



Freire

Charter Wilmington

Freire Charter School Wilmington Title I Schoolwide Plan 2017-18

The mission of Freire Charter School Wilmington is to provide a college-preparatory learning experience with a focus on real-world learning, critical thinking, and problem solving in an environment that emphasizes the values of community, teamwork, and nonviolence.

Our school provides a safe, friendly, rich, rigorous, and college-preparatory education for our students. Our model is built around high academic expectations, clearly delineated instructional and cultural principles, a commitment to nonviolence, a data-driven cycle of instruction, an emphasis on student voice, and a focus on social justice. The programs we implement to fulfill these principles include research-based curricula, therapy services for students, individual academic mentoring and tutoring, a range of after-school activities, and special programs focused on peace and social change.

In traditional schooling, students are conditioned to be passive recipients of knowledge. Paulo Freire believed that in order to learn, students needed to be “in dialogue” with knowledge. At Freire Charter School Wilmington, we update Paulo Freire’s notion of dialogic learning for 21st century adolescents. Our approach teaches our students to seek and value alternate perspectives, take responsibility for their learning, speak up in passionate yet appropriate ways, and use education to gain personal power. We meet our students where they are by providing intensive skill remediation and intervention as needed, making instruction active and engaging, and helping students persevere through and take ownership of challenging coursework. Our curriculum is designed overall to reflect depth, programmatic coherence, and continuity while fostering critical thinking and integration of reading, writing, numeracy, and research skills.

Freire is committed to maximizing learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their learning challenges, economic or cultural backgrounds, or any other limitations. We assess all students carefully to identify their strengths and weaknesses relative to our rigorous college preparatory curriculum and plan a path of mastery for each individual student including accommodations for students with special needs and English Language Learners.

Freire teachers focus on a data-driven cycle of instruction to accomplish our academic goals. Evidence from state tests, interim benchmarks, course midterms and finals, the SAT and PSAT are at the center of our professional development and instructional decisions. Freire teachers are thoughtful, resourceful and dynamic professionals who use data to shape their practice by identifying and emphasizing core knowledge and skills, collecting data as they monitor and assess student mastery, and then analyzing this data to enable lesson adjustments and targeted re-teaching.

We regard the 8th grade year as a kind of academic support program, a year when students receive the intervention and remediation they will need to be successful in high school. Our core academic courses are designed to simultaneously help students catch up and to push them forward. All courses are mapped to rigorous Common Core standards. In order to ensure that all students are prepared for college, Freire provides a highly structured, prescribed, and Common Core aligned curriculum for its students in all courses.

One of the Freire's great strengths is a curriculum that is truly focused on preparing students for college. For instance, in English, this means that students are pushed through a rigorous program of critical reading, where texts may range from the works of Shakespeare to *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Here they develop the ability to deeply analyze texts through intensive discussion, reading, and writing. In math, Freire's instruction highlights high-level problem solving and critical thinking. The courses are designed to expose students to a wide variety of mathematical thinking, including shifting the focus from computation and fluency to problem solving application and conceptual understanding. Gradually, students come to know not just how to solve a problem but why those methods work. At the same time, the courses are also differentiated based on need, meeting students where they are and giving them the basic supports so that they are able to meet our high standard of rigor.

Equally important as curriculum and instruction in fulfilling our college-preparatory mission is Freire's commitment to nonviolence. The support of our dedicated staff helps our students to create a caring community where our students adhere to and self-enforce our code of nonviolent conduct. Our strong peer mediation program helps students feel safe enough to take the risks needed for learning. In this environment, students can achieve both academic and emotional growth. In addition, special classes and activities engage students in dialogue about peace and social change and promote civic activism in order to prepare students for their futures as change-making and engaged adults. Freire's student-centered philosophy allows us to offer the kind of personalized, multifaceted, and rigorous education that students deserve.

1. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school

2017-18 is Freire Charter School Wilmington's third year of operation, and our third year of operating a Title I Schoolwide Program. During the need's assessment, Freire Wilmington utilized stakeholder input in conjunction with comprehensive data analysis of the School's academic and cultural indicators. Specifically, Freire drew from parent, student, teacher, and board member input to inform the needs assessment and the overall Schoolwide Plan. We achieved impressive academic results in just our first year. On statewide Smarter Balanced exams, Freire has experienced a large growth of test scores compared to other feeder schools within the area as well as the state. In the 2016-17 school year, reading scores represented triple the growth statewide, with a positive 40-point change in reading scores, compared to the 13-point change statewide for 8th grade. Math scores represented double that of state growth, with a 37-point change in Math scores compared to a 16-point change statewide. Freire students also outperformed many middle schools in the neighboring Brandywine, Christina, Colonial, and Red Clay school districts on these tests. However, many of our students still are not achieving proficiency, and we have developed a comprehensive set of strategies to continue the acceleration of growth and the increase of Smarter Balanced scaled scores.

