

**FREIRE SCHOOLS ELEMENTARY EXPANSION
 BUILD THE FUTURE EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE
 FY2019 GRANTS TO CHARTER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS
 FOR REPLICATION AND EXPANSION OF HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER
 SCHOOLS (CFDA 84.282M)
 PROJECT NARRATIVE**

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INTRODUCTION

Freire is a high achieving network of three urban public charter schools (4 campuses) serving approximately 2,000 students in grades 5-12 in Philadelphia, PA and Wilmington, DE. Driven by the idea that all students can achieve excellence under the right conditions, we provide students from educationally disadvantaged communities with a rigorous, creative education that develops concrete skills and love-centered values to produce collaborative and courageous citizen leaders ready to build the future. Our flagship school, Freire Charter School (FCS), opened as a high school in fall 1999 and expanded to serve grades 5-12 (adding a middle school campus) in fall 2012. FCS has a 19-year record of success in closing the achievement gap and preparing historically underserved Philadelphia students for college. FCS has been a catalyst for unlocking the potential of some of Philadelphia's most underserved youth. Replicating the successful Freire model, Freire Charter School Wilmington (FCSW) opened in fall 2015, followed by TECH Freire Charter School (TFCS) in fall 2016. Freire's charter management organization, Build the Future Education Collaborative (BtF), spun off from FCS on July 1, 2015 as a non-profit CMO to manage the three separate charter schools.

The world has changed since Freire was founded in 1999, and we are evolving with it. Freire has uniquely served Philadelphia and Wilmington, rising to challenges and utilizing resources in our communities. In addition to providing a rigorous college preparatory program, we have learned that students find the learning process more meaningful when topics are relevant to their lives, needs, and interests. We also know that students need to feel safe before they can meaningfully participate in their own learning. As such, we combine social-emotional learning, problem-based and creative learning, extensive out of school programming, and partnerships with outside organizations to create an educational program that is uniquely 'Freire' and

successful in preparing students for postsecondary success (see our responses to Selection Criteria (a) and (b) and Appendix I.1 for more detail about our program).

Freire is now poised to expand two of its current schools to serve elementary students, working toward providing a full K-12 continuum at those schools, and growing our network-wide student population from 2,000 to 3,250 by the year 2025. To aid in clarity throughout this application, the table below provides a summary of each entity as it relates to this project:

Term	Entity	Details
Freire	All	Refers to all Freire schools and our general approach
BtF	Build the Future Education Collaborative	Opened in 2015 as a non-profit organization managing all Freire schools; provides executive, educational, operations, financial, and advancement services
FCS	Freire Charter School	Opened in 1999 and currently has two campuses: <u>FCS-MS</u> with grades 5-8 and <u>FCS-HS</u> with grades 9-12; we plan to build a third campus, <u>FCS-ES</u> , to add grades K-4
FCSW	Freire Charter School Wilmington	Opened in 2015 and currently has one campus with grades 8-12 (<u>FCSW-HS</u>); we plan to build a second campus, <u>FCSW-E/MS</u> , to add grades K-7
TFCS	TECH Freire Charter School	Opened in 2016 and currently has one campus with grades 9-12; as TFCS is the newest Freire school, expansion is not being considered at this time

As these new grades will be added under existing charters, this project is technically an expansion. We will not need to incorporate new entities, form new governance boards, or set up new benefits plans. Operationally, these expansions will require nearly every element of opening a new school. Each expansion will require its own new, separate facility and will be led by independent leadership and school administration separate from the existing campuses. We are looking for new buildings for these younger grades, forming multiple campuses per charter school. This will enable Freire to maintain the small school environment that is critical to serving our students’ urgent needs through individual attention and administrative flexibility. At the same time, the network model affords our school leaders the ability to depend on their colleagues

across the network for advice, as well as on the CMO for administrative support needs and guidance so that they can focus their full attention on students.

1. ABSOLUTE PRIORITY

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2—LOW-INCOME DEMOGRAPHIC

Freire Schools Low-Income Summary 2018-19 (Oct 1)				
	Freire	FCS	FCSW	TFCS
Grades Currently Served	5-12	5-12	8-12	9-12
Number of Students	1974	1002	479	493
Low-Income Students	1,265	661	244	360
Low-Income Percentage	64%	66%	51%	73%

The table above shows the percentages of students from low-income families across all schools BtF manages, using Direct Certification figures for Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals under the National School Lunch Program. As indicated, our network-wide percentage (64%) and each individual school meets Absolute Priority 2 as they exceed the requirement of 40%. Further, schools that collect NSLP Meal Benefits Applications traditionally report significantly higher low-income percentages than schools that use the Direct Certification method. For this reason, USDA rules currently use a multiplier of 1.6 to create NSLP eligibility, putting our network-wide projected equivalent low-income number at 100%.

Using solely the naturally lower Direct Certification figures, Freire has a demonstrated history of serving a low-income population exceeding the 40% CSP requirement. Our network-wide low-income percentage was 52% in 2014-15, 50% in 2015-16, and 55% in 2016-17. We will maintain a similar network-wide percentage of low-income students during the grant period by recruiting students from economically disadvantaged areas and likely locating new buildings in such areas as well. The Freire program is specifically designed to be inclusive of disadvantaged students, including low-income students, making such students a good fit for our

schools. Freire will maintain this focus as we continue to build our reputation, support network, and student body. See Appendix E for more information.

2. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1—PROMOTING DIVERSITY

All Freire schools emphatically observe nondiscrimination requirements contained in the U.S. Constitution and Federal and State civil rights laws. Consistent with PA and DE charter school laws, no Freire schools use weighted lotteries or enrollment preferences to attempt to reach demographic quotas. Students come to our schools through family choice and randomized lottery. In Philadelphia, Freire has a long-running reputation for quality within the African American community, and, while we welcome any and all students, due to overwhelming demand from that community the lottery outcome is that our students are predominantly African American. With Freire’s positive track record for high achievement, the opportunity to open an elementary school in Philadelphia renews our opportunity to recruit students from racially and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds at a younger age.

With Freire being new to Delaware, FCSW, meanwhile, has the opportunity to place an intentional focus on recruiting and retaining students from racially and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds and maintaining a racially and socioeconomically diverse student body as it continues to build its reputation, support network, and student body. The highest performing charter schools in Delaware (all containing high percentages of Caucasian and Asian students and low percentages of African American, Hispanic, and low-income students and students with disabilities) each currently rely on geographic or academic enrollment preferences that, in effect, heavily skew their enrollments to the highest performing students. Our intent is for FCSW to become one of the highest performing charter schools in Delaware, but to do so while attracting

students that do not come from privilege, but rather any students who have the drive, desire and dream to graduate from college, start a career, and better their communities.

Wilmington and its surrounding communities have had a long history of educational segregation, with federal intervention taking place on more than one occasion. Within the context of the desegregation actions that Delaware has taken since the late 1970s, school district lines were re-drawn. The City of Wilmington was divided into sections, creating several districts each including suburbs and a portion of the city. Wilmington students were bussed outside the city center to peripheral suburban locations far from home. The result of this was devastating to Wilmington in myriad ways. FCSW has sought to foster diversity through intentional location. By placing our building in the city center, we have allowed Wilmington residents, again, their own local high school; in fact, FCSW is presently the only public college preparatory school inside city limits serving grades 9-12. A location in central Wilmington appeals to the widest group of community members possible without being considered dominated by any one racial group. Furthermore, a location in the city, where the majority of residents are low-income, provides the low-income population of Wilmington with access to a top-notch college preparatory public school close to home.

Since opening, FCSW has maintained a diverse racial composition that has included a four-year average of 70% African American, 12% white, 12% Hispanic, and 6% other nonwhite students. We plan to maintain or increase the level of racial diversity with the expansion to younger grade levels, as we have found through informal market analysis that starting earlier will facilitate diversity in recruitment. Early students tend to be demographically clustered (attending child care or living on blocks or in buildings with homogeneous demographics), making targeted recruitment efforts more efficient. In Delaware, high school alumni affiliations are very strong,

which presented a hurdle when recruiting for a brand new high school. With a younger population, families will be more open to exploring innovative educational options. Finally, we will publish our promotional materials and application form in more languages and seek bilingual student recruitment staff.

Regarding socioeconomic diversity, we project FCSW maintaining a low-income percentage of around 50%, which represents a range of family financial situations.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES 2-4

We are not competing for these priorities.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 5—NOVICE APPLICANTS

Build the Future (BtF) qualifies as a Novice Applicant because while FCSW and TFCS have previously received CSP grants through the CSP Developer program (formerly known as the non-SEA program), BtF has never received a federal grant, including under this program or any other discretionary program, since opening in 2015, nor has it been funded as a member of a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

(a) QUALITY OF THE ELIGIBLE APPLICANT

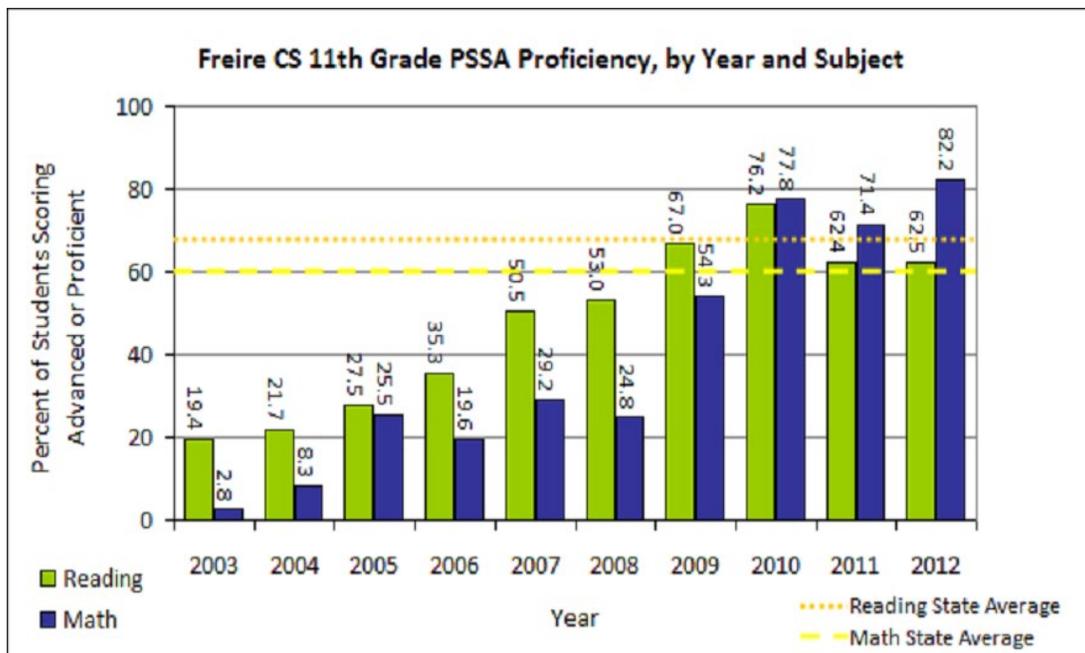
(a)(i) Results Exceed Other Public Schools in the State

Freire has nearly two decades of success in raising student achievement for a largely educationally disadvantaged student population and preparing them for success in college at rates that exceed local, state, and national averages for low-income students. At our flagship school, FCS-HS, we have exceeded the School District of Philadelphia's performance on the Keystone assessment in Literature and Algebra every year since 2013-14. Our first expansion project, FCS-MS, demonstrates our ability to successfully transfer our educational model to a younger population. In 2017-18, there is significant evidence that FCS-MS exceeded the state benchmark

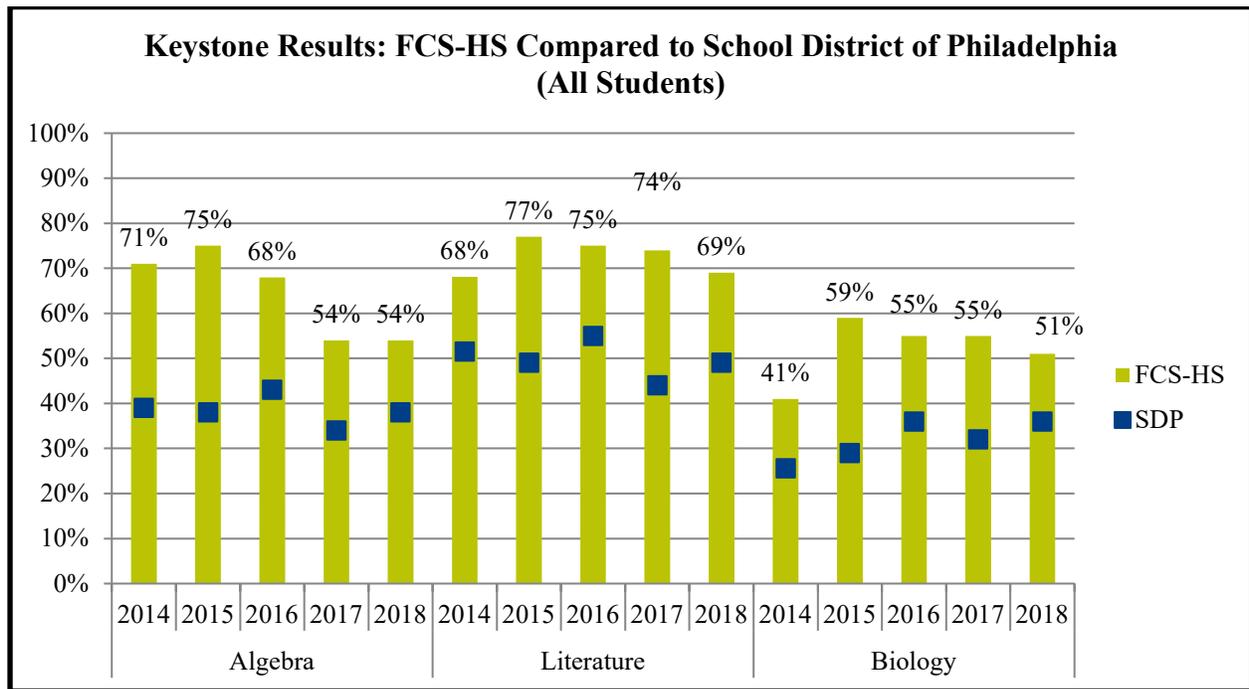
for growth in Math, ELA, and Science. FCS-MS also had the highest growth score in Math of any middle school across PA. Our two newest schools are able to boast early success. At FCSW, in our first year receiving a rating for SAT results (2017-18) our proficiency rate in ELA exceeded the state average. TFCS exceeded the standard for PA academic growth in Literature and Biology and met the standard for academic growth in Algebra in 2017-18. In Algebra, there is evidence that TFCS students in all achievement groups met the standard for Pennsylvania academic growth. Supporting data for this Selection Criterion can be found in Appendix G.

