that staff are trained in topics including those required by 14 Del. Code Chap. 41, Subchp. II such as child abuse awareness, bullying prevention, and gang detection.
- Ensure that the kitchen space and food preparation and sanitation meet health code.

6. Lunch/Breakfast. Describe the plan for providing meals to students, including homeless students and others students eligible for free or reduced price meals. If the school plans to contract for meals, identify the contractor, if known, and describe the services to be provided.

(Note! Passed In 2013, 14 Del. C. §506(f) states that if a child would qualify for a no- or low-cost breakfast or lunch under a federal national school breakfast or lunch program, then the charter school shall provide breakfast and lunch to the child at no or low cost to the child's family, beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Charter schools shall not consider whether a child would qualify for no- or low-cost breakfast or lunch under a federal national school breakfast or lunch program when making enrollment decisions.)

In compliance with 14 Del. Code §506(f), we offer free and reduced-price meals to all eligible families, and do so through participation in USDA school meals programs administered by DDOE's Office of School Nutrition. In order to serve meals through this program, we comply with 42 U.S.C. § 1751 and 7 C.F.R. § 210 et seq. Our team at FCSW, with support from FSNO, developed several years of experience operating as its own School Food Authority (SFA) from 2015 to 2019. In 2019 we had the opportunity to partner with the Community Education Building (CEB) and have our school meal programs operate under the CEB's SFA. This has been an extremely beneficial partnership for FCSW, allowing our staff to focus on instruction

and climate and bring in outside experts on nutrition and food preparation. In addition, this has been more cost efficient for us. We plan to extend this partnership so that the CEB can continue lending their expertise and professional oversight to our programs for breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Especially given the importance of breakfast for high school students, we will follow 41 Del. Code § 4137 and provide alternative service models for school breakfast, such as breakfast in the classroom. While FCSW currently operates under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and serves free meals for all students, we are aware that in FCSN's first year we must collect household applications. We will review the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) as of 4/1/24 before making a decision about whether to pursue CEP for the 2024-25 year.

7. Student Health Services. Describe the plan to ensure the health of students. Describe how the school will provide health services to all students, including the plan to hire a School Nurse and a description of his/her role in the school. The response must include how the school will promote student health and well-being. The response must also include who at the school will supervise the School Nurse and his/her role in ensuring compliance with health regulations.

FCSN is committed to supporting the whole student, and that means ensuring that our student health services address students' physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs so that they can be prepared for achievement in school. Before the pandemic, student health services were an important part of our comprehensive school services; now, they are more vital than ever. To ensure students' health, FCSN will take into account the most up to date state and federal guidance in COVID mitigation strategies. These strategies may include ventilation, hygiene, disinfecting, vaccination, mask wearing, distancing, COVID testing, and contact tracing/quarantining/isolation.

The school nurse will play a leading role in implementing the School's mitigation strategies plus our overall student health services program. To that end, FCSN will hire a certified school nurse. The school nurse will hold a bachelor's degree in nursing and possess a current nursing license. The school nurse's regular job duties will be to provide direct nursing care, health screenings and referrals (including BMI calculations, vision and hearing screening), ensure immunizations are up to date for students, coordinate care for students with chronic health conditions, and take an active role in teaching students about their bodies and how to maintain positive health. Further, the school nurse will work with students in pregnancy prevention, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and any and all other issues that may come up while serving high schoolers. The nurse will do so in their one-on-one confidential consultations with students, by visiting health classes, and by working with the Leadership Team to address any health concerns at the level of the student body itself in a proactive and strategic way. The nurse will work to ensure a strong bond with parents, as a way to triangulate student learning during the day. The Head of School will oversee the nurse in all capacities, with compliance support from the FSNO in areas such as 14 DE Admin. Code § 804 regarding immunizations, § 811 regarding health recordkeeping, § 815 regarding examinations and screenings, and § 817 regarding medications and treatments. The school nurse will follow the Delaware School Nurse Manual published by DDOE's School Health

Services Office.