In addition, we were able to build up the culture of the school in our three years, offering a healthy mix of extracurricular activities, including basketball, student council, math team, art club, dance, and more. Students were excited to go on a variety of field trips, including college visits, science laboratories, and pure fun days at amusement parks. In 2017, we were awarded the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program grant for \$300,000 per year over a three-year period. This funding is critical to nurturing a strong and identifiable school culture. A portion of these funds have gone towards our after-school programming partnerships with various local and national organizations to provide students the opportunity to engage in activities that align with their personal and professional interests. In addition, these funds also support our Academic Centers, which are run by our dedicated teachers and are available four days a week to students who may need extra math or writing help.

Since our opening, we have steadily grown in critical climate indicators by lowering suspension rates and increasing attendance rates. Despite a slow start in these areas initially when Freire opened, we hope to continue the positive trend within these climate indicators. Going forward, we hope to find more actionable ways to involve parents and families more in the Freire Wilmington community as a whole.

Academic Data

Percentage of students failing two or more classes

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
End of Q1	43%	31%	30%
End of Q2	31%	35%	46%
End of Q3	35%	31%	34%

9th grade credit accumulation

By the start of the 2017-18 school year, 98.8% of students returning to Freire after a 9th grade year at our school in 2016-17 began the year with 4 or more core credits (English, math, science, social studies, and a foreign language).

Year-to-year Smarter Balanced student growth

	Reading Scale Score Comparison			Math Scale Score Comparison		
	2015-16 7th Graders	2016-17 8th Graders	Difference	2015-16 7th Graders	2016-17 8th Graders	Difference
State	2553	2566	13	2535	2551	16
Freire	2506	2546	40	2469	2506	37

DSSF growth score comparison to area schools

Delaware School Profile **Reading** Growth Metric (State = 50)

Freire	A.I. duPont	Stanton	Bayard	Gauger-Cobbs	Kirk	Shue-Medill	George Read
84	46	21	26	59	62	27	51

Delaware School Profile **Math** Growth Metric (State = 50)

Freire	A.I. duPont	Stanton	Bayard	Gauger-Cobbs	Kirk	Shue-Medill	George Read
74	46	31	43	48	55	33	52

Proficiency comparison to area schools

Reading Smarter Balanced Assessment Proficiency Percentage (State = 57)

Freire	A.I. duPont	Stanton	Bayard	Gauger-Cobbs	Kirk	Shue-Medill	George Read
41	20	22	8	36	45	38	50

Math Smarter Balanced Assessment Proficiency Percentage (State = 45)

Freire	A.I. duPont	Stanton	Bayard	Gauger-Cobbs	Kirk	Shue-Medill	George Read
---------------	-------------	---------	--------	--------------	------	-------------	-------------

Achievement gap/subgroup proficiency analysis

	Reading Proficiency		Math Proficiency	
	African American	Low Income	African American	Low Income
State	36%	35%	21%	21%
Freire	36%	29%	21%	23%

Academic Data Analysis

When our students arrived at Freire, many were behind the state average in performance. Despite these gaps in students' previous education, we were able to achieve substantial growth over the course of a single school year. In reading, Freire beat the state growth metric value by 34 points (84 as compared to 50). In math, Freire further outstripped the state metric value at 24 points ahead (74 as compared to 50). Additionally, Freire's growth scores were vastly higher than those of the 7 area middle schools where most of our students come from.

In general, a substantially higher percentage of Freire's students scored proficient than students at the 7 area middle schools where most of our students come from. Furthermore, during the 2016-17 school year, Freire enrolled the highest percentage of low-income students and the third highest percentage of African American students of any high school in the state. In Freire's 2016-17 school year, low-income students scored lower than the statewide average for low-income students in the Reading Smarter Balanced by 6%. Additionally, disaggregated Smarter Balanced results indicate that African American students from Freire scored the same as the statewide average for African American students in Reading. In Math proficiency, Freire scored the same as the statewide average within the African American subgroup. Low-income students at Freire scored 2% higher in the Math Smarter Balanced than the statewide average.

Although we were able to help students make great academic process, for many students it was still not enough to get them to proficiency. The percentage of Freire's students scoring proficient on the Smarter Balanced fell behind the state at 41% as opposed to 57% in reading and at 24% compared with 45% in math. However, our students entered with a need for substantially accelerated growth in order to reach grade level expectations in Reading and Math Smarter Balanced assessments. Based on prior year Smarter Balanced scores, less than fifty percent of students arrived to Freire on grade level in reading and less than thirty percent in math. Our own testing also confirmed that of those students not on grade level, on average they were two or more grade levels behind. While we see this as no excuse and we still push for all students to reach proficiency and beyond, it does pose a major challenge for us as we move forward. It is important to note that while our students' achievement levels were farther behind on math, we demonstrated a clear ability to help students grow faster in that subject to help close that gap. We attribute these gains to our rigorous curriculum, as well as the ability of our teachers to engage students in deep critical thinking.