As TFCS and FCSW prepare to graduate their first senior classes, we are excited to monitor our alumni to see how our high school graduates grow into college graduates. At the same time, the entire Freire network seeks to build upon its successes and continue to raise our rates of student proficiency. Below we have outlined the Freire network’s performance data, including data for educationally disadvantaged students. As assessments differ across state and grade configurations differ across the network, we present this data on a school by school basis.

FCS-HS (Freire Charter School – High School)



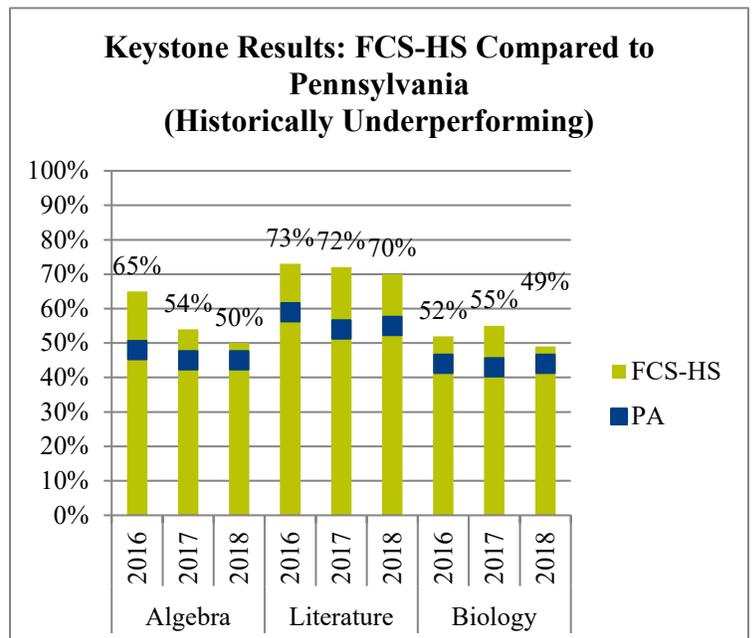
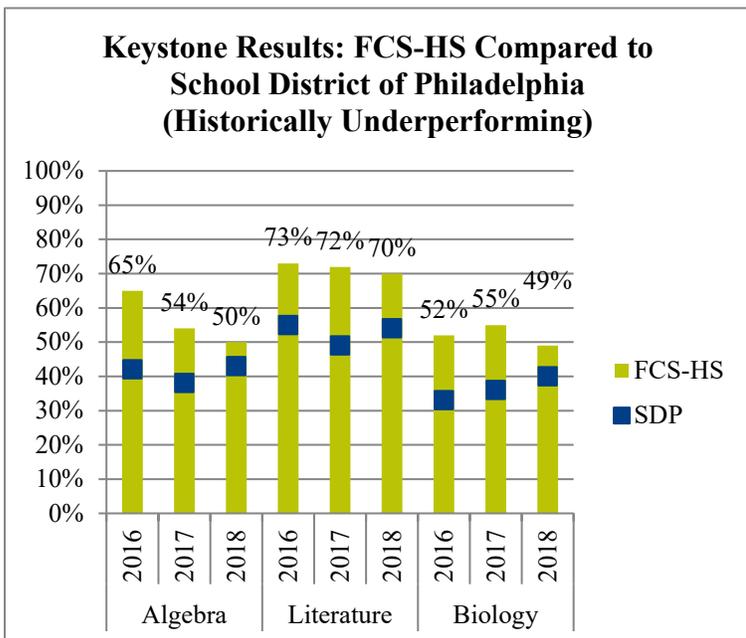
FCS-HS has a proven track record of academic success over the past two decades. During the time when the state used the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) for high school grades and FCS was a high school only (2003-2012), we demonstrated a dramatic upward trend in proficiency rates over time, becoming comparable to the state average. Since 2012-13, Pennsylvania has assessed students in Algebra, Literature, and Biology using the Keystone Exam (primarily for 11th grade, although students could test earlier based on course sequencing).



FCS-HS has exceeded the School District of Philadelphia’s performance on the Keystone assessment in Literature and Algebra every year since 2013-14. Freire has received notable indications of success from the PA Department of Education. In 2015, based on the State’s accountability system, **Freire ranked in the top five high schools in Philadelphia (and was the only school in the top five with open enrollment serving primarily low-income students of color).** We were also proud to be recognized as a Title I Distinguished School in that year. In 2017-18, 54% of 11th graders were proficient in Algebra compared to 38% at the District; 51% of 11th graders were proficient in Biology compared to 36% at the District; and 69% of

11th graders were proficient in Literature compared to 49% at the District. Our teacher coaching program, our work aligning teacher-created assessments to standards, and our 11th grade interventions have all contributed to this strong performance.

FCS-HS has also had great success in serving educationally disadvantaged students. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) accountability system uses the subgroup “Historically Underperforming Students,” which is defined as a non-duplicated count of students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Learners (we use this term for consistency with state reporting, though we would prefer to say “historically underserved”). For the past three years, FCS-HS’s Historically Underperforming Students have exceeded the state average in Algebra, Biology, and Literature. In 2017-18, 50% of historically underperforming FCS-HS students were proficient in Algebra compared to the 45% State average; 49% of historically underperforming students were proficient in Biology compared to the 44% State average; and 70% of historically underperforming students were proficient in Literature compared to the 55% State average.



While we are proud to be continually outperforming other schools in these ways, we have not ignored a schoolwide dip in proficiency across all three disciplines over the past three years. In response, we have changed FCS-HS's academic leadership, hired a new network-wide Director of Learning to provide teacher and leader coaching, and implemented Renaissance Star 360 benchmark assessments with fidelity. We undertook these initiatives because we remain committed to continuous improvement for every Freire student.

We are also proud of the growth our students have achieved at FCS-HS. Using the three-year average as calculated by PDE, there is significant evidence that our students have exceeded the benchmark for growth in Algebra and Biology and moderate evidence that they have exceeded the benchmark in Literature. Our 2018 Algebra results showcase the fulfillment of our growth goals: we not only maintained overall significant evidence that our students exceeded the state benchmark for growth, but further, **students from all achievement quintiles exceeded the standard for growth and FCS-HS was in the 87th percentile** for growth in Algebra statewide. This impressive growth demonstrated the success of restructuring our math program that year.

As a college prep school, we feel that post-secondary outcomes speak strongly to our academic success. For the years in which we have comparative data (up to 2015-16), our school-wide graduation rates approach the state average and **consistently outperform the School District of Philadelphia**. When looking at low-income students, **we have begun to exceed the state average**. Our graduation rate has steadily increased over the past three years, from 82% in 2015-16 to 87% in 2017-18.

College matriculation and persistence over time have been strong. Over the past five years, an average of 93% of our students have been accepted to college and plan to attend at some point, while 77% have seamlessly enrolled the fall after graduating from Freire. Nationally,

only 68% of high school graduates enroll in college seamlessly (National Student Clearinghouse [NSC]). We have a team of staff who provide college advising, plan numerous college trips, and offer a seminar for parents to support the college search process. We also recently began using Naviance, a web-based college planning tool, to provide additional guidance and support.

More importantly, based on a four-year average, **84% of Freire alumni who start college persist to the second year of college (reaching a high of 92% in 2014), as compared to a national average of 72%** (NSC). Our college graduation rate also far exceeds the national average. FCS-HS's college completion rate within six years after high school graduation averages 37% over the past three years, as compared to a national average of just 25% for high-minority, low-income students from public non-charter schools (NSC). These norm-defying results are a testament to the work Freire does to prepare students for the rigor of college academics.

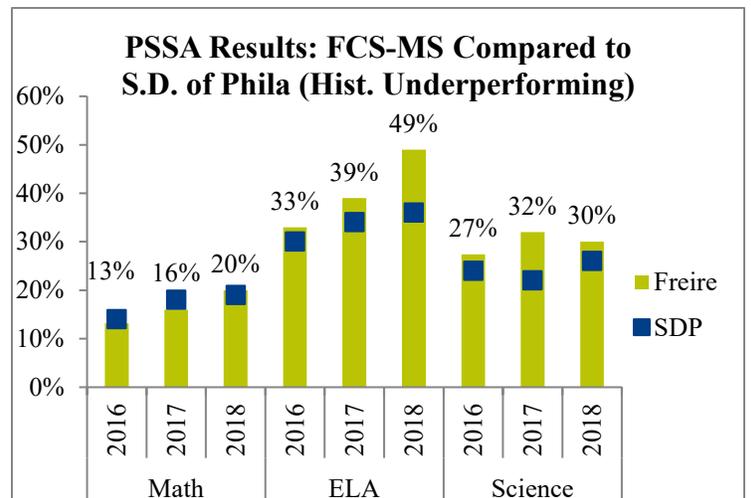
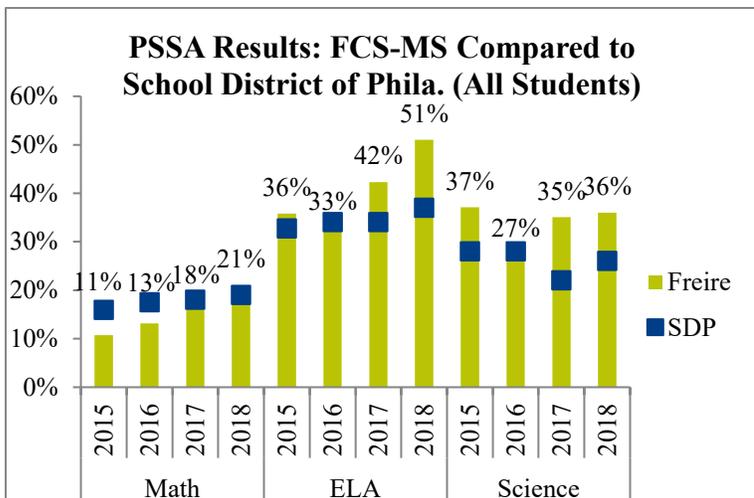
FCS-MS (Freire Charter School – Middle School)

In 2012, FCS expanded to add a separate middle school campus serving grades 5-8. The new FCS-MS replicated key elements of the FCS-HS program while adapting them for younger grades. Through changes in state assessments (including realignment to PA Core Standards), FCS-MS has found its stride and has been showing improvement year after year. **We consistently exceed the School District of Philadelphia's assessment results and are now one of the top middle schools in the city.**

In Pennsylvania, students in grades 3-8 are assessed using the PSSA, with Math and English Language Arts tested in grades 3-8 and Science tested in grades 4 and 8. In 2014-15, the PSSA was realigned to the PA Core Standards (Pennsylvania's response to the Common Core). This realignment resulted in statewide drops on the PSSA; for example, the number of students

scoring proficient or better on the Math PSSA across PA dropped by 35.4 percentage points. FCS-MS, which had just opened under the previous assessment, saw its test scores decrease for a two-year period. The 2015-16 results in particular brought to our attention the need to realign the FCS-MS curriculum to the new PA Core standards as measured by the PSSAs, so that in future years our students would be properly prepared for the tests. The first year after that realignment, we outperformed our peer schools in all three subjects, but neither the District nor the charter sector as a whole. In response, our lead teachers ventured further, this time further tweaking the curriculum, changing our benchmark assessments to ensure that all relevant standards were covered and assessed prior to testing, and finding a better balance between the PSSA Science anchors and the Next Generation Science Standards. We also changed our approach to academic interventions, building intervention time into the daily schedule and using data to respond appropriately to students' individual needs. Finally, we made significant changes to our classroom-based assessments and our daily schedule.

In 2016-17, we saw a significant increase of 9 percentage points in proficiency in ELA, 7 percentage points in Science, and 4 percentage points in Math, demonstrating positive results for these changes. In 2017-18 we again posted gains in all three subjects, outperforming the District in each. Specifically, 51% of students were proficient in ELA compared to 37% at the District,



21% were proficient in Math compared to 19% at the District, and 36% were proficient in Science compared to 26% at the District. **FCS-MS was the second highest performing general admission Philadelphia public school in ELA and Math** and the 4th highest in Science (this excludes schools that have achievement-related admissions criteria). For educationally disadvantaged students, the middle school's 2017-18 PSSA scores for historically underperforming students exceeded the District and State in ELA and Science and exceeded the District in Math.