Another key part of our student health services is our health education program. All students will be required to take health in 10th grade, which will include instruction on injury prevention and safety (including CPR), wellness, nutrition, reproductive health, and tobacco, drugs, and alcohol. Our course scope and sequence can be found in Attachment 4. We plan to offer a variety of extracurricular clubs and sports that encourage students to practice wellness and stay active. In addition, as a participant in the USDA School Meals Programs, we will develop a local wellness policy. Included in this policy will be nutrition guidelines for all food and beverages available for sale on campus during the school day aligned to school meal and snack nutrition standards. We will implement this plan to promote wellness, prevent and reduce childhood obesity, and ensure that our food service program is promoting good nutrition.

8. Insurance Coverage. Provide, as Attachment 20, a list of the types of insurance coverage that the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage in accordance with 14 Del. C. § 512(10). Types of insurance should include, without limitation, workers' compensation, liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, and other. The Applicant should contact the Insurance Coverage Office at (302) 739-3651 or 877-277-4185 for further information on liability protection for public schools in Delaware.

Please see Attachment 20.

9. Student Records. Describe the plan for the timely transfer of student and school data and records to the Department of Education, pursuant to 14 Del. C. § 512(13). (Note! eSchool is the electronic system the State uses to enter and count students.)

We comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding the privacy and disclosure of student records, including the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 14 Del. Code § 4111, and 14 DE Admin. Code § 252. In Delaware, we use the state's eSchoolPLUS pupil accounting system. The use of this system ensures that timely transfer of student data and records to other schools and to DDOE is largely built into how we operate on a day-to-day basis. The FSNO provides back-end support to schools in the Freire Schools network, including technology support and user provisioning from the IT team, data management and analytics through the Performance Management team, and practices and disclosure support through the Operations and Compliance team. We train all staff to use the mandatory eSchool system as part of their responsibilities. Further, we have experience with key student data processes such as unit count, transportation eligible count, and graduation/dropout verification. The Head of School ensures that administrative staff are trained in handling records requests from parents and new schools, and will reach out to the FSNO if legal or compliance questions ever arise.

1.9 Facilities

14 Del. C. § 512(8) and (12)

1. Discuss the school's facility needs based on the educational program and projected enrollment. Discuss both short-term and long-term facility plans. Demonstrate that the estimate included in your budget is reasonable.

At full capacity, FCSN will serve 500 students in grades 9-12. Based on this projected enrollment, our facility must include enough space for at least 18 classrooms. FCSN's school building will also include a computer room, a gymnasium, nurse's office, offices for administration, and a cafetorium. Other ideal amenities include a science lab, library, and a shared art and music room. Classrooms will be designed around curriculum and outfitted with technology that helps support different learning styles and teaching methods. In collaboration with an architect, we have developed a space plan to determine the types and amount of space we need to effectively operate our school (See Attachment 21a). This space plan is guiding us as we conduct our search for a safe and welcoming school facility. Please see Attachment 21b for the floor plan for the facility currently under consideration (248 Chapman Road, Newark, DE).

The facility's construction will most likely occur in two phases tied to the number of students enrolled. FCSN expects to enroll 225 students in Year 1, allowing for phase 1 of construction, which will complete roughly half of the building. We expect to enroll 350 students in Year 2, which will initiate the second and final phase of construction. Completing construction in two phases allows the School to ramp up funding streams in a more fiscally responsible way, as funding will increase with enrollment. We expect we will need to secure a loan for tenant improvements as well as pay rent in the first five years. The total combined cost for both loan repayment rent and utilities will be approximately 20% of the budget. In addition, our financial plan intentionally has us saving money so that by year four we will have approximately \$900,000 (or 47 days cash on hand) in reserves to address any unforeseen capital expenses.

2. If the applicants have identified a facility, state where the school will be located (including county location and any other location specifics) and, as Attachment 21, provide floor plans of the school that identifies each room and whether the building will be new construction or an existing building. Include a detailed description of the facility that includes the number of acres.

a. If the site has been identified, list the detailed terms and/or conditions for the use of the facility. If not, describe the plans to identify a suitable facility.