Academic Needs and Goals

At Freire, we are driven to see these students through to success and therefore plan intensive supports for these learners. We believe high expectations must be paired with a high level of support, and as a school we strive to do whatever it takes to get our students there. We are taking a number of steps to increase

academic achievement and growth, especially putting a great deal of effort into bringing students with proficiency gaps up to grade level and engaging students in the college preparatory structured curriculum. In the 2017-18 school year we are rounding out Freire Wilmington's college preparatory programming with our "Graduation x2" focus for the 2017-18 school year. The premise of "Graduation x2" is not only getting students to college but equipping them the skills to succeed and graduate from college. We believe that in order to elevate our students to this goal, students will need rigorous curriculum and learning opportunities as well as core mindsets and beliefs that prepare them for post-secondary life and beyond. The core beliefs that we work to instill in students are, "I belong here in this academic community", "My ability and competence grow with my effort", "I can succeed at this", "This work has value for me." These core beliefs are tied to a growth mindset that we want to nurture in all our students. The "Graduation x2" focus enables students to realize the full potential of their intelligence and connect it to their effort through specific lesson plans, adult modeling, framing through lessons, and emphasis on data and progress. Further, through college experience, exposure, and messaging throughout the school, students will become more invested in the idea of college.

The rigor of our curriculum is another huge factor in actualizing the "Graduation x2" focus for Freire Wilmington students. A challenging curriculum not only prepares our students to perform on assessments such as the Smarter Balanced, PSAT, SAT, and others, but enables them to demonstrate core academic skill and deeper critical thinking around these assessments. Using data, student performance on assessments at all levels is tracked and analyzed by teachers to identify where students need additional support. In the 2017-18 school year targeted differentiated support will focus on Math. Listed below are specific strategies we will employ to fully actualize the "Graduation x2" goal for our students.

Curriculum Rigor

- All teachers will continue to focus on literacy, pushing the use of the highest quality texts, and implementing close reading and writing techniques in their classrooms.
- Math teachers will focus on complex problem solving and critical thinking, ensuring that they are aligning curriculum to standards and teaching not just basic fluency but also problem solving and conceptual understanding.
- Teachers will receive additional coaching in rigorous content.

Focus on Assessment

- Emphasize implementing carefully aligned, high-level interim assessments.
- Implement assessment data systems to more deeply understand the academic needs of our students especially in Reading and Math.
- Students will take the PSAT.
- Provide coaching and professional development so that teachers develop assessment literacy— understanding critical benchmark assessments like the PSAT and Smarter Balanced exams on a deep level.

One on One Support

- Have teachers perform data analysis to take a closer look at how strategic interventions could help individual students.
- All teachers will offer extra tutoring and support after school.
- Freire will open after school academic support centers in Math, Writing, Reading, and Science where students can go for additional help from their teachers and peers.

- Social work graduate students will work with students failing multiple classes to help them improve academic performance.
- Freire will intensify parent communication for students who are falling behind academically or socially.
- Freire will give students access to any technology they need to complete assignments or projects.

Teacher Coaches and Professional Development

- Dedicate professional development time to analyzing the level of questioning and the depth of thinking necessary for students to be able to succeed not only on State and national assessments but also in a variety of rigorous applications.
- Through professional development and individual teacher coaching, teachers will learn how to ask the right questions in the classroom and on assessments to grow student critical thinking skills.
- Teachers will be provided with increased mentoring and collaboration time
- Freire will offer professional development around core instructional techniques.
- Teachers will understand how diversity affects instruction.
- School leaders will continue to hire high-quality teachers to the Freire community as the school grows.

Through these actions it is our hope to see the following outcomes:

- Students will achieve at a high level, answering complex and critical thinking questions that meet college preparatory standards.
- Students are not only accepted to colleges but prepared to graduate from college, following through with the “Graduation x2” focus.
- Lower rate of students failing at the end of each quarter and on midterm and final exams.
- More students performing at a high enough level to make the honor roll.
- Achieve growth at a level that is double the state average by 2019.
- Work toward developing targets for SAT scores and graduation rates.

School Climate Data

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enrollment (9/30 count)	234	322	411
Average daily attendance	88.5%	92.6%	93.4%
Chronic Absenteeism (15+)	37.4%	25.5%	18.9%
Suspensions	183	191	172
Per student rate	0.80	0.59	0.42
Expulsions	0	0	0
Referrals to Law Enforcement	7	0	0

School Climate Needs and Goals

Improving school climate indicators such as attendance and suspensions will require building a sustained and deep level of trust with our students and continuing to increase connectedness within the school community by growing an even stronger school culture. We need more capacity at the staff level, more after school activities, more school spirit, a stronger connection with our parents, and more positive incentives. Finally, we need to ensure that all of our students experience academic success at school. We are working on improvements in all of these areas.