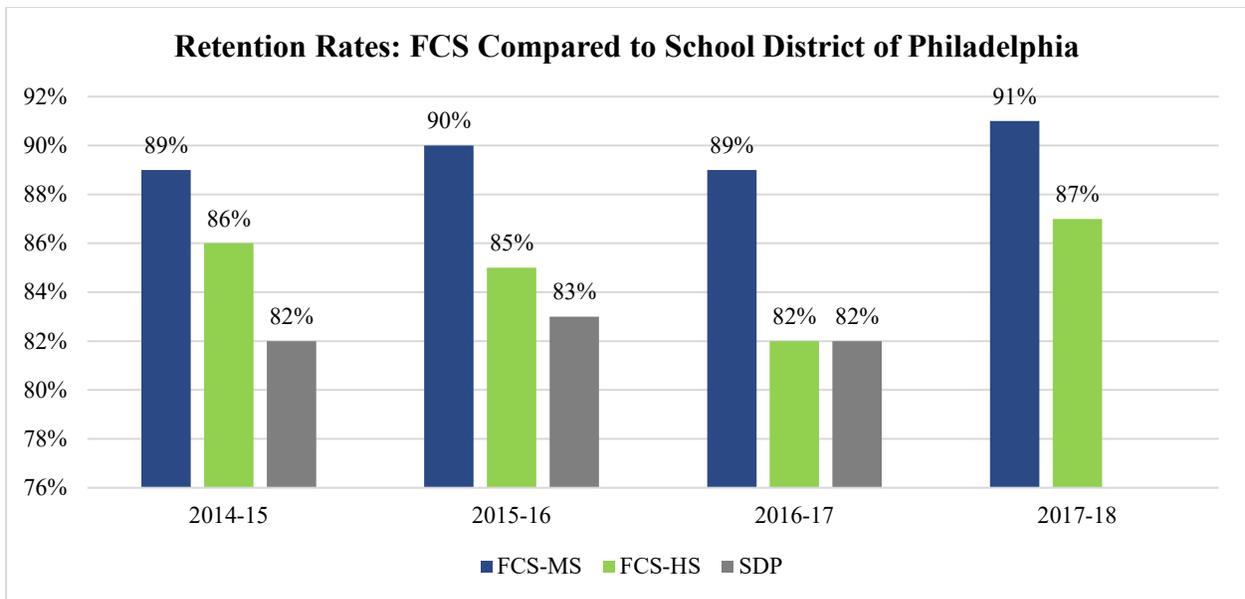
FCS-MS's growth data shows further evidence that our program is working. Using the three-year average as calculated by PDE, **there is significant evidence that our students have exceeded the benchmark for growth in all grades and subjects** except for 5th grade ELA (where we met the benchmark). Based solely on 2017-18, there is significant evidence that FCS-MS exceeded the state benchmark for growth in all grades and subjects except for 7th grade ELA (where there was moderate evidence we exceeded the benchmark). **Moreover, FCS-MS had the highest growth score in Math across Pennsylvania.** Students from all achievement quintiles met or exceeded the growth benchmark across all grade levels and subjects, demonstrating our success in helping all students grow regardless of their incoming achievement level.

FCS (Freire Charter School, MS and HS Campuses Combined)

Overall, FCS's past performance history demonstrates a clear ability to build long-term trends in increasing our student growth and proficiency rates over time. We have maintained high quality curriculum and instruction throughout every year, but in the past we have struggled to recover trends when state assessments have changed. When this happened at the middle school level, we turned around performance in two years. We now have extremely strong data monitoring systems in place to immediately catch and correct alignment issues before they affect

state assessment scores. Further, improving BtF’s capacity to manage and oversee its schools in this regard, particularly our new campuses, is our top priority. We have planned for the next member to join the BtF team to be a Director of Curriculum and Assessment who will focus on effective implementation of state standards (see Appendix I.3 for job description).

Another indicator of FCS’s quality is our student retention data. During the past three years for which we have comparative data (2015-2017), FCS-HS’s cross-year retention has continually met or exceeded that of the School District of Philadelphia. At 87% in 2017-18, we still strive to average 90% or better. The leadership at FCS-HS has put together a comprehensive plan to address the root causes of attrition, including disciplinary procedures, climate and morale, and academic supports. During the same past timeframe, FCS-MS’s cross-year retention has consistently and significantly exceeded that of the School District of Philadelphia, only falling below 90% in one of those years (89% in 2016-17).



Finally, a consistent area of strength at FCS is student attendance. In the past four years, average daily attendance has exceeded 90%, peaking at 93.2% in 2017-18. While we do not have District or State comparative data for 2017-18, we have fallen just shy of the state averages for

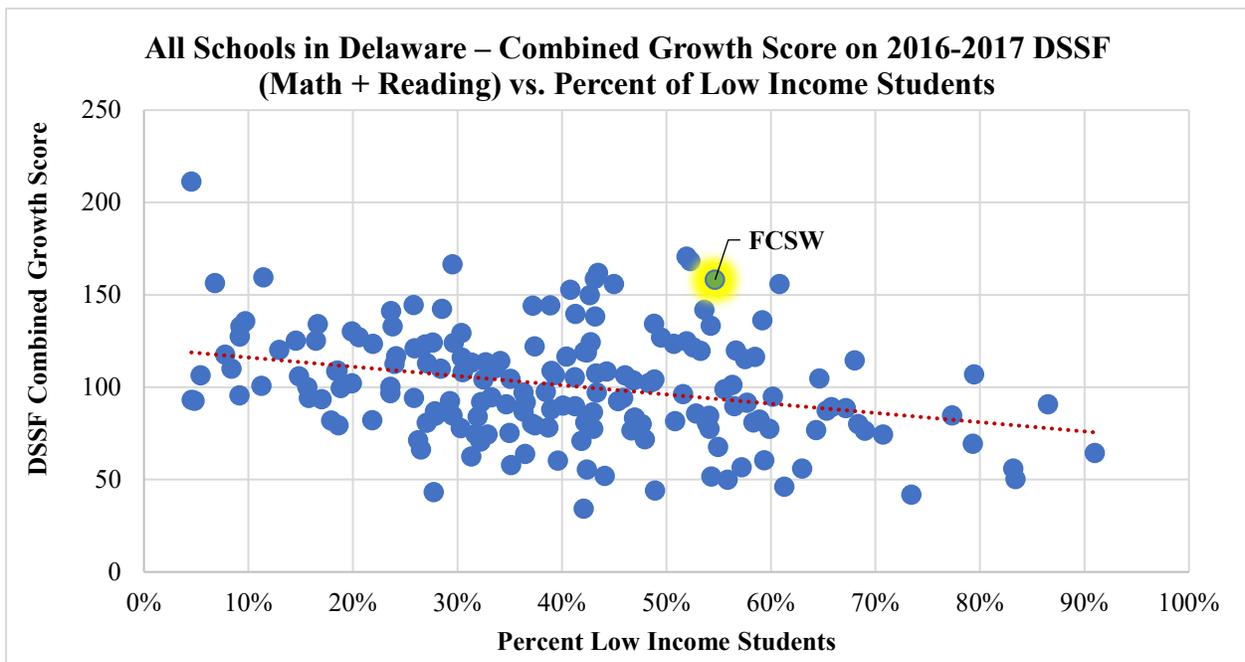
all students in each of the previous years, but **exceeded the School District of Philadelphia average each year**, including exceeding the District average each year **in the subgroups of African American, Economically Disadvantaged, and Students with Disabilities by between 1 and 5 percentage points.**

FCSW (Freire Charter School Wilmington)

At FCSW, we served students in grades 8-11 in 2017-18, that being the first year FCSW had an 11th grade. Delaware's assessment system has been in transition during our first charter term. In 2017-18, ELA and Math was assessed for 8th graders via the Smarter Balanced assessment, and for 11th graders via the SAT. Science was not assessed during the charter term per the DE state accountability system. When reviewing the achievement and growth of educationally disadvantaged students, FCSW has two subgroups, low-income and special education; there are not enough English learners to constitute a subgroup.

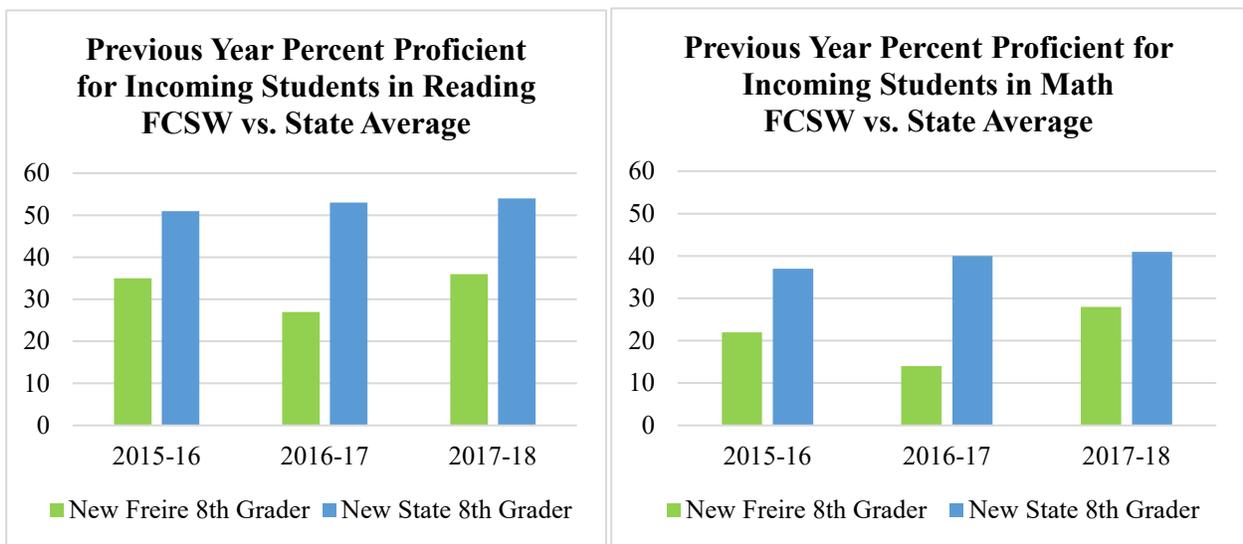
During its charter term, FCSW has been able to provide many Delaware students with a new educational option: a rigorous college preparatory curriculum in a safe and supportive environment. Moreover, FCSW consistently enrolls some of the highest rates of low-income and minority students of any high school in the state, as well as a majority of students significantly behind grade level in ELA and Math. Since its opening three years ago, FCSW has helped students achieve considerable academic growth, annually outpacing the state and most area schools despite being a young school. **In our first year receiving a rating for SAT results (2017-18), our proficiency rate in ELA exceeded the state average.** On Smarter Balanced assessments (8th grade), FCSW has exhibited tremendous growth results. **In the 2016-17 school year, ELA scores represented triple the growth of the state average, placing the school as third out of all schools statewide for growth.** Math scores represented double that of state

growth, placing us as the 14th highest in Math growth across the state. In the 2017-18 year, Freire again outpaced statewide numbers in growth on both the ELA and Math Smarter Balanced assessments. Over the charter term, Freire students have also consistently outperformed many middle schools in the neighboring Christina, Red Clay, and Colonial school districts (the districts from which we predominantly draw our students) within both the growth and proficiency metrics of these assessments. Our significant growth speaks to the strength and success of our school replication and our academic programming; our rigorous curriculum and its alignment to state assessments; and the ability of our teachers to engage students in deep critical thinking.



Though we have been able to sustain growth throughout the charter term, we recognize that it is important for us to strengthen proficiency rates. Data analysis has shown us that our incoming students are entering FCSW with lower proficiency scores compared to their peers. The proficiency rates of our incoming cohorts have been significantly lower than the state average. Further, since FCSW begins with 8th grade, we do not have students for multiple years of Smarter Balanced testing, and, thus, we only have a single year to bring incoming 8th graders

to proficiency. Additionally, our Smarter Balanced scores are based upon a new cohort of students each year, making it a challenge to build trends over time. Volatility in proficiency rates of incoming cohorts over the charter term has been an obstacle to achieving year over year increases in our proficiency rates. In response, we have implemented initiatives such as our After School Academic Centers and aligned our lessons more closely to state standards as measured by the Smarter Balanced assessments. This challenge is one of the very reasons why it is so important to expand our program to include earlier grades, as that will help us prevent gaps in the first place and help other students begin catching up earlier. We will also be better able to show year-over-year improvement trends when students are with us for more than one year of testing.



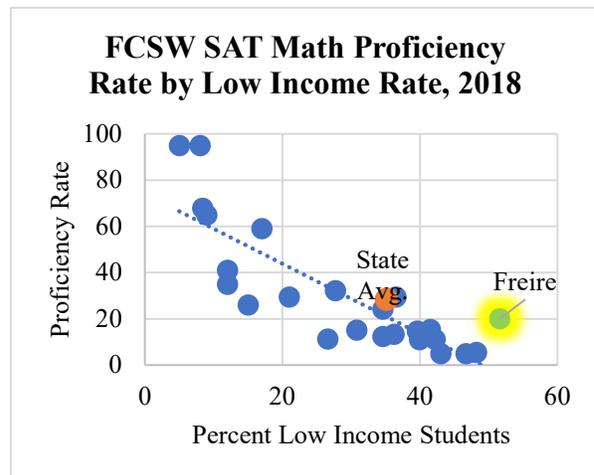
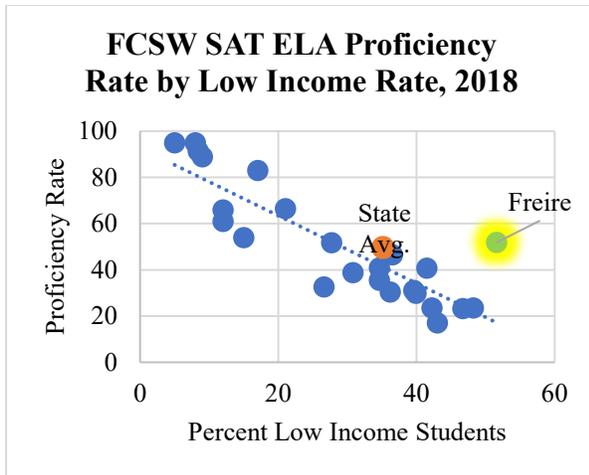
Within Smarter Balanced ELA proficiency, FCSW has experienced a year to year decline in the proficiency rates of the successive cohorts. A drop in initial proficiency in reading from year one to year two contributed to the trend of decline between these years. Incoming 8th graders in the first year of operation entered FCSW significantly less behind in reading than the subsequent year’s cohort of incoming 8th graders. Looking specifically at educationally disadvantaged students, our 2017-18 Smarter Balanced ELA scores for low-income students

were within 1 percentage point of the low-income subgroup at Christina School District, the district from which we draw the majority of our students. In special education, reporting was suppressed at both FCSW and Christina School District (in both ELA and Math).