The FCSN team has identified a viable location based on the needs of our school; however, as we are in the early stages of negotiations, the location is subject to change. With that in mind, the school will be located in New Castle County, Delaware. The current first choice of building is located on 6.72 acres at 248 Chapman Road, Newark, DE, and was originally built in the 1980s as an office building. It is a two-story building with a center entrance that is mirrored on either

side. There are large windows around the perimeter of the building, which will allow for bright and airy classrooms.

How students feel as they approach their school building can set the tone of the day. For that reason, FCSN has made it a priority to ensure that there is adequate green space around the building. The proposed building is close to I-95, but the outdoor space is such that a protective calm is more prevalent than the sounds of traffic. The amount and layout of the outdoor space will allow students to participate in outdoor activities onsite. There are picnic tables for lunch and outdoor study groups. Equally valuable is the driveway that surrounds the school building for easy bus drop off. It is a private drive that is unlikely to be busy outside of school starting and ending times. The building is also a 0.3 mile walk from a DART route #10 stop, which would allow students and staff to potentially use public transportation to get to and from school. Ample parking is available, sufficient to allow some students to drive themselves to school.

FCSN may not be the only tenant of our eventual building. However, as the main tenant, occupying the majority of the building under consideration, should the negotiations continue, FCSN will have right of first refusal as to the other tenant. There will be a shared parking lot, with FCSN having access to 302 spaces, leaving 101 spaces for the second tenant. In this hypothetical shared space, there will be separate entrances to protect our students' safety, which is our first priority.

The intent is to lease building space with an option to purchase upon renewal of the charter. However, if mutually agreeable, there will also be the option to extend the lease. All schools in the Freire Network have triple net leases, which gives FCSN the ability to maintain the mechanical and cleaning for the building to our standards. The landlord will be expected to maintain the core and shell of the structure.

b. If a facility has not been identified, specify potential locations that are under consideration, and discuss the process and timeline for selecting, acquiring, renovating (if appropriate), and taking occupancy of a suitable facility.

While the site on Chapman Road is currently the frontrunner, we are continuing to look at other options, and would entertain sharing a building with another school. With regard to the timeline, FCSN will honor the requirement of having a certificate of occupancy by June 2023. Between now and the approval of this charter, the FCSN team will continue to look at properties, evaluate options, and look at the leasing options. Once the charter is approved and funding stream is more concrete, FCSN will begin phase 1 of construction so that the space will be ready for students before securing the certificate of occupancy in June 2023 (two months before the school opens to students). Phase 2 of construction will begin the following year, with the entirety of the school's construction complete by August 2024.

c. Explain how the facility will meet the needs of students. Provide an assurance that it will be accessible to students with physical disabilities.

Creating an educational space that is safe and accessible for all students, regardless of physical or cognitive limitations, is non-negotiable for us. The proposed building already has elevators and ramps to ensure that all spaces are physically accessible to everyone. To provide additional ease of access, hallways will be wide, rooms and door-ways will be large, and multiple bathrooms on each floor will accommodate wheelchairs. In addition to those with physical disabilities, it is important to FCSN to have spaces for those that are comfortable for people who are neurodivergent. This includes providing “clarity of wayfinding.” Rooms and hallways will be labeled, potentially color coded, and identified in a way that provides a safe, accessible path. Walls and hallways will be painted in calm colors and will be kept clear of wall clutter. The use of LED lighting will reduce the buzz of fluorescent ballasts. Where necessary, classrooms will be outfitted with educational technology that is supportive for learners who are visually impaired and/or hearing impaired.

d. To the extent that the Applicant has discussed or established specific lease or purchase terms, include the proposed terms and any draft agreements. Ensure that all costs are included in the budget.

Specific lease terms have not been negotiated yet, but we will keep the Charter School Accountability Committee and DE Department of Education informed of our progress.

See Attachment 24, our business plan, for additional details on funding.

1.10 Budget and Finance

14 Del. C. §§ 512(8)-(9)

Per the application instructions, please see the attached budget documents as Attachments 19, 22, 23, and 24.