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August 13, 2019

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Freedom School Partners executive director, Mary Nell McPherson, to retire**

**Charlotte, N.C.** – The board of directors of Freedom School Partners announced today that Mary Nell McPherson, executive director, will retire by the end of 2019. McPherson has served as founder and leader of the organization for 20 years. Under her leadership, Freedom School Partners has continued to grow and deliver its mission of promoting the long-term success of children by preventing summer learning loss through igniting a passion for reading and inspiring a love of learning. This past summer, Freedom School Partners served 1,200 K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students (called scholars) at 18 sites throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

“Twenty years ago, I answered the call to become the first executive director of Seigle Avenue Partners, which has become Freedom School Partners,” said McPherson. “It has been my great joy to work with many in our community to build the Freedom School movement. Now, with deep gratitude for our work together and with full confidence in and hope for the future of Freedom School Partners, I have decided it is time to retire.”

“On behalf of the entire board of Freedom School Partners, we want to recognize the tremendous vision and leadership that Mary Nell has demonstrated to this organization,” said Freedom School Partners board chair, Geoffrey Mize. “As our founder, she will always be our inspiration to carry on this important work on behalf of our children and our community. We are excited to celebrate with Mary Nell as she approaches her upcoming retirement and are fortunate to have an outstanding staff and board which gives us strength and stability in this time of transition.”

A search to identify the next executive director will begin immediately.

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*Freedom School Partners is a nonprofit organization which promotes the long-term success of children by preventing summer learning loss through igniting a passion for reading and inspiring a love of learning.*

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