Within Smarter Balanced Math proficiency, FCSW has seen an overall increase in scores over the charter term. From year one to year two, our proficiency dropped slightly because of the difference in the initial proficiency of incoming 8th graders from year to year. However, this was followed by a notable increase in the rate of proficiency from year two to year three. Looking at educationally disadvantaged students, our 2017-18 Smarter Balanced Math scores for low-income students exceeded the low-income subgroup at Christina School District by one point.

Our 2017-18 SAT results were promising for our first class of 11th graders. Of FCSW 11th graders, 52% scored proficient on the ELA section of the SAT, outperforming the state average by two percentage points. **Furthermore, our SAT scores outpaced many New Castle County high schools** (see charts below comparing FCSW to all high schools in the county). For low-income students (our only SAT subgroup for educationally disadvantaged students), we exceeded the Christina School District average and the DE state average on the ELA SAT. We are in a strong position to drive further success within ELA and have some foundational work to do on building stronger Math scores. We always strive for continuous improvement and will continue to develop methods to maintain progress in improving student performance.

2018-19 is the first year that FCSW will have a graduating senior class, so this is the first year we will have graduation and college acceptance data.



Attendance in high school is a critical aspect to determining college success. Thus, we have worked extensively and implemented various programs to improve our rates over the charter term, including implementing an automated attendance tracking and parent notification system. Attendance at FCSW has improved greatly since the 2015-16 school year, from 88.5% average daily attendance in 2015-16 to 94.1% in 2017-18, matching the state of DE’s average daily attendance. The state’s accountability system does not track student attendance data by subgroups. Freire will continue to improve attendance by strengthening the sense of community within the school and continuing to develop interventions to address absenteeism.

As a young school with a unique grade configuration (grades 8-12), FCSW has worked diligently to improve student retention over the course of the charter. After our first year of operation, our retention rate was 53%. For 2018-19, our retention rate was 73%. FCSW will continue to reduce attrition by continuing our programs that support positive school culture. We have also increased retention by offering more athletics and extracurricular activities in response to student demand. Additionally, to address natural attrition between grades 8 and 9, we created a new student transition program for our 8th graders. While an indicator of charter school health,

retention is not tracked by the State of Delaware. As such, comparison data at the local and state level is not available, nor is subgroup data for educationally disadvantaged students.

TFCS (TECH Freire Charter School)

TFCS is the Freire network's youngest school, opening in 2016-17 with grades 9-10. As such, only two years of performance data are available. TFCS is not proposed for expansion through this CSP grant.

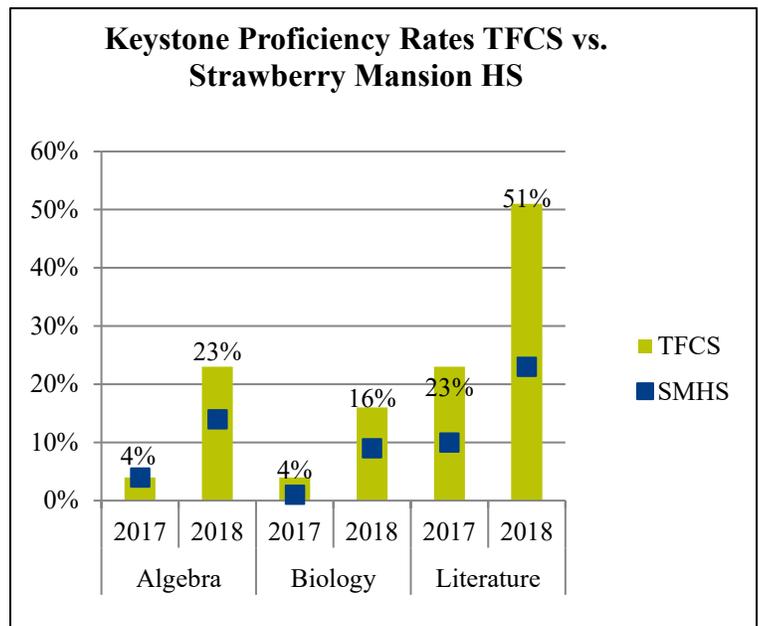
In 2016-17, many students arrived with test scores and academic backgrounds 3-4 or more years below 9th and 10th grade levels. In our first year, students had lower proficiency rates than those within our similar schools group and the School District of Philadelphia average on all three Keystone exams (Literature, Algebra, and Biology). It is worth noting that Keystone scores are typically based on each student's best attempt through 11th grade, while in 2016-17 TFCS only enrolled 9th and 10th graders. In response to these scores, we focused on better aligning the curriculum, assessments, and grading system to PA Core standards; increasing student engagement in a measurable way; and featuring at least one fully tech-integrated project in every course.

As a result of these initiatives, Literature proficiency more than doubled in 2017-18, from 23% to 51%, and Algebra proficiency increased fivefold, from 4% to 23%; these rates placed us ahead of School District of Philadelphia average in just our second year of operation. The Biology proficiency rate increased from 4% to 16%, matching that of similar schools from 2017. Looking specifically at educationally disadvantaged students, our improvement was similarly strong. Among the historically underperforming subgroup, TFCS experienced a 29-point gain in Literature, 19-point gain in Algebra, and an 11-point gain in Biology. We exceeded the District's average proficiency for historically underperforming students in all three disciplines. We are

proud of these incredible improvements, though it is an atypical year-to-year comparison due to the lack of 11th grade scores in the first year.

Regarding growth, Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS) ratings are based on within-year results only, so such scores are not affected by the change in grade configuration. These growth data demonstrate significant evidence that, in 2017-18, TFCS exceeded the Pennsylvania growth benchmark in Literature and Biology and met the benchmark in Algebra (with evidence that students in all achievement quintiles met the benchmark). As a testament to our work with the most educationally disadvantaged students, in Literature, students in the three lowest achievement quintiles exceeded the standard for growth, and in Biology, students in the lowest achievement group gained the most ground.

Additionally, whereas the other Freire schools are geographically open admission, per its authorizer TFCS has an enrollment preference for up to 60% of its population to come from the catchment area of Strawberry Mansion High School (SMHS). Therefore, a comparison of performance results with Strawberry Mansion is appropriate. In 2017-18, 23% of TFCS students were proficient in Algebra compared to 14% at Strawberry Mansion; 16% of TFCS students were proficient in Biology compared to 9% at Strawberry Mansion; and 51% of TFCS students were proficient in Literature compared to 23% at Strawberry Mansion.



TFCS has a 12th grade class for the first time in 2018-19, so no post-secondary data are yet available.

Our retention rate was 63% in 2016-17, which we attribute to the fact that students needed time to adjust to our developing culture as a new school. Retention data for 2017-18 showed a notable improvement with a 72% retention rate. The 2017-18 School District of Philadelphia retention data is not yet available for comparison, but the District-wide retention rate was 82% the year prior. We believe that the shifts made to our academic program, including expanding our Academic Advising team, ensuring that teachers and staff regularly communicate with parents to keep them involved in their students' learning, and adjusting the school day schedule to allow for time during which students and teachers work in level-differentiated intervention groups, will continue leading to improvements in student retention.

In its first two years of operation, TFCS's student average daily attendance remained steady at 89%. While state and School District of Philadelphia rates for 2017-18 will not be available until mid-January 2019, we know that TFCS came within 1% of the School District's attendance rate in 2016-17. TFCS significantly exceeded Strawberry Mansion High School's 2016-17 average daily attendance of 74.4%. In 2016-17, we fell below the School District and state average daily attendance for economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities. To improve our attendance, TFCS has implemented incentive programs and interventions to encourage students to be present and punctual. Though our average remains lower than the District's 2016-17 rate, we are very focused on developing new methods to engage parents to improve students' attendance.

(a)(ii) Schools Closed, Charters Revoked, or Affiliation Terminated

The Freire network has only ever consisted of the three charter schools listed in our Introduction, all managed by BtF (the applicant). No schools under BtF’s management have closed, either voluntarily or via revocation. No schools have ever had their affiliation from BtF revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation. All three BtF-managed charter schools (FCS, FCSW, and TFCS) are operating and in good standing with their charter authorizers. Evidence of FCS’s renewals in 2003, 2008, 2013, and 2018 and FCSW’s renewal for 2019 are attached in Appendix F. TFCS is still in its first charter term and will not receive its first renewal recommendation from its authorizer until Spring 2019 (evidence of date included).

(a)(iii) Significant Management or Compliance Problems

None of our three schools have had any significant issues in financial or operational management or student safety, nor have they otherwise experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter. This is evidenced through the fact that all charters have been renewed (see above), letters to this effect from the Delaware Charter School Office and Freire Charter School’s counsel (included in Appendices C and F), printouts from the School District of Philadelphia website showing that our schools have never received any notices of deficiency (included in Appendix F), and the fact that each school’s audit reports from the last three years show no findings (Appendix H).

(b) SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

(b)(i) Current Service to Educationally Disadvantaged Students

Since the opening of the first Freire school in 1999, the intent of the Freire educational program was to serve primarily educationally disadvantaged students—students considered at risk of academic failure based on their demographics, disability, or prior educational achievement. Our paramount goal is to help these students learn, achieve, and transform their

sense of themselves and of their futures—to raise their expectations about what they can be, in school and beyond. Our recruitment efforts and services have always aimed to attract educationally disadvantaged students, and Freire has always primarily served low-income African American students (our student body is currently 87% African American and majority low-income network-wide).

As shown in the chart at right, our Philadelphia schools have exceeded the local school district in the percentage of special education students served and been similar to or higher than the state average. At FCSW, our population of students with disabilities

	Special Education		
	SY 16	SY 17	SY 18
FCS	17%	19%	19%
TFCS	n/a	16%	21%
Philadelphia SD	15%	15%	16%
Pennsylvania	16%	19%	16%
FCSW	6%	16%	19%
Wghtd Local Avg	17%	18%	17%
Delaware	14%	15%	14%

population began somewhat small, consisting of 15 out of 234 students. In the 2016-17 school year, this population more than tripled to 52 students (out of 322), and in 2017-18 increased by 50% to 78 students with disabilities (out of 411). FCSW now serves a percentage of students with disabilities that exceeds the state average and remains comparable to local districts (average weighted by the number of FCSW students residing in four local districts).

Please see our response to Selection Criterion (a) as well as the data provided in Appendix G for our subgroup performance results. Our flagship school, FCS-HS, has demonstrated the ability to exceed the proficiency rate for special education students on the Keystone Exams, such as on the Literature exam in 2017, when **30% of our special education students were proficient as compared to 9% in the School District.**

While our English Learner (EL) population has been lower than the district average at all our campuses, we wish to note that we admit students based on open lotteries in accordance with state laws. Our schools serve predominantly African American communities without large numbers of ELs, and we therefore expect to have a substantially lower EL percentage than the District average. For example, at TFCS we have a 60% enrollment preference for students from the catchment of Strawberry Mansion High School, which

	English Learners		
	SY 16	SY 17	SY 18
FCS	0.6%	0.6%	0.2%
Comegys	0%	0.4%	0.6%
Gideon	0%	0%	0.4%
Lea	14%	15%	11%
Sayre MS	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%
West Phila. HS	1%	1%	1%
Strawb. Mn. HS	0.3%	0.3%	0%
TFCS	n/a	0.3%	0.7%
Dobbins HS		n/r*	2.1%
Vaux HS		0%	0%
Ben Franklin HS		7.1%	6.1%
Phl. Military HS		n/r*	6.4%
Strawb. Mn. HS		0.3%	0%
Philadelphia SD	8%	9%	9%
Pennsylvania	2%	3%	3%
FCSW	3%	2%	2%
Bayard MS	6.5%	8.7%	14.4%
HB du Pont MS	5.5%	5.0%	7.5%
George Read MS	7.1%	8.3%	8.6%
McCullough MS	8.1%	7.8%	10.2%
Delaware	6.4%	7.2%	9.3%

*n/r = not reported

currently has an EL population of 0% (see table for a selection of other local comparison schools). For further context, we note that half of all Philadelphia District schools have EL populations of less than 5%. Nevertheless, we design our programming to provide equal educational opportunity to all students who enroll, including ELs. Our application is published in multiple languages and we contract with a translation service to communicate with current and prospective families who speak languages other than English.