Attendance

In past years, corrective conversations with families regarding attendance were frequently attached to discussions with school staff about academics or behavior. We developed several interventions around absenteeism in 2017, and our goal is to see a 93% average daily attendance rate in 2017-18. In 2016-17, Freire met its goal of 92% attendance and from the data collected thus far within the school year, Freire is well positioned to meet the 93% goal for the 2017-18 school year. Our goal is to maintain our high attendance percentage for the remainder of the current school year and in the long-term aim for a steady increase in attendance from year to year.

Goals

We have developed the following goals and targets around improving school climate:

- Staff will create a peaceful, structured, and engaging learning environment by articulating clear rules and expectations and upholding them consistently
 - Focus specifically on consistent culture systems, especially consistent consequence systems and expectations. Staff will implement positive behavior systems by using research-based psychological principles, for example, referral and participation in peer mediation, positive write-ups, and raffle rewards.
 - Staff will create plan to communicate policies and expectations to students (“Breathe Fire”).
- Develop an inclusive Freire community through the strengthening of our school’s culture, climate, and parent/ family relationships. Overall, the development of the Freire community requires a collective understanding of what it means for students, teachers, and others to respect, value, and trust each other.
- Teams and committees of staff, including grade level teams (GLT’s) will build sense of belonging and community at the school including major events, structures to share news and information, rituals, and a sense of shared joy.

- Staff will create a yearlong culture plan for students that includes:
 - Scope and Sequence for assemblies
 - Develop culture priorities - bullying/race/gender/difference
 - Pre-planned field trips & special events
 - Foster themes around Freire Dragons / College Prep
 - Foster student leadership and voice by implementing processes and structures to listen more deeply and frequently. These processes and structures to foster student voice and leadership within the school include relational meetings, student committees, surveys and other feedback loops to constantly improve throughout the year.
- Create an environment that is inclusive of ALL kids, especially those with special needs
 - Staff will understand the importance of and expectations around special education
- Staff will create collaborative team structures with an atmosphere of psychological safety
 - Meet regularly in collaborative teams to check in on expectations and consistency of application, reflect on data, and evaluate current systems
 - Create collaboration norms and structures including meeting templates and document sharing
 - Grade level teams will work together to identify students with specific behavioral needs and work together to implement relationship-focused positive supports and analyze result.
- Incorporate parents into the life of the school more frequently and on a deeper level
- Offer a greater variety of afterschool programming
- Increase the quality of the school food service

2. Employ schoolwide reform strategies that:

- a. Provide opportunities for all children to meet the State’s proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement**

The first topic we addressed in our needs assessment was how to continue and improve on helping our students meet the State’s standards for academic achievement. We are putting a great deal of effort into bringing students with proficiency gaps up to grade level, with the first goal we defined being to focus on assessment. Between the academic goals we defined through our needs assessment, the instructional strategies and school climate initiatives discussed above, and the professional development activities described throughout this plan, we believe Freire has a comprehensive plan in place to provide an opportunity to each of our students to meet Delaware’s academic standards.

- b. Use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically-based research that:**
- i. Strengthens the core academic program**
 - ii. Increases the amount and quality of learning time, such as providing an extended school year and before- and after-school and summer programs and opportunities, and helps provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum**
 - iii. Includes strategies for meeting the educational needs of historically underserved populations**

In order to master proficient or advanced levels of achievement—and to ensure that our students will be accepted into and succeed in college—we understand that most of our students will need extra help and support along the way. Instead of regarding extra help as an add-on, our instructional program builds support and interventions into every aspect and part of the school day. Our 8th grade students take supplemental

intensive reading and math courses where they develop fundamental skills. Further, we provide students with more needs timely intervention in the form of push-in or pull-out classroom support. Not to be overlooked is the academic culture at Freire, where there is no stigma attached to asking a teacher who is introducing a new concept in class to “break it down” or to getting extra help.

All teachers make themselves available to students after school for extra help with students who need it. Beginning in 2016-17, we opened after school academic centers where students can drop in for extra help in reading, math, and science from their teachers and peers. We also provide a summer school program for students in need of credit recovery so that the fewest possible number of our students are retained.

Helping each and every student who enrolls at our school succeed regardless of background is at the very core of what we do. The imperative that we meet the needs of historically underserved populations goes without saying at Freire. In 2017, the two largest subgroups of the student body at our school were African Americans, comprising 73% of the student population, and low-income students, comprising 49% of the student population. Helping all of our students means helping students in these subgroups, and overall, Freire has outperformed the state average in overall growth as well as in helping these students achieve proficiency. We provide professional development and implement a wide variety of school programming to help all members of our school community understand and value our diversity.

