

Tech Freire CS: Project Abstract

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TECH Freire Charter School is a recently-approved charter high school (grades 9-12) which will open in the 2016-2017 school year and ultimately serve 580 of the neediest students from the School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Our mission is to provide a college-preparatory learning experience specializing in computer science and entrepreneurship with a focus on real world learning, critical thinking, and problem solving in an environment that emphasizes the values of community, teamwork, and nonviolence.

Philadelphia is the 8th largest region in the country for STEM employment opportunities, yet there are few options for Philadelphia's youth to learn the basic skills and education needed to work in these fields (www.us2020.org). Students of color face especially limited opportunities in the technology sector—only 4 percent of employed software developers in the United States are African-American, and only 5 percent are Latino (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Philadelphia's original Freire Charter High School has a demonstrated track record of producing high academic results among low-income, urban student populations. 96% of the Class of 2015 enrolled in college and 88% of Freire graduates who enroll in college consistently return to college for their second year—a norm-defying college persistence rate that is a testament to students being well-prepared at Freire. Build the Future Education Collaborative recently spun off from the first Freire School as a new charter support organization (CSO).

The new TECH Freire Charter High School will be led by seasoned administrators from the original school, supported by the experienced staff of the new CSO. TECH Freire will offer the rigorous liberal arts education of the original Freire Charter School, with the addition of education in computer programming and entrepreneurship, equipping students with the powerful tools they will need to thrive in the fast-paced and rewarding workplace of the future. TECH Freire will provide a safe, friendly, rich, rigorous, college-preparatory education for its students. The TECH administrative team has experience ranging from daily charter school operations to community engagement, fundraising, fiscal and personnel management, curriculum and pedagogy, high-stakes accountability through standardized tests, use of data to drive decision making, special education, admissions, college placement, English Language Learners, leadership, school real estate, and more. The Build the Future Team also has experience with the Charter Schools Program, having successfully received a grant award for its school in Wilmington, DE which just opened for the 2015-16 school year. We are seeking a grant of \$500,000 to support the implementation of our high quality charter school over 24 months, consistent with the overall goal of the Charter Schools Program to support the creation and development of high quality charter schools and the competitive preference of improving academic outcomes and learning environments for students with disabilities.