The Freire Program

Over the past nineteen years, Freire has developed, refined, and implemented the Freire Program, which is aimed at helping all students, including educationally disadvantaged students,

access our curriculum and achieve to state and national standards. A description of the Freire Program is included in Appendix I.1, with a summary of the key elements here:

- **College Prep Mission:** A college preparatory mission that includes a focus on individual freedom, critical thinking, and problem solving in an environment that emphasizes the values of community, teamwork, and non-violence. At Freire, college prep means ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to graduate from high school AND to persist in and graduate from college.
- **Deeper Learning:** Freire schools teach to achieve deeper learning, cultivating 21st century skills in the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal domains across all subjects with the goal that students achieve transferability and application of these skills and knowledge they acquire in the classroom to the real-world context. Freire has developed a Deeper Learning Evaluation Rubric (see Appendix I.8) and implemented it across all campuses, which shifts the way we evaluate and improve upon teaching, focusing on observable student outcomes over teacher inputs.
- **Emotional Supports & Freire Family:** Too many Freire students are exposed to traumatic experiences. Responding to trauma is an essential part of our model, and Freire provides for emotional support teams at every campus, academic counselors, peer mediation, hardship support, student and family therapy, and wellness programming. Freire schools take a proactive approach to building school culture and creating a Freire Family, meaning everyone is valued and the school community is built upon mutual respect, openness and honesty. See Appendix I.9 for more information on our Emotional Supports Program and Appendix I.10 for our Peer Mediation Manual.

- **Experiential Learning:** Freire believes that experience matters. At Freire, experiential learning is a series of trips, courses, and programs that emphasize hands-on experiences, bringing our classrooms to the city and the city to our classrooms through creative partnerships with an ever-evolving portfolio of community organizations.
- **Non-Violence Policy:** Each Freire campus has a non-violence policy with a robust set of behavioral and emotional supports to aid students in meeting our expectations. Students and staff resolve conflicts using nonviolence, mediation, and conflict resolution.
- **Data Driven Culture:** Data is used at every level of the organization to improve student achievement. The key elements of Freire’s data driven culture include a monthly data dashboard, in-depth analyses/deep dive reports, stakeholder surveys, and regular Data Meetings between the BtF performance team and the heads of school.
- **Teachers as Professionals:** When teachers feel supported, when they are treated as professionals, and when they feel safe to take risks, staff culture and instruction are strong. Freire supports teachers with high quality professional development through the most appropriate means, including teacher coaching, mentoring, and other methods.

Elementary/Middle School Program Elements

In addition to the general Freire Program that will be replicated with our K-8 expansion projects, there are elements specific to FCS-MS that inform our K-8 school expansion projects (See Appendix I.2).

- **Squad:** We are a family, and a family loves and cares for each other. To purposefully cultivate positive relationships between students and staff, all staff members have a “Squad”. A Squad consists of one staff member and about 10-15 students. Squads meet

weekly to provide an opportunity for students to build positive relationships while also allowing them to take ownership over their own performance data.

- **Scheduled Intervention:** Our instructional program builds support into every aspect and part of the school day. The middle school model incorporates a daily block of intervention or enrichment, depending on student need. By including intervention in the daily schedule, we can take timely action on data and ensure that we move the needle for all students, so that everyone keeps growing.
- **Power of Yet:** Realizing that we need to inspire a shift from a fixed mindset to an understanding of both our fixed and growth mindsets, we employ “Yet Cards.” To achieve these shifts for students and teachers, students are not only permitted but encouraged to retake mastery assignments at any time over the course of the year.

Service Plan for IEP and EL Students

In addition to these school-wide elements, Freire implements specialized supports for IEP and EL students. Each campus has its own Director of Student Services (special education) and a team of student services teachers and support staff to serve students with identified disabilities. These staff integrate supportive approaches and instructional ideas into the general education teacher’s classroom instruction, provide adaptive materials, and lead supplemental “pull-out” instruction in small groups. Student services staff may also provide individual tutoring and support additional monitoring or assessment as called for in a student’s IEP. Each Director of Student Services closely monitors the student services teachers and student progress to ensure fidelity with each student’s IEP and compliance with the law so that every student maintains equal access to every element of the Freire Program described above and receives a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Freire complies with the IDEA, its implementing

regulations in 34 CFR Part 300, and state companion regulations 22 Pa. Code Chapter 711 (in PA)/14 DE Admin. Code 922-929 (in DE). We also comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other civil rights, enforced by the US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights or otherwise.

If a teacher, administrator, or parent has a reason to believe, based on student performance data, behavior, or other evidence, that a student might have a disability that could require educational accommodation, Freire makes every attempt to obtain parental consent for an evaluation, which is then conducted in a timely fashion. The school then convenes a meeting to determine if an IEP or 504 plan is necessary, and if so the appropriate team and plan are formed. We educate students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – along with all other students to the greatest degree possible. IEPs and 504 plans are reviewed regularly and implemented according to the recommendations of the team members.

Each school also has a detailed EL Policy to ensure that we appropriately serve our EL students and comply with applicable state and federal requirements for educating ELs, including provisions of ESEA as modified by ESSA and 22 Pa. Code § 4.26 (in PA) / 14 DE. Admin Code 920 (in DE) (see Appendix I.11). An ESL professional oversees identification, planning, English instruction, and accommodation in testing and in regular classrooms of EL students at Freire. Upon enrolling in the school, all students are given a home language survey inquiring which language is spoken at home. If the language spoken at home is anything other than English, students are then provided with approved a screening exam. Based on the scores on the screening exam, students are placed into the appropriate English learning level. Our plan for English learners is that, in all content classes, the student meets with their teacher and an ESL staff member to address the goals that the student must achieve in order to receive a passing grade in

that class. Students also receive additional ESL instruction, and EL students are not removed from core content classes. The frequency of these instructional lessons, as well as the standards that must be met, depend on the student's level of proficiency and are designed to expedite EL student success in the school's rigorous and highly successful college preparatory program.

(b)(ii) Continued Service to Educationally Disadvantaged Students

Every aspect of the approach described above will continue and be replicated at our new campuses. The Operations team at BtF will support ongoing review of policies and procedures concerning IEP, 504, and EL students to ensure that they are up to date with regulatory changes and evolving advancements in the field. The performance management team will continue to work continuously with the heads of school and student services team at each campus to monitor and respond to academic and climate data for the special education subgroup. Our special education program will be revised at the new schools under this project to accommodate incoming kindergarten students who may have had an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) in place in preschool. Freire will immediately use any such plans to consider whether an IEP evaluation is necessary. We also recognize that many students with special education needs may not enroll with IFSPs, and we have planned and budgeted for the need to conduct a higher number of initial evaluations than we have in the past while serving only grades 5-12.

We do not select students in any way other than through our lottery and will never use a student's disability or EL status as a deterrent to enrollment. To promote equity, we seek to make the application and enrollment process as streamlined as possible at all Freire schools. For example, our Philadelphia schools have accepted the Standard Application that other charter schools use as well as online applications and paper applications. As of this year, our schools are now participating in the new Apply Philly Charter system for 2019-20 application cycle, continuing this trend of promoting equity by reducing the burden of the application process on

families. With the expansion of FCSW specifically, we will pursue the plans described above under Competitive Preference Priority 1 to ensure diversity, including among home languages.

Admission at Freire is done by random lottery, meaning that we do not have control over the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll at our schools. However, serving these students is at the core of what makes us Freire. We will continue to locate our schools in or accessible to communities with high percentages of educationally disadvantaged students. As we are schools of choice, families have the freedom to enroll their students in another school if they feel we are not meeting their needs appropriately. Our percentage of special education students is a sign that families are more satisfied with our level of care than with that provided by the local school district. This also indicates that we are succeeding in retaining special education students.

Instructional Practices

Finally, there are some specific instructional practices that we will replicate from our existing schools while also adapting them and adding new elements to best serve younger grade levels. As with our entire program, these will apply to all students while being designed with our students specifically in mind. Freire's new elementary program will provide a rigorous curriculum aligned to Pennsylvania Core Standards (in PA) and the Common Core/Delaware Standards (in DE). It will incorporate all components of the "Freire Program" and our "Freire Middle School Program" summarized in our response to Selection Criterion (b) and detailed in Appendix I.1 and I.2.

Our program will provide for extensive time for students to develop the literacy and numeracy foundation needed for success in our college prep middle and high school programs and beyond. Students will practice literacy and math skills and apply new content-specific knowledge through reading, writing, and inquiry-based problem-solving activities. Nonfictional

texts will be the center of literacy as a further way to help students not only enhance content knowledge but also improve their Lexile levels and deep comprehension.

Dedicated time for daily in-school interventions will enable us to close any gaps for students in need of additional educational support while providing enrichment time for our highest achieving students. Our daily math instruction will be supplemented with the adaptive and personalized Get More Math program. This program emphasizes the need for practice and feedback, with practice sessions designed for each student's needs, blending new material and ongoing cumulative review.

At the core of our program is a commitment to deeper learning, where teachers are trained to start lessons by activating prior knowledge, help students process new information, and then stretch their thinking by applying new knowledge to new situations. We will provide an environment for creative learning where our students feel safe to take risks, experiment, make mistakes, get feedback, and redo their work until mastery. Our learning process is designed to cultivate content-specific thought processes: in math students learn to think like mathematicians, in history they learn to think like historians, in science they learn to think like scientists, etc.

Our teachers will be trained to teach fluency in reading and numeracy. In reading, we aim to develop the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and expression. Teachers will keep running records as students practice their reading, which will be aligned with the Fountas and Pinnell or another similar assessment. Having mastered letter sounds, decoding rules, and a good base of sight words, students begin to feel the flow of good reading. Eventually, the reading process becomes second nature, allowing for deep comprehension and analysis of the text to emerge. In math, procedural fluency is placed alongside conceptual understanding as one of the major goals

of math instruction. In both disciplines, we believe that fluency is a critical part of comprehension, and as a result we will focus on student practice and regular feedback.

Finally, use of data to drive instruction will be essential to our program's success. We will use data to maximum impact via a variety of efficient and effective formative assessments as instructional tools as well as summative assessments to formally judge student progress. We will use commercially developed assessment and data management systems including Renaissance Star 360 and UChicago Impact STEP assessments, and possibly others like MAP Growth.

(c) QUALITY OF EVALUATION PLAN

Freire's proposed methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of our proposed project, as described in our logic model, and that will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the grant period. Freire and BtF are committed to the principles of data-driven decision making, continuous improvement, and a high degree of accountability. This project has three objectives—expansion, quality, and knowledge—each of which is associated with measurable short- and long-term outcomes. We will use both internal and external evaluation to ensure that we are on track to success in implementing this project.

Objective 1: Expansion

Provide a K-12 continuum of high quality, research-based educational programming to historically underserved students while ensuring financial sustainability

Freire will conduct an internal evaluation for Objective 1. The Performance Management team at BtF will closely track performance on the outcomes indicated in the logic model below. A status update will be provided to the school Board of Directors on a bimonthly basis.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short/Midterm Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
Central office staff	Recruit additional central office and school staff	Updated job descriptions and collateral; job fairs attended; hiring website updated; hiring events hosted	Central office and school positions hired	New campuses open
School leaders			Charters approved	Expand high quality seats to younger students
CSP funding	Apply for two charter expansions	Charter expansion applications submitted	Certificate of occupancy granted	Schools continue enrolling educationally disadvantaged population while serving new grade levels
Strong financial management capacity	Prepare building	Permits and financing secured; renovation plan completed; FFE and instructional materials purchased	Student applications received	
Lessons learned from three prior replications	Recruit students	Open houses held with updated collateral; school websites updated; school fairs attended	FTE school staff hired	30 days cash on hand
	Recruit school staff			Meet authorizers' financial ratios
	Manage budget	Monthly financial reports		Clean audit

Objective 2: Quality

Engage students in rigorous, creative, deep learning, within an emotionally responsive and safe environment, leading to improved academic outcomes for historically underserved students

In order to continuously improve our student outcomes, Freire, led by the BtF Performance Management team, closely monitors a range of outcomes. The logic model below provides a summary view of the theory of action between the key components of the Freire Program (Appendix I.1) and the outcomes we aim to achieve. For a more detailed version of the logic model, please see Appendix I.12.

Inputs	Activities	Short/Midterm Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
Staff	Distributive leadership, teachers as professionals	Deeper learning rubric improvement	Effective teachers retained
Funding	College prep mission, deeper learning, creativity in learning, experiential learning, Power of Yet, interventions	Students feel safe, supported, and engaged	Students retained
Curriculum texts, assessments, rubrics		Growth mindset applied to academic contexts	Students achieve proficiency on state tests
Data warehouse, Student Information Systems, survey platform	Emotional supports, non-violence policy, Squad	Student growth in reading and math	Students graduate high school in four years
	Data-driven culture		Students enroll and persist in college

Through the work of the Performance Management team, data is shared with the Boards of Directors of each school to maintain accountability, shared with school leaders to drive evidence-based decision making, and shared with teachers to implement data-driven instruction. A robust set of systems and processes have been developed over time to support this type of internal evaluation; moreover, Freire has recently begun several new external partnerships to help collect and manage data. The key elements of Freire’s data-driven culture are discussed below.

Data dashboard: Every month, the Performance Management team produces a dashboard for each school featuring key leading indicators such as attendance and suspension rates, benchmark test results, and 9th grade on-track metrics. Prior year data is included for comparison. The dashboard helps keep everyone focused on the most important outcomes and helps identify any concerns in time to intervene.