- c. Includes strategies to address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly low achieving children and those at risk of not meeting the State of Delaware’s standards who are members of target populations of any program that is included in the schoolwide program which may include:**
 - i. Counseling, pupil services and mentoring services**
 - ii. College and career awareness and preparation, such as college and career guidance, personal finance education, and innovative teaching methods, which may include applied learning and team-teaching strategies**
 - iii. Integration of vocational and technical education programs**

Providing a college-preparatory education and a safe and supportive school climate are at the center of what we do at Freire. We use our Title I allocation to fully fund a Dean of Students and an Assistant Dean of Students, who are central to ensuring that our school is a safe environment where students can focus on learning. This is especially important in addressing the needs of students at risk of not meeting the State of Delaware's standards in a timely and effective manner. Our Dean works to remove social, emotional, and behavioral barriers to learning by coordinating some of the initiatives described below.

We are a safe school where students can focus on learning in a peaceful, orderly environment that is structured but free from regimentation. We are a school where students can walk through the hallways comfortably and unafraid of being who they are. To create this space where students can learn and grow, we have strict rules and expectations that are clear and upheld consistently. As staff, we are united as a team in upholding these expectations and we are committed to transparency in our discipline policy and rationale. We have an especially strong commitment to nonviolence. We stand by these expectations because we believe that all students are capable of behaving at a high level and we commit to supporting all students as they grow to meet these high expectations.

To support students in meeting these expectations, we have all students who are new to our school attend a two-day summer clinic where we provide an intensive introduction to our unique school culture and expectations. Students learn conflict resolution skills, our anti-bullying program, and peer mediation. Any member of our community can request peer mediation themselves, our staff can refer a student, or a dean

can require a student to participate as part of a behavioral resolution. Mediations are led by trained peers and are completely confidential.

During the school year, we strive to make therapy available to our students in need. We establish relationships with counseling interns and professional therapists from Christiana Care to provide weekly therapy at no cost to students who are experiencing problems (whether in school or at home). Students can refer themselves in addition to staff and parents making referrals.

We have been able to improve and turn around attendance rates over the past three years by systematizing our parent notification system for students with problem attendance. Over the summer of 2016, we worked extensively to sync the multiple systems involved in producing daily absence reports and sending automated phone calls and emails to parents/guardians. This communication is now sent each morning between 10:30 and noon to keep parents notified if their student has missed school or arrived late to school. We are also devoting more person power to the issue, with an MSW student completing field placement hours at Freire specifically focused on absenteeism prevention. This intern identifies students when they reach 5 unexcused absences and begins meeting with them weekly or bi-weekly to fulfill or create an absence elimination plan. The intern works with both students and families to identify the underlying cause of the student's individual struggles with absenteeism, drawing connections to show the impact absences have on grades and learning, and providing additional support based on the student's specific needs. We also hold friendly competitions and incentives to encourage and promote attendance. Each homeroom teacher receives a weekly tracking report on their students' weekly attendance rate. Any homeroom who hits a monthly attendance rate of 95% or higher receives the monthly incentive and is recognized at school-wide assemblies.

We have also taken a proactive approach to building a Freire Family. We call ourselves a family because our culture is one where everyone is valued, and we work to create an inviting atmosphere for all students and staff. Together, we build a unique community that is built on mutual respect, openness, and honesty. Our classrooms and halls are enlivened by our trust in students, who feel known, respected, and held to account. Our staff focuses on collaboration, believing that everyone has a voice and is on the team – we each bring a unique and valuable skill set to fulfilling our mission. Likewise, we encourage student leadership and voice, empowering them to take ownership of their learning. Finally, we believe that relationships matter and are the heart of all learning. When people feel included, important, and cherished, they will succeed.

We have undertaken a number of diversity initiatives to help students and staff bridge differences. At the midway point of the school year, as students return from our rigorous midterms, we hold our annual “Dragon Day.” This is a celebration focused on building the school family and creating a sense of belonging and personal development. Teachers offer workshops and activities like chess lessons and escape the room activities that students sign up for based on interest. The day also includes a diversity session where participants discuss their own identities, get to know others, and ultimately build a greater mutual understanding of issues around diversity and sense of oneness. We also sponsor all-school field trips such as ice skating and Hershey Park as a way to build camaraderie and connectedness. Further, full courses in social justice and awareness are offered throughout grade levels. This continuity of diversity in school activities and curriculum represents the overall mission and vision of the school.

Research indicates that access to opportunities and exposure to experiences are critical to prepare students for completing college. Freire is committed to expanding our students' experiences. In 2016-17, all grades participated in a visit to the University of Delaware to become acquainted with a college campus. We have organized field trips for 8th and 9th graders to see Shakespeare plays, and for 10th graders to travel to Washington, DC to visit the Smithsonian museums. In addition, our slate of extracurricular activities has been

growing and changing on a monthly basis and will expand substantially in the 2017-18 school year as we implement the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant we successfully sought.

As a school of choice with a college-preparatory mission, Freire does not emphasize vocational or technical education.

d. Addresses how the school will determine if such needs of the children have been met

The school has partnered with the Build the Future Education Collaborative, a charter support organization, which includes a Performance Management Team. This team tracks student achievement, discipline, attendance, and other relevant data on an ongoing basis to progress monitor the effectiveness all our interventions. These metrics are reported at bi-monthly board meetings so that our progress is being tracked at the highest level, ensuring strong accountability. Our Performance Management Team also provides ongoing review of school data and support in understanding this data to school administrators. Teachers also review performance data on a regular basis, doing so individually, in consultation with colleagues and administrators, at staff meetings, and in professional development sessions. Evidence from state tests, benchmarks, and course midterms and finals are at the center of our professional development and instructional decisions.

e. Are consistent with, and are designed to implement, State and local improvement plans, if any.

As a public charter school, Freire Charter School Wilmington observes any requirements mandated by the State of Delaware, but develops its own local improvement plans as its own LEA.

3. Provide instruction by highly qualified teachers

As part of ESSA implementation, the federally-mandated “Highly Qualified Teacher” designation was phased out. The new requirement was for teachers to meet appropriate state certification requirements. Our school is required to have 65% of our teachers hold state certifications, and in 2017-18 we are meeting this requirement with 67% of our teachers certified. When a teacher is not appropriately certified, we work with the teacher and create a plan for that person to achieve appropriate certification.

At Freire, having the highest-quality teaching staff is of the utmost importance to us. We ensure this not only by striving for all teachers to be certified, but by recruiting the best people, using instructional coaches, providing effective professional development, and building planning time into our schedule. We address these strategies in depth under the next two items in our schoolwide plan.

4. Provide high quality and on-going professional development for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals, and if appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff to enable all children in the school to meet Delaware’s Learning Standards

Our professional development is designed for teachers to improve content knowledge in core academic subjects; learn effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills; and understand student academic achievement standards.

Before the new school year starts, all new staff participate in one week of pre-service professional development with new teachers participating in an additional week of new teacher professional development. Based on individual and group professional learning goals, our 2017-18 pre-service professional development topics include Freire Operating Values, Review of Freire Policies and Procedures, Stories of Our Students, School Culture, Technology Training, Effective Teaching, State Assessments, Special Education, Using Data

to Drive Instruction, the School Schedule, Common Core, School Safety, Vertical Planning Teams, the Meaning of College Prep, and more. We also utilize Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion 2.0* as a text and resource training in 62 topics that put students on the path to college, which we will continue to draw on throughout the year.

Once the school year is underway, the school calendar is structured so that full-day professional development sessions happen every 4-6 weeks. In addition to Lemov, based on individual and group professional learning goals, our 2018-17 topics include delivering rigorous content, core instructional techniques, understanding assessment analysis, the role of diversity in the classroom, and positive behavior intervention and supports. Professional development days may include built in planning time with either a teacher's grade level or their content area—or both.

We also emphasize common planning time outside of dedicated professional development days. Our 8th grade English course is taught by one teacher, which creates built-in horizontal planning. Our two 9th grade English teachers have common planning time to maintain common standards for all students. All Core subject departments have scheduled vertical planning time.

To encourage their growth and development as education, we are now encouraging our teachers to experience and learn from different teaching methods by visiting other high performing schools. In 2016-17, the entire teaching staff visited Freire Charter High School in Philadelphia in order to observe classes. In addition, certain teachers have made individual trips to other high performing schools in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and within Delaware.

Another way we encourage teacher professional development is through mentoring. One of our most experienced and skilled teachers serves as our in-house teacher mentor, working individually with every Freire teacher who is in their first, second, or third year of teaching.

Finally, is our teacher coaching program, where both our Co-Head of School, Academics and a Director of Instructional Development provide differentiated support to our teachers. Our instructional coach provides one-on-one teacher coaching specific to instructing students with academic, social, and emotional barriers to learning. Instructional coaching focuses on classroom management, content, instruction, and assessment for learning. Content focused coaching emphasizes lesson design, lesson enactment and assessment for learning. At Freire, our coaching program is designed to share classroom management expertise, dig deep into content and instruction, assess for student learning, and use assessment to guide coaching and instruction.

The coach's role is dedicated to ensuring that there is a skilled and effective teacher in every classroom; in partnership with teachers and administrators, the coach can craft and implement professional learning opportunities that revolve around the instructional core and keep everyone focused on learning. The coach, using a variety of formats, can seed and cultivate adult learning in schools. In so doing, the coach must also use their power of influence to invite administrators into the learning process and act as partners. They can assist administrators to develop the capacity to assess the content and pedagogical content knowledge at play in a lesson. Our coach can help teachers plan and design lessons or units, observe and debrief lessons and provide actionable feedback, cultivate collaboration, develop the capacity of teachers to coach peers, and plan and set coherent, aligned, and mutually agreed upon goals for teacher development based on data specifically related to student learning.