Deep dive reports: The Performance Management team undertakes a number of in-depth analyses throughout the year. Some reports are focused on detailed breakdowns of summative data, like state test results, in order to evaluate strategy and programs and hold ourselves accountable for strong student outcomes. Others are focused on providing formative data to help schools improve implementation of a specific program or intervention. For example, the team might look at attendance and grades for students attending after-school academic centers to help schools maximize the benefit of this student support. Finally, the team might decide to produce a deep dive report in response to the dashboard. For example, if attendance dips one month, the team will disaggregate attendance data by date, day of the week, grade level, subgroups, etc. to help school leaders determine root causes.

Stakeholder surveys: While evaluating outcomes is paramount, survey data can provide useful formative data to school leaders. Freire has begun using the Panorama survey platform to collect data from students, teachers, and parents. The survey items have been validated nationally to provide the most reliable data about school culture, student engagement, teacher satisfaction, and related topics. Freire also uses the Tripod student perception of teaching survey. A Gates Foundation study found that this survey instrument in combination with teacher evaluations can reliably predict teacher quality as measured by student growth.

Data warehouse: Freire now works with Schoolzilla to implement a data warehouse to help clean, store, and manage data. This will enable the Performance Management Team to more efficiently produce dashboards and reports that synthesize data from across the variety of data sources and platforms used in the network.

Data meetings: Freire views data as a tool for accountability and continuous improvement. To unleash its power, data must be used to drive action on an ongoing basis at the

school level. Through regular meetings with the Performance Management team, heads of school become more comfortable with school data. They have the opportunity to ask questions of the Performance Management team and engage in discussion with the Director of Learning and the Network CEO about how best to respond. This enables them to feel prepared for discussions with teachers and to make mid-course corrections throughout the year. These meetings also provide a forum for the BtF team to share promising practices from across the network, introduce relevant research that can help guide strategy, and identify network trends that can lead to new or improved supports from the central office to the schools.

Objective 3: Knowledge

Contribute to our growing body of information on the success and health of our programming on two topics: growth mindset and school replications/expansions

Freire will use CSP funds to contract with an external evaluator to conduct a study of an innovative intervention modeled on Carol Dweck’s “Power of Yet” concept. Through an in-depth look at this initiative and the results we achieve when implementing it at a new campus and with younger students, we will learn key lessons about replicating and adapting core elements of our model. These lessons will help us in future projects and may help others in the field as they expand to new grade levels, new geographic regions, and other changes in context.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short/Midterm Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
External evaluator Teachers Students Yet Card process and materials	Finalize research questions, assessments, and academic metrics that will be evaluated Train teachers implementing the intervention	Final research plan IRB approval Executed contract with external evaluator	Students in intervention group complete Yet Cards Academic/assessment data collected and shared with evaluator Interviews with teachers completed	External evaluator’s report completed Lessons learned used to adapt intervention as needed and shared publicly on Freire website

The Power of Yet is a strategy for developing students' ability to apply a growth mindset in academic situations. Students are encouraged to retake any mastery assignment at any time over the course of the year. Between their first attempt and their second attempt, students must create a plan (written on their "Yet Card") for how they will improve their understanding of and ability to apply the content. The theory of action is that students will more frequently apply a growth mindset in challenging academic situations once they experience success in mastering something they struggled with initially.

The evaluation will be led by Dr. Claire Robertson-Kraft, Founder and Executive Director of ImpactED, where she works with social impact organizations to use data to accelerate social change. ImpactEd is housed at the University of Pennsylvania, where Dr. Robertson-Kraft received her doctorate and where she currently teaches program evaluation and quantitative methods. She has worked on a range of relevant projects, including a study of teacher hiring for the Delaware Department of Education, an evaluation of a school redesign project for the School District of Philadelphia, and a paper on character education with Dr. Angela Duckworth. Her resume is included as Appendix I.19.

The evaluation plan will feature an interrupted time series design with mixed methods and will be conducted over two years as follows:

- Year 1: Implementation evaluation
 - Research questions: How does participation in the "Power of Yet" project influence students' growth mindset? What factors contribute to successful replication for upper elementary/middle grades? What factors contribute to successful adaptation to lower elementary grades?
- Year 2: Impact evaluation

- Research questions: How does participation in the "Power of Yet" project influence students' academic progress? How does this vary across individual student characteristics?
- Methods: Teacher interviews, pre- and post-assessment of character traits, and academic metrics analysis.
- Freire will openly license this research to the public as a grant deliverable (consistent with the final regulation published by the Department of Education in the federal register on 1/19/2017) and will publicly post it on the Freire website.

Objective 1: Expansion				
	Outcome	Performance Measure	Target 2019 20 21 22 23	Baseline/Rationale
1a	Open two new campuses	# of campuses in network	4 4 4 6 6	Freire has successfully managed growth from one to four campuses in seven years and has sufficient time to plan for this expansion.
1b	Expand high quality seats	# of enrolled students	1974 2000 2000 2580 2850	
1c	Continue to serve an educationally disadvantaged student population	% of enrolled students by subgroups	64% low income (direct cert) 18% special ed	Intentionally consistent with current demographics, as our mission is to serve an educationally disadvantaged population.
1d	Fiscal strength	% of Freire network schools with at least 30 days cash on hand	100% annually	All schools have maintained at least 30 days cash on hand and project budget ensures that expanded grades are viable on their own.
1e	Audit	% of Freire network schools receiving audit with unqualified opinion and no major findings	100% annually	All school audits have been clean for past three years, so we are confident in our financial management practices.
1f	Ratios	% of Freire network schools meeting authorizers' minimum financial ratios	100% annually	All three schools have met minimum ratio standards, so we are confident in our financial management practices.

Objective 2: Quality				
	Outcome	Performance Measure	Target 2019 20 21 22 23	Baseline/Rationale
2a	Deeper learning rubric improvement	% of Level 1 and 2 teachers will improve one level on one domain of the Deeper Learning Rubric	80% annually	Rubric is new and as such we are currently developing our baselines. However, our experience with quality teacher development gives us confidence that this ambitious target is attainable.
2b	Students feel safe, supported, and engaged	Average Daily Attendance	93 94 94 95 95	Baseline is 92.5% and has been trending upward.
2c	Students feel safe, supported, and engaged	% of students with 0 suspensions	80 80 82 85 86	Baseline is 80% and has been trending upward.
2d	Growth mindset	% of mastery grades improved from retakes	65 67 70 70 70	Baseline is 60% and incremental improvement is attainable.
2e	Student growth	% of K-3rd graders who grow at least 3 reading levels as measured by STEP or similar assessments over course of school year	NA NA NA 85 95	Our network has not previously included lower elementary grades, so there is no baseline; however, our Director of Teaching and Learning has led schools to similar results previously.
2f	Student growth	Increase in % of students at or above benchmark in math & reading over course of school year as measured by STAR 360 assessment	10 10 10 12 12 percentage point increase over course of school year	Last year, the % of students at or above benchmark grew by 7 percentage points over the course of the school year. Given that most students arrive years behind grade level, growth is an especially important outcome that warrants an ambitious but attainable target.
2g	Effective teachers retained	% of teachers offered renewal who are retained	92% annually	Baseline is 92%. With mobility and other external reasons, this is unlikely to increase further.
2h	Students retained	% of students retained from October 1 - October 1	81 82 83 84 85	Baseline is 80% and incremental growth is attainable.

Objective 2: Quality				
	Outcome	Performance Measure	Target 2019 20 21 22 23	Baseline/Rationale
2i	Students achieve proficiency on state tests	% of 4 th and 8 th grade students who score proficient or advanced	Exceed host district by 7 percentage points or more each year	Baseline over two years is 5 percentage points and on an upward trend.
2j	Students graduate high school in four years	Four-year cohort graduation rate	83 84 85 85 85	Baseline at flagship high school has improved from 82% to 91% in three years. With two newest high schools graduating first cohorts in 2019, we expect to follow similar upward trend.
2k	Students enroll seamlessly in college	% of graduates enrolling seamlessly in college	73 73 75 75 75	Baseline at flagship high school is 78%. Accounting for two new high schools, we anticipate incremental improvement following slight dip.
2l	Students persist in college	% of alumni returning for second year of college	86% annually	In line with current multi-year average performance.
2m	Students graduate college within 6 years	% of alumni who graduate college within six years	37% annually	In line with current multi-year average performance.

Objective 3: Knowledge				
	Outcome	Performance Measure	Target	Baseline/Rationale
3a	External evaluation report	Report completed and published on Freire’s website	Report completed and posted by Spring 2024	Experienced external evaluator is confident in the project.

(d) QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PERSONNEL

(d)(i) Financial and Operational Sustainability

BtF’s ability to help its schools remain financially and operationally sustainable while providing the highest quality education is one of the organization’s strengths. Our team has the savvy, expertise, and grit to remain financially and organizationally sustainable no matter the circumstances and we have consistently demonstrated adaptability and responsiveness in the face

of evolving financial and operational landscapes. As described under Selection Criterion (a)(iii) and associated supporting documentation, Freire has had no significant financial, management, or compliance concerns and has robust systems and quality staff in place to maintain that success. See (d)(iii) and Appendix B for team backgrounds and Appendix C for letters of support attesting to our quality.

For context to our fiscal sustainability plan, we first provide a brief overall growth forecast and description of how grant funds will be used. Years supported by CSP funding are shaded (with partial funding in each final year). Total operating revenues and expenses are rounded and shown in millions (M). Complete budgets for these time periods, including non-operating costs, are included in Appendix H.

Build the Future						
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Revenue	\$2.65M	\$2.90M	\$3.48M	\$3.51M	\$3.83M	\$3.97M
Expenses	\$2.64M	\$2.89M	\$3.37M	\$3.49M	\$3.76M	\$3.95M
Staff	23	28	28	29	31	33

CSP Funding will support hiring of new network-level staff beginning 7/1/2019 and ending 12/31/21 as the positions become funded by CMO service revenue. In order to continue providing high quality management and oversight of the expanded charter schools, BtF will need additional equipment in FY 2022. In FY 2023, less than \$10,000 in CSP funds are budgeted to be used at the CMO level.

Freire Charter School						
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Grades	5-12	5-12	K-1; 5-12	K-2; 5-12	K-3; 5-12	K-12
Students	1,000	1,000	1,280	1,400	1,500	1,600
Staff	108	110	141	155	163	173
Revenue	\$15.23M	\$15.49M	\$19.49M	\$21.40M	\$23.03M	\$24.56M
Expenses	\$14.64M	\$14.98M	\$18.95M	\$20.91M	\$22.50M	\$24.11M

CSP funding will support school leader salaries during one expansion planning year, then critical equipment, instructional materials, and staff recruitment/development costs during the first two implementation years of the expansion. This period will end on 6/30/23; in FY 2024, CSP funding will support only the conclusion of the external evaluation.

Freire Charter School Wilmington						
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Grades	8-12	8-12	K-1; 4-5; 8-12	K-2; 4-6; 8-12	K-12	K-12
Students	500	500	800	950	1,150	1,150
Staff	48	51	79	97	117	118
Revenue	\$7.04M	\$7.09M	\$11.09M	\$13.00M	\$15.32M	\$15.61M
Expenses	\$6.72M	\$6.84M	\$10.81M	\$12.73M	\$14.94M	\$15.20M

CSP funding will support substantially similar expenses to those at FCS, with the addition of student recruitment costs necessary in Delaware.

Although the new grade levels will be expansions of existing entities, it is our goal that each individual campus be self-sustaining in the long-term. Therefore, we prepared a stand-alone budget for each of our two new buildings and then consolidated them with all the grades of each charter school. Each consolidated budget nets the appropriate surplus, after capital purchases and debt service payments, needed to meet all loan covenants and financial ratios required by the schools’ financial partners and charter authorizers.

Regarding per-student revenue projections, we have planned very conservatively. For Philadelphia, our projected annual rate increases are 2.5%, 2%, 1.5%, 1%, and 0% between now and 2025 whereas over the past three years, actual regular education rates have increased by 6.8%, 4.7%, and 5.2%. In Delaware, we have forecasted revenue rate increases of only 1% per year as funding is based on a higher number of variables. Because of this and the fact that Delaware does not provide an increased capitation rate for special education students in grades K-3, we have planned to reach the full grade span in a shorter timeframe. We have also budgeted for substantially higher student recruitment costs for FCSW to ensure that enrollment meets projections to secure the necessary revenue. This is not a concern in Philadelphia due to extensive waitlist numbers (Appendix I.13).

In terms of private fundraising, in each of the past five years we have successfully raised a *minimum* of \$100,000 per school; thus, forecasting \$100,000 per school in such revenue for

operating is conservative. The schools are also not dependent on this income as it represents only approximately 1% of total funding. Consistent with our recent expansion experience, each school will need to raise over \$1M in private grants and donations to fully fund start-up costs. We successfully raised over \$2M in private grants and donations to support the start-up of the newest school in the Freire network. We are confident in our ability to raise these funds given our past success and the fact that BtF's advancement team and donor base are far more robust than during our past expansions (we did not have a full-time fundraising professional on staff for most of that period). We also have a contingency plan to fund those costs with long-term loans based on very strong relationships with viable lenders. Any additional grants and donations received by the school will be used to further enhance programs. Appendix C includes letters of support from some of our key donors (Philadelphia School Partnership and Longwood Foundation) and lenders (Building Hope and The Reinvestment Fund).

(d)(ii) Management Plan

While BtF (the applicant) does not hold the charters to any schools, it meets the definition of a "charter management organization" given in Section 4310(3) of the ESEA. It is recognized as a nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and it provides centralized support, operations, and oversight to three separate charter schools in two states. FCS licenses its program to BtF for use in other schools, and BtF provides each of the three schools in the Freire network with educational and administrative services pursuant to agreements approved by the Boards of the schools and BtF. The agreements between BtF and both FCS and FCSW as well as the BtF bylaws are included in Appendix I.14 to I.16.

BtF has a strong plan in place to ensure that we achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including responsibilities, timelines, and milestones related to opening the new campus at each school and how those relate to the proposed CSP project. A

brief description of how CSP funds will be used is included above in Part (i), in addition to the complete Budget Narrative attached to this application and complete multi-year operating budgets for each organization in Appendix H. All project staff at BtF will continue their current responsibilities as described on their resumes throughout the project, in addition to project-specific tasks described in the chart below. Job descriptions for new positions to be filled are included in Appendix I.3, and organizational charts for the current structure and how it will grow through 2025 are Appendix I.4. The existing campuses of the schools proposed for expansion will continue to have strong leaders, and the leadership and staffing structures at the new campuses will mirror those at our current locations, with one leader dedicated to academics and another leader dedicated to ‘academic supports’—our term for operations and school culture through the lens that these functions should support learning at all times.

Throughout the grant period, BtF will provide project oversight and administrative support on the expansions, including all grant-funded tasks; handle compliance with the terms of the CSP grant; complete quarterly and annual reports; attend the annual Project Directors’ meeting; hold schools accountable to their plans and targets; and report to the Board of BtF and each school on the progress of the expansions and the CSP grant. BtF will also continue all regular CMO functions, including holding school leaders accountable, governance and authorizer relations, performance management and data reporting, fundraising, legal compliance, policy updates, operational support, accounting, human resources, insurance, and more.

At the school level, the academic leader at each campus will continue to supervise classroom teachers, the faculty who lead teacher development and student interventions, and the special education department. The academic supports (culture and operations) leader will ensure the emotional and physical safety of the school community, communicate with parents and

supervise the deans, advisors, counselors, and other support staff. School leaders are responsible for hiring and managing their staff, overseeing instruction, providing behavioral supports to students, and participating in a continuous cycle of data analysis and improvement. We have included job descriptions for several key school administration positions for the new campuses as well as organizational charts for the current and new locations in Appendix I.5 and I.6.

A management timeline is below.

Expansion Timeline, Milestones, and Responsibilities	
<p>Key to Roles at BtF: CEO, Director of Operations/Project Director (DO), Managing Director (MD), Controller (Co), Director of Special Projects (SP), Director of Advancement (DA), Director of Teaching and Learning (TL), Director of Curriculum and Assessment (CA), Director of Teacher Recruitment (TR), Director of Student Recruitment (SR)</p> <p>Key to Roles at Schools: Head of School for Academics (HOS-A), Head of School for Academic Supports (meaning culture and operations) (HOS-S)</p>	
4/1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin search for Director of Curriculum and Assessment to start 7/1/19 (CEO, MD, TL) • Begin special fundraising work for new campus startup costs (DA, CEO) • Request formal engagement with external evaluator for CSP project (MD)
7/1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA hired with CSP funds and begins creating curriculum for new grades K-4 (PA standards) and K-7 (DE standards) (CEO, MD, TL) • Begin filing quarterly and annual CSP reports (DO, throughout grant) • Begin working on amendment application to School District of Philadelphia (authorizer) to expand FCS and create FCS-ES (SP) • Begin parent and community outreach efforts for new campuses (BtF Executive Coordinator & Alumni Liaison, leaders of new campuses as possible) • Selection made for external evaluator for CSP project (MD)
August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real estate negotiations for FCS-ES campus (Co, DO, CEO) • Interview potential internal candidates for FCS-ES administrators (HOS-A for FCS-ES, already identified as Chris Zagacki) • Begin working on amendment application to Delaware Department of Education (authorizer) to expand FCSW and create FCSW-E/MS (SP)
September, October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real estate negotiations for FCSW-E/MS campus (Co, DO, CEO) • Interview potential internal candidates for FCSW-E/MS Heads of School (CEO) • FCS Board of Directors approves expansion details (CEO)
11/15/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application submitted to authorizer to expand FCS to FCS-ES (SP)
Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCSW Board of Directors approves expansion details, including naming heads of school for FCSW-E/MS if possible (CEO)
12/31/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application submitted to authorizer to expand FCSW to FCSW-E/MS (SP)

2/15/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School District of Philadelphia makes decision on charter amendment application for expansion of FCS to FCS-E/MS, approval anticipated
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delaware Secretary of Education makes decision on charter amendment application for expansion of FCSW to FCSW-E/MS, approval anticipated
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO attends CSP Project Directors' meeting (annually) • Major funding commitments for expansions secured (DA)
7/1/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final leases executed for new FCS-ES and FCSW-E/MS buildings; facility build-out commences (Co, DO, CEO) • CSP-funded planning year begins for both new campuses, and CSP grant funds cover salaries of HOS-A and HOS-S at each new campus for the next 12 months. They spend 50% of their time apprenticing at existing schools and 50% on planning activities for their new campus. • DO begins facilitating monthly meetings between the leaders of each new campus and the CEO, MD, SP, Co, TL, CA, TR, SR, and other staff as necessary to discuss progress of the expansion, use of CSP funds, and identify emerging needs/problems; meetings will continue as needed until new campuses are fully functioning; smaller teams meet biweekly/ad-hoc. • Begin search for Director of Teacher Recruitment and Director of Student Recruitment (MD)
10/1/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Teacher Recruitment begins, funded by CSP, to start building relationships, sharing materials, and building hire prospects • Director of Student Recruitment begins, funded by CSP, to begin community outreach and have students submit applications as soon as those are live (approx. 10/1)
January, February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-lottery student application deadlines; lotteries occur; if seats are still open, student recruitment continues, otherwise work shifts to processing enrollment paperwork and continuing to build community connections • All core positions, including all teaching roles, at new campuses have been formally posted and interviews begin taking place (MD, TR, HOS) • Formal status checks on facility build-out processes (Co, DO, CEO)
Spring 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for and hire additional BtF HR, systems, and operations coordinators to start 4/1/21 using CSP funds (MD, Co, DO) • Two BtF staff attend National Charter Schools Conference (DO) • Led by DO, BtF operations team ensures all necessary operational actions for expansion are in place (for example: board policy changes, insurance policies, student handbooks, lunch program, transportation plans, law enforcement MOUs, community/extracurricular program MOUs, accountability submissions, operational processes, new hire training) • Final construction and permitting checks on facility build-out processes for new FCS-ES and FCSW-E/MS campuses (Co, DO, CEO) • Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FFE) for new buildings ordered, some funded by CSP (Co, DO, HOS-S) • Final planning around curriculum, assessment, teaching practices, learning platforms, student information system, etc. (CEO, HOS-A, TL, CA, MD) • Plans are finalized with external evaluator to ensure alignment (MD)

7/1/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New buildings receive certificates of occupancy and new FFE (DO, Co, HOS-S) and school leaders begin moving into new facilities • BtF moves into new or additional office space, with additional equipment funded by CSP (Co, MD, DO) • One-year employment term ends for BtF Director of Student Recruitment and responsibility for this moves to the school level • Electronic learning platforms, textbooks, and curriculum supplies ordered in alignment with final plans and funded by CSP (HOS-A, Co) • Most or all staff positions at new campuses have been filled (TR, HOS)
August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer pre-service professional development begins (HOS-A) • School starts with new grade levels; benchmarking assessments given • School leaders and BtF performance management team begin monthly data meetings facilitated by MD • DO and entire BtF team provide intensive supports to the new school leaders as they navigate the first months of school
October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student recruitment and application begins for 2022-23 SY (HOS-S) • Teacher recruitment begins for 2022-23 SY (TR, HOS-A)
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of 1/1/22, all BtF staff become funded through operating revenue rather than CSP funds (CA, TR, and the 3 new support staff hired 4/1/21) • After end of first semester, thorough review of performance data to make any adjustments needed to academic program for the remainder of the current year and/or next academic year (HOS-A, MD, CEO)
Spring 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All tasks regarding student recruitment, hiring, and purchasing new FFE/supplies for upcoming school year repeat from prior year
July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full network team debrief on first expansion year (DO, MD, CEO)
Fall 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff induction, student start, and data monitoring activities repeat from prior year with second round of additional grade levels • Schools receive state-provided performance data on first year and begin analysis for CSP and other reporting purposes (DO, MD, HOS-A)
Spring 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All tasks regarding student recruitment, hiring, and purchasing new FFE/supplies for upcoming school year repeat from prior year
6/30/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-year period funding expansion expenses for FCS and FCSW ends, with costs for the rest of the expansion funded through other sources
Fall 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and authorizer provided performance data on second year of expansion begins to come in and external evaluator gathers data and prepares report for Spring 2024 completion (MD)
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final performance report on CSP grant submitted (DO) • FCSW-E/MS grade span growth complete; FCS-ES growth ends in 2025

(d)(iii) Personnel Qualifications

BtF has assembled a CSP project leadership team to execute the CSP grant with fidelity, successfully apply for charter amendments, and oversee high-quality expansions. The team has

expertise in teaching and learning, education management, new school start-up and charter expansion, leadership development, school finance and accounting, charter school operations, fundraising and advancement, data-driven decision-making and performance management, and grants management. Together with the leaders at each school, the BtF team will produce elementary schools where any and all students will learn and grow, preparing them for rigorous college preparatory high schools. Full resumes for all can be found in Appendix B.

Kelly Davenport, CEO, BtF, and Freire Schools Network Founder: Kelly led Freire Charter School Philadelphia for 16 years, including leading the expansion into a new middle school. She has also led the start-up of new schools, FCS and TFCS and the creation of the non-profit CMO BtF. She started her career in education as a Spanish teacher, earned a Masters for Teachers from Indiana University, and then later a Doctorate in Leadership in Urban Education from the University of Pennsylvania. She is a facilitator for the PA Department of Education's Inspired Leadership program, where she travels the state running required professional development for PA principals. Kelly was chosen to lead the two charter school expansions in this CSP project because of her ability to build and lead a team around Freire's mission; her expertise in pedagogy, leadership development, board governance, fundraising, and facility development; and her years of experience building schools.

Max Matthews, Director of Operations, BtF: Max joined the staff of BtF in 2015, where he has served as Director of Operations since 2017. Max is a critical member of BtF's leadership team, working with the CEO, Controller, and Managing Director to support the Freire schools. He serves as the expert on charter school law and other legal and regulatory compliance issues and coordinates school accountability reporting to charter school authorizers, including managing charter renewals. In this role he has served as the Project Director for two Developer

CSP grants. He has a background in nonprofit management, including earning a BA in Arts Administration from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Max was chosen to serve as Project Director because of his experience in managing the replication of FCS at FCSW and TFCS and because he has specific knowledge of the CSP program.

William Ray, Controller, BtF: Bill is a seasoned financial professional and CPA with extensive experience in government accounting, budget preparation and analysis, and federal grant compliance reporting. As BtF's controller since 2015, he manages network-wide annual budgets exceeding \$30M and all aspects of information technology, financial reporting, and human resources. He holds a BA in Financial Accounting from Lycoming College. As the network expands, Bill will be a vital member of the leadership team, having directly managed the financial planning for Freire's recent new school developments, the establishment of accounting policies and systems at these sites, and CSP grant fiscal reporting and compliance. Bill will lead efforts to secure facility financing for the two new school buildings.

Leigh Botwinik, Managing Director, BtF: Leigh is an experienced non-profit administrator with education training and expertise in performance management. As BtF's Managing Director she manages the organization's day to day operations, while also providing leadership to the Freire schools, particularly around hiring and the academic program. Leigh earned both a Master of Public Administration and a Master of Science in Education from the University of Pennsylvania. She is a former Teach for America corps member in Washington, DC. Leigh will provide her extensive management experience as we refine our education model for our new elementary/middle schools and scale up our talent development operations.

Teryn Thomas, Director of Teaching and Learning, BtF: Teryn is an experienced educator who recently joined the BtF team. She has worked for nationally recognized charter

school networks including Mastery Schools and KIPP as a teacher, teacher leader and coach, and school leader. Most recently she served as Investment Manager for the Philadelphia School Partnership, where she specialized in principal coaching, new school development, and evaluating school quality for investment prioritizing. At BtF, Teryn is the network's instructional leader, leading school improvement efforts and setting the network vision for a teacher performance system, including the development and implementation of our student-centered Deeper Learning Rubric and professional development and coaching for teacher coaches. Teryn has a Master of Science in Education from the University of Pennsylvania. She is a former Teach for America corps member and is a certified teacher in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Teryn will lead the curriculum and staff development efforts of this project, as well as providing guidance on the expansion application process and collaborating on talent development.

Melanie Reiser, Director of Special Projects, BtF: Melanie has nearly two decades of experience as a leader in Philadelphia's charter school community, including extensive experience in public charter school operations and compliance, project management, new school development, charter school reauthorization, grant writing and management, and public advocacy. She collaborated on the formation of BtF and served on the leadership team that opened FCSW and TFCS. She holds a BA in Political Science from Elizabethtown College and a Master of Government Administration from the University of Pennsylvania. Melanie brings to this project her experience in preparing charter applications, implementing start-up plans, and managing federal grants (including previous experience as a CSP Project Director).

Hillary Sorin, Director of Advancement, BtF: Hillary is a vital member of the BtF leadership team, where she leads fundraising efforts for the network. She collaborates on the network-wide implementation of arts- and tech-integrated learning, and ensures schools have

resources to implement this strategy. Hillary previously led annual giving at the Chester Fund for Education and the Arts. She holds a BA in History and American Studies from Macalester College. Hillary will be essential in identifying and cultivating private and foundation support for our new school campuses and in sustainability planning for the network.