5. Employ strategies to attract high-quality, highly qualified teachers to high-needs schools

Freire recruits staff from local colleges and universities, through alternative certification programs such as Teach for America, and through other networks. We post all open positions on local and national job websites to ensure that we attract high quality and effective staff.

We partner with Teach for America to assist us in recruitment and training. TFA corps members emerge from the training program highly qualified and we are drawn to this program because the training they receive is hands-on and practical (teachers are prepared from day one) and instills within teachers a belief in kids and high expectations for students and their own professional growth.

We have a rigorous application and selection process for all staff members. Prospective instructional staff members submit a resume, cover letter, and three professional references. Staff members screen incoming applications to determine applicants' alignment with Freire values and expectations. Selected applicants then participate in 30-minute phone screenings with Freire staff to further determine whether an applicant will be a good addition to our team. Finally, a portion of applicants are invited to participate in an in-person interview with Freire staff members. Teaching applicants in most cases are required to conduct a demonstration lesson and meet with school leaders.

Once high-quality teachers are on board, we employ a variety of strategies to retain them, including:

- Providing a safe, peaceful work environment
- Engaging teachers in decision making
- Providing leadership opportunities for teachers
- Providing frequent feedback on instruction
- Providing high quality professional development and ongoing instructional coaching support

6. Employ strategies to increase parental involvement, such as family literary services

Freire Charter School Wilmington is fully committed to finding meaningful and mutually enriching ways for parents to participate in our school that involve improving the quality of teaching and learning for all our students and at every level.

At Freire, we are always working to form stronger, better partnerships with families, and we have an open-door policy for families to communicate their needs, questions, or concerns to us at any time.

The ways that we communicate information to families include:

- Our website at www.freirewilmington.org, which is updated regularly with current news and event information
- A weekly email newsletter with updates for families on any and all activities, events, issues, etc.
- Frequent family mailings through the regular mail
- An automated family notification system so that families can be notified by phone when necessary
- The Home Access Center allows families to view their student's grades on a continual basis throughout the school year, with access codes provided in the first month of school and training available at back to school night and upon request
- Through family meetings, visits, back to school night, and conferences (more information below)

The ways that we solicit input from families include:

- Parent participation on the Board of Directors and various committees
- Family meetings throughout the year

- Including a family component in the interview process for hiring staff when possible, particularly when hiring senior administrative staff

Freire works to help families understand how we assess our students, as well as how Delaware and the nation as a whole assess them to determine whether or not they are college-ready. As part of our regular academic calendar, families and school staff discuss achievement, standards, assessments, and student academic growth at the following events:

- Family Meetings – Regularly held family meetings where a Freire staff member is often present to highlight college counseling, the Co-Head of School, Academic Supports’ office, after-school activities, the therapy program, etc.
- Back to School Night – Back to School Night happens very early in the school year and is the first chance families have to meet their children’s teachers in person.
- Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences – At Freire, conferences work best when both the student and parent attend the conference with the teacher. That way, we can work together to build on each student’s individual strengths and make sure we all follow the plan as a team.

In addition, course syllabi for every class are available to families, which provide a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used, and the standards students are expected to meet. All of our staff are always available to families, and we invite them to come in and discuss not only what is expected at the state and national level for their children to learn, but also how their individual children are performing at the present time. Parents are invited to reach out to anyone on staff to schedule a meeting at any time during the school year.

From the students themselves to their families, teachers, and support staff – each and every member of the school community has a critical role to play in supporting success for our learners. To make sure each individual knows their role in the process, all community members must agree to and sign the Freire Contract for Excellence, which was developed jointly with families.

Freire makes every attempt to ensure that information related to school and family programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the families of participating children in a format and a language families can understand. Parents/guardians are required to complete a Home Language Survey when a student first enrolls in the school, which enables us to plan for any translation needs. We contract with a telephone translation service (Language Line) to facilitate communication as necessary.

An event offered for the first time in 2016-17 was a parent college workshop. At this event, we brought in an expert to speak with parents about the role they play in a student’s success in college, how to plan for and pay for college, and how to find the resources a family will need.

Two parents of currently enrolled students serve on the school’s Board of Directors, and families are invited to serve on various school committees.

In order for Freire to maximize every teaching and learning opportunity available during the secondary school experience, there needs to be a strong partnership between the student’s families and teachers. As a result, Freire provides trainings for all staff in the summer training/orientation as well as at least one other educator training yearly on the important role that families play and how we can effectively work together with families. In these trainings, we address differences in culture, expectation, communication styles, and more.