This project team will be supported by school-based leadership from the Freire schools that will be expanding. These individuals will ensure the consistent quality of program delivery at existing campuses while the network is in expansion mode, while contributing to the implementation of the education model at the new campuses. **Christopher Zagacki** is the current Head of School and academic leader at FCS-MS. He is a seasoned and skilled PA-certified principal and will transition to the role of Head of School and academic leader at the new FCS-ES campus. At FCMS, he is currently supported by **Andrea Zepp** as Head of Academic Supports and **Jennifer Lynch** as Assistant Head of Academics, and we anticipate that Andrea and Jennifer will co-lead FCS-MS after Chris transitions to the new FCS-ES.

At FCS-HS, **Christopher Moore** is currently Head of School and the academic supports leader, supported by **Adam Antonioli** and **Jason Falconio** as Co-Heads of School for Academics. Jason holds PA principal certification. FCSW currently employs a co-leadership model between DE certified principal **Paul Ramirez**, Co-Head of School, Academics, and **Felicia Harrington**, Co-Head of School, Academic Supports. At both campuses, we have a number of skilled teachers and administrators who intend to grow into leadership roles at a new campus; however, there are not yet any plans for specific staff to transition to new positions within the elementary expansion project.

4. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) Program Objectives

(a)(i) Meeting Student Needs

Please see our responses to Selection Criteria (a) and (b) as well as the description of the Freire educational program included in Appendix I.1.

(a)(ii) Transportation

Build the Future's Operations department, in conjunction with a traffic engineer as necessary, will coordinate provision of transportation to the two new campuses.

Students in grades 1-6 residing 1.5 miles or more from their school campus are provided bus transportation through the School District of Philadelphia in accordance with 24 P.S. § 17-1726-A. Parents of FCS kindergarten students will need to transport their students to and from school, as is common practice in the city. Students in grades 7-12 residing 2 miles or more from the school are provided public transit passes at the expense of the School District of Philadelphia. FCS is responsible for providing specialized transportation to a student in any grade with a disability who has transportation listed as a related service in his/her IEP, and we have budgeted for this expense based upon experience. Finally, we also budget for additional public transit passes at the school's expense to help students get home from extracurricular activities.

At FCSW, the State of Delaware makes a payment equal to 70% of the average cost per student of transportation within the district in which the charter school is located in exchange for the charter school becoming responsible for the transportation of those students to and from school. FCSW contracts with a commercial school bus company to provide transportation, primarily using hub stops. We also have some families who prefer to transport their students to and from school in their personal vehicles, or who live quite close to the school and whose students walk to and from the building each day. This same system will remain in place for the

added grades K-6. Once students reach grade 7, those who live near public transit routes may request that the school provide them with a transit pass at the school's expense rather than sign up for a school bus route (this system is currently in place for students in grades 8-12).

Designated drop-off locations will be established to ensure students' safety and to minimize traffic congestion in the neighborhood. We also provide a second bus that departs school at 5:30 p.m. on days when after school activities are running. FCSW is responsible for providing specialized transportation to a student in any grade with a disability who has transportation listed as a related service in his/her IEP, and we have budgeted for this expense based upon experience.

(b) History of Outcomes and Results

Please see our response to Selection Criterion (a) and documentation in Appendix G (for assessment, attendance, retention, and graduation data) and in Appendices F and H (for demonstration of absence of any significant compliance and management issues).

(c) Description of Educational Program

(c)(i) Meeting Challenging State Academic Standards

Please see our responses to Selection Criteria (a) and (b) as well as the description of the Freire Program included in Appendix I.1 for more information.

(c)(ii) Grade Levels to be Served

Please see the introduction to this narrative and Selection Criterion (d)(i). This grant will support the addition of grades K-2 at FCS and K-2 and 4-6 at FCSW, both over a two-year expansion implementation period.

(c)(iii) Instructional Practices

Please see our responses to Selection Criteria (a) and (b) as well as the description of the Freire Program included in Appendix I.1 for more information.

(d) Current Management of more than one Charter School

(d)(i) Meets the Definition of “Charter School”

Please see documentation provided in Appendix F.

(d)(ii) Treated as a Separate School by its Authorizer and State

We operate schools in two separate states. See Appendix F for documentation.

(e) Information on Schools Closed, Charters Revoked, or Affiliation Terminated

This does not apply. Please see our response to Selection Criterion (a)(ii-iii) and documentation in Appendix F.

(f) Logic Model

Please see our response to Selection Criterion (c) and Appendix I.12.

(g) Single-Sex Charter Schools or Activities

We are not proposing any single-sex schools or educational programs. Our schools will continue to offer some single-sex sports, which will comply with Title IX. Specifically, in athletic programming, male and female students have equal opportunities for participation.

(h) Management Relationship of Applicant to Schools

Please see our response to Selection Criterion (d)(ii).

(i) Parent and Community Input

Freire is fully committed to finding meaningful and mutually-enriching ways for parents to participate in and provide input on our schools, particularly on new school development and improving the quality of teaching and learning at every grade level. During the school development process, our families are our greatest resource when developing programs and policies and establishing a positive school climate. As we prepare our charter application and select and renovate a facility, we will hold a series of family meetings/roundtables for each new campus. These meetings will be used in part to disseminate information to our families, but more

importantly to solicit their input on a host of start-up issues from school climate to educational programming. Once operational, each school will have a family involvement policy, updated annually, to direct our parent programming, communication, and shared leadership activities (see sample plan in Appendix I.17). All parent feedback is collected and formally reviewed at least annually through surveys regarding their evaluation of teachers, community safety, and their perceptions and attitudes towards the school. School leaders consider survey results as part of the annual planning process when designing changes each school year, and also consider and respond to direct feedback as appropriate on a continual basis. To ensure that parents have a voice in school governance, the bylaws of each school reserve two spots on each Board of Directors for parents to serve as voting members.

In addition to these opportunities for parent feedback and governance, we have built a robust system for two-way communication with parents at each campus. Parent communication activities include Back to School Night, student-parent-teacher conferences, individual consultation with a student's academic advisor, online student information system access, a weekly email newsletter, participation in our emotional support program, and additional after-school and weekend activities. Students and/or their families can meet with our in-house therapist or one of our graduate student interns who work under our family therapist's direction. Advisors keep track of students' academic progress and maintain regular communication with parents/guardians, helping link students to the supports available at Freire. Through our student information system, parents can view their student's assignment and course grades, homework completion, attendance, and behavior. We also utilize an automated school messaging service to get e-mail, text, and phone call communication out en masse about school functions, news,

trainings, etc. Overall, we encourage and support an open line of communication between parents and the school and invite parent feedback at any time.

Similarly, we have learned that community support and collaboration is critical to the successful replication and expansion of our school programs, and to the delivery of our problem-based and creative learning model. During the application and facility selection and development phases, we will host a series of community meetings/roundtables to discuss issues such as transportation, facility construction, student recruitment, and avenues for community involvement. Once each school is operational, we aim to bring the community to our classrooms, and our classrooms to the community. BtF has a Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement who recruits community partners and develops meaningful community-based learning activities, specifically regarding college prep and career readiness. We take care to ensure that our community partners are involved in planning learning experiences and are surveyed or interviewed following each experience so that we can continuously improve our programming. The Board of each school strives to recruit professionals from the community who can bring community feedback to the governance process. Finally, during the student recruitment phase, we rely heavily on community grassroots organizing to spread the word about our school program. This very important part of our outreach plan will include attending fairs/expos; attending meetings at community groups; visiting supermarkets and churches; inviting current Freire Charter School parents, students, and alumni to speak to potential new Freire students; conducting phone banks; and canvassing door-to-door.

(j) Lottery and Enrollment Procedures

Freire schools value diversity and seek students from diverse backgrounds. Freire schools do not discriminate in their admissions practices based upon age (to the extent applicable), race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin,

religion, marital status, ancestry, parental status, disability, achievement or aptitude, proficiency in the English language, or any other unlawful basis. As required by both Pennsylvania and Delaware Charter School Law, Freire uses a lottery system for admitting its students when the number of applications received by the deadline exceeds the number of seats that are available in that grade level. In Delaware, the admissions timeline and procedures are set by the state. For our Pennsylvania schools, each school's Board of Directors approves a yearly admissions timeline and process, which is posted on the school's website. This includes the application deadline, lottery date, enrollment deadline, and a nondiscrimination statement. The application will require only a few minimal pieces of information and will be published in English, Spanish, and Mandarin Chinese, with translation made available in any other requested language. The School will not charge any fees for admission or enrollment.

As allowable by state law (14 Del. C. § 506(3) in DE and 24 P.S. 17-1723-A in PA), charter schools may have admissions preferences for their lottery. In Pennsylvania, preference will be given in enrollment to siblings of students currently enrolled in the Freire school being applied to. First preference for all students will be given to residents of Philadelphia. In Delaware, Freire will give a lottery preference to (1) students who have siblings currently attending FCSW and (2) students whose parents are employed on a permanent basis by FCSW for at least 30 hours per week. Students who qualify for both admissions preferences will be considered first for open seats. Students who qualify for one preference will be considered in the priority order listed above. Students who qualify for no preferences will be considered for all remaining open seats once preferences have been exhausted in the lottery pool. Copies of our complete admissions policies are included in Appendix I.7.

(k) Provision of FAPE under IDEA

Please see our response to Selection Criterion (b).

(l) Meeting Challenging State Academic Standards

Please see our responses to Selection Criteria (a) and (b).

(m) Budget Narrative

Our Budget Narrative is attached to the appropriate submission form of this application. Our use of grant funds is described generally in our response to Selection Criterion (d)(ii).

(n) Audited Financial Statements

The latest audited financial statements for the Applicant as well as each school that we manage are included in Appendix H. Please note that BtF was considered a “component unit” of FCS for accounting purposes through FY 2017, due to the level of control of the FCS board over the BtF board. As of FY 2018, the FCS board approved an amendment to the BtF bylaws to reduce its level of control, and BtF is no longer considered a component unit of FCS. However, BtF’s FY 2018 audit report is not yet complete. Therefore, the most recent independently audited financial statements for BtF (the applicant) are part of the FCS FY 2017 audit report. Further detail is included in Appendix H.

(o) Enrollment Assistance Plan for Closure

In the event that a Freire school is closed via charter revocation or nonrenewal, Freire and BtF are committed to working collaboratively with the charter authorizer (the School District of Philadelphia for our PA schools and the Delaware Department of Education for FCSW) to ensure that parents are informed about the closure process and school choice options. In Delaware, the DDOE Charter School Closure Protocol mandates the formation of a transition team including DDOE representatives, the closing charter school’s Board Chair, the lead charter administrator, and the lead charter financial administrator. Per the protocol, the charter school would facilitate a DDOE-led parent meeting to review schooling options. During the time it remains open, the school would facilitate the transfer of student records to the receiving school district(s). Any

remaining student records would be transferred to Delaware Public Archives or DDOE. In Philadelphia, the closure process is not defined by State Charter School Law or local authorizer policy. However, Freire has a historically positive relationship with the charter authorizer and anticipates that we would have a collaborative relationship during the closure process. Freire would hold a family information meeting to ensure that they know what their educational options are and how to get their children into the best possible school. Our Academic Advisors would work with families during the new school application and enrollment process for as long as the Freire school remained open. BtF would assume responsibility for transferring all student records to receiving districts and/or the School District of Philadelphia’s Charter School Office.

(p) Description of Waivers

(p)(i) Waivers Requested

We are not requesting special waivers of any Federal statutory or regulatory provisions, as none are necessary for the successful operation of the charter schools to be expanded.

(p)(ii) Rules Not Applicable to Charter Schools

In both Pennsylvania and Delaware, there are a number of statutes, regulations, and other rules that are not applicable to charter schools, pursuant to state statute (24 P.S. § 17-1715-A in PA; 14 Del. Code § 505 in DE). These laws list requirements which charter schools must follow, while exempting them from all other provisions. Below is a brief list of key areas in which Charter Schools are thus granted flexibility by inference by state:

Legal/Regulatory Provision or Area	Exemption Applies?	
	PA	DE
Freedom to set program of study and curriculum, provided that courses prepare students to meet state content standards and participate in the state system of assessments	Yes	Yes
Set school schedule and calendar independent of local district, provided minimum instructional hours are met	Yes	Yes
Create student code of conduct and student policies, provided they comply with certain provisions	Yes	Yes

Self-elected Board of Trustees, rather than local system of general election or appointment	Yes	Yes
School sets its own annual budget, sets its own procurement policies for state/local funds, and approves its own expenditures	Yes	Yes
Exclusion from automatic membership in local teachers' union, unless school staff unionize	Yes	Yes
Exemption from state system of teacher evaluation	Yes	By request
Certification of staff by SEA	Yes*	Yes*
School staff are not required to participate in the state pension system	Yes	By request
Board of Trustees maintains control of staffing and personnel policies, salaries, and hiring decisions, as recommended by school leaders	Yes	Yes
School is its own LEA for federal programs, determining its own Title I-A, II-A, and IV-A programming and spending, as well as managing its own IDEA funding	Yes	Yes
School leaders maintain control of daily operations of the school	Yes	Yes
Independence from local district School Food Authority for school lunch program administration	Yes	Yes
Selection of school facility	Yes	Yes

*In PA, up to 25% of all professional staff in a charter school may be uncertified. In DE, up to 35% of teachers may be uncertified.

In Delaware, FCSW has taken advantage of the ability to request an exemption from the state system of teacher evaluation and had its own alternative system approved by the Department of Education. As of this time, we have not requested an exemption from participation in the state pension system.

Please refer to Appendix I.18 for more detailed information on Pennsylvania Charter School Law flexibilities.