We plan to send out a parent satisfaction survey that we will use to adjust our parent programming, methods of communicating with families, our schoolwide planning, and our family involvement policy. We incorporated parent voice into this schoolwide plan through meetings.

- 7. Develop plans for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs, such as Head Start, even Start, early Reading First, or a State-run preschool program, to local elementary school programs**

This is not applicable to Freire as our program begins with 8th grade.

- 8. Implement measures to include teachers in the decisions regarding the use of academic assessments in order to provide information on, and to improve, the achievement of individual students and the overall instructional program**

Freire teachers are thoughtful, resourceful, dynamic professionals who use data to shape their practice, by identifying and emphasizing core knowledge and skills, collecting data as they monitor and assess student mastery, and then analyzing this data to enable lesson adjustments and targeted re-teaching. Teacher voice is actively sought into assessment selection, and teachers are coached to be active users of data to improve instruction on a real-time basis. We solicit teacher feedback informally throughout the year during the monthly professional development sessions and formally in an annual teacher satisfaction survey.

Teachers are included in Freire's schoolwide planning conversations. Led by the Co-Head of School, Academics, teachers are directly responsible for implementing many of goals set forth in this schoolwide plan. We discuss the school's goals and incorporate them into the agenda at weekly staff meetings, during common planning time, in one-on-one meetings, and within professional development days. These regular conversations ensure that we are all working toward our common priorities.

Many of our schoolwide plan goals for 2017-18 focus on increasing teachers' engagement with and literacy in assessment. We devoted an entire professional development day during this school year to having all teachers examine their own students' past assessment results and then create plans in response. Following all interim assessments, individual teachers use their students' data to review results and re-teach as necessary to achieve results for all students.

- 9. Implement activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering the proficient (meets) or advanced (exceeds) levels of academic achievement standards are provided with effective, timely additional assistance which include measures to ensure that students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis and to provide sufficient information on which to base effective assistance**

At Freire, we accept students with a wide range of needs and academic skill levels and who come to us from a wide range of backgrounds. The Freire approach has always been to meet each student where they are when they arrive at our school, which requires personalizing each student's education program – setting goals, working with parents and students on identifying and planning their needs, and setting students up with the right fit of services and programs to build their academic growth. All of our students are considered potentially at risk of not mastering the demanding college readiness standards and Common Core Standards held by the school, and therefore we employ an RTI process throughout the school, continually monitoring the progress of all of our students with curriculum-based benchmarks and nationally normed reading and mathematics tests.

We begin with diagnostic testing of every new student (which is tied to Smarter Balanced), followed by individual planning based on the results of that testing. By identifying needs and strengths and employing Response to Intervention, we can provide grade level and subject area programming in regular classrooms, but tailor the materials and instructional approaches in those classrooms to individual student needs.

While we always plan to meet the needs of our identified special education students, we also have learned that what are often called best practices for students with special needs can also be recognized simply as good teaching. Our Student Services (Special Education) staff helps integrate supportive approaches and instructional ideas into the “regular” teacher’s classroom instruction, providing students – who may or may not have IEPs but all of whom benefit from extra support – the kind of deliberate, explicit teaching they need. Through adapted texts, “push-in” special education and reading and math support, supplemental “pull-out” instruction in small groups, and after school subject-matter tutoring, coupled with frequent academic monitoring, we are able to educate students with no particular learning challenges, students at risk of academic failure (far below grade level skills), students with IEPs, English Language Learners (ELL), students with 504 plans, migrant and newly immigrating students, and homeless students. A student’s individual needs (whether identified in an IEP, ESL plan, or homeless student plan) are used to adjust the curriculum and scope and sequence for that student through differentiated instruction involving grouping and assignments of different types of learning tasks in projects, additional courses, and/or above-level or below-level courses in a particular academic area. Students with IEPs and students with 504 plans are assisted by a certified special education teacher assigned to their grade. We always place students in the least restrictive environment that will enable them to succeed.

10. Coordinate and integrate Federal, State and local services and programs, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training

As a small school using a co-leadership model, coordination and integration of services is built into our model. Our Co-Head of School, Academics oversees teaching and learning while working closely with our Co-Head of School, Academic Supports who oversees school climate and operations. Our two leaders are assisted in their work by charter support organization Build the Future Education Collaborative. The Director of Operations and the Controller from that organization help the school manage its federal programs and its overall budget. All federal funds supplement the school’s budget in a carefully coordinated way.

Funding allocations for federal programs are as follows:

Federal Grant Program	2015-16 Funding	2016-17 Funding	2017-18 Funding
Title I, Part A	\$53,991	\$121,158	\$195,286
Title II, Part A	\$10,202	\$26,216	\$33,499
IDEA	\$22,422	\$55,250	\$65,598
21 st Century Grant	N/A	N/A	\$300,000