APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday February 25, 2021 at 4:30 PM

Location
Join Zoom Meeting https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/j/82460204268 Meeting ID: 824 6020 4268

One tap mobile +13017158592,,82460204268# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location: +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 824 6020 4268

Trustees Present
A. Errichetti (remote), A. Mendelson (remote), D. Ford (remote), D. Fuller (remote), D. Janes (remote), J. Crowell (remote), L. Doherty (remote), R. Martin (remote), R. Sela (remote)

Trustees Absent
G. Moody, M. Landon, T. Gabinetti

Guests Present
J. Castrillon (remote), R. Romano (remote)

I. Opening Items

A.

Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Janes called a meeting of the board of trustees of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Feb 25, 2021 at 4:35 PM.

C. Approve minutes from January 28, 2021

D. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 01-28-21.
D. Ford seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

G. Moody	Absent
R. Martin	Aye
T. Gabinetti	Absent
A. Errichetti	Aye
A. Mendelson	Aye
R. Sela	Aye
D. Fuller	Aye
L. Doherty	Aye
D. Janes	Aye
J. Crowell	Aye
M. Landon	Absent
D. Ford	Aye

II. Academic Achievement

A. Student Assessment System

Rebecca Sela shared that AA Com looked at student data in their meeting, as they always do. She noted that there was an uptick in attendance since January. The committee also looked at the accountability plan goals and how teachers responded to the survey around how they feel supported by coaching. We discussed with the school team how they are interpreting some of the teacher feedback and making sense of it. In general, the teacher experience this year related to the goals in the accountability plan goals is very positive. Teachers feel supported and professional development and coaching is effective. We also looked at special education student data to focus in on how that sub-group is performing in relation to the general ed population. We have added MAP to our assessment system and Rebecca explained how the Anet assessment and MAP assessment are both being utilized.

ANet assessments are fixed form and provide insights into students mastery of grade-level standards at a moment in time.

MAP assessments are adaptive and therefore helpful in identifying exceptional students on either end of the continuum.
Teachers and Leaders may use MAP data to select students for interview, such as Tier 2 supports or enrichment/extensions.

III. Finance

A. January Financials

Denise Ford reviewed the monthly financial statement and shared that as of January 31st cash is remarkably stable and we are doing really well overall. We have received stimulus grants for covid relief which the management team is preparing a plan for and will bring it back to the finance committee. These funds will be allocated in ways that will support student learning loss form the pandemic, infrastructure and capacity as well as additional staff to open for in-person instruction. The finance committee will be working with management to support planning and management of funds.

With the additional funds coming in from federal grants we will meet the threshold for an extra audit this year. This will come with an additional expense and will provide an additional layer of oversight and accountability around the management of the grants.

B. Investment RFP

Matt, Denise, Tony, Rachel and Lynne are finalizing an RFP that will be sent out to solicit proposals from investment firms. Please share any thoughts or leads with Matt. We aim to get the RFP sent out by the end of the month.

C. Student Information System - change to Power School

Rachel explained that with the development of the high school, the school has been considering a change to its Student Information System (SIS). Consideration of a SIS change has been happening for over one year and included many team members (board, school leadership, operations team, technology consultants, etc.).

Currently Veritas uses SchoolBrains as its SIS, but SchoolBrains needs to be used in conjunction with other software programs to be an effective tool. It has been determined that additional software programs would need to be added in order for SchoolBrains to be an effective tool for the high school. PowerSchool is a DESE compliant SIS system and includes the necessary modules to support a high school program.

PowerSchool is more widely used in the high school programs because its system has:

- a more robust class scheduling module that includes a student interface
- a course credit tracking and graduation requirement tracking module, and

- a family friendly portal that makes real-time information more relevant all in one place (i.e. attendance, grades, credits, IEP progress, etc.).

Lynne has led the process of selecting and negotiation a contract with Power School and started in the Spring of 2020. The process has included:

- state-wide surveys
- other software considerations (i.e. Rediker, Canvas)
- monthly meetings with leadership to review and discuss research
- PowerSchool presentation to leadership
- stakeholder input:
    - Robbie Martin onboard
    - Lily Newman onboard
    - Operations Team onboard
    - Leadership onboard with SIS change only for FY22
    - Jonathan Swan onboard with SpEducation
- Reference check with Springfield Public Schools, Brooke Charter School (who went through similar SB to PS change due to high school), Phoenix Charter School
- Costs:
    - Implementation plus year one costs started at $123k and ended at $93k
    - Annual fees started at $48k (annual increase of 5%) and ended at $35k (annual increase of 3% max)
    - For a total 5 year savings of over $70k (from the starting proposal)
- PowerSchool would replace SchoolBrains, EDIS, ESped, and Docusign programs in FY22 (these equal $25k annually) and overtime PowerSchool will have the potential of replacing other programs currently in use (i.e. DeansList, JumpRope, POSSIP, Edulastic, etc.) which are approximately $20k annually. This is only a possibility and we are not counting on replacing these programs as the Power School products would have to be as good or better for us to consider a change.

We are requesting the board vote to authorize Rachel to execute the contract with PowerSchool.
A. Mendelson made a motion to authorize Rachel Romano, Executive Director, to execute the contract with Power School as presented.
R. Martin seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Doherty	Aye
T. Gabinetti	Absent
G. Moody	Absent
A. Mendelson	Aye
J. Crowell	Aye
D. Ford	Aye
D. Fuller	Aye

Roll Call

R. Sela	Aye
D. Janes	Aye
R. Martin	Aye
M. Landon	Absent
A. Errichetti	Aye

IV. Governance Committee Report

A. Board Composition

David Fuller reported that the committee is reviewing the current board composition to consider which trustees have expiring terms in June and he will be reaching out to each of those trustees to find out if they have interest in serving for another term.

B. Board Survey Results

Governance committee will be reviewing the survey results from the Board Effects survey to which a majority of our trustees responded. We will use the email sent by the Mass Charter Public School Association to guide our discussion and we will provide a summary at our next meeting.

V. Executive Director Report

A. Return to in-person instruction update

1. Return to in-person learning

We Currently have 60 students back in person based on need. MCAS administration for all will happen in person starting in March and our plan was to flip into the Hybrid model post MCAS to practice in anticipation of needing to open hybrid next school year. This may change based on guidance from the Commissioner released this week.

DESE guidance this week is pushing all schools/districts to bring students back in person prioritizing elementary students so we will begin with 5th grade coming back in person as soon as possible and are about to survey parents to find out who would attend in person, it was 50% at last survey in January and covid stats are improving so potentially more. We will require all teachers/staff to return to the building when we welcome 5th grade back in person. We will be announcing to staff tomorrow that these are the plans to begin understanding what leave requests will look like and how it impacts these plans.

B. Update on operation of Veritas Prep Holyoke

Still negotiating with HPS about the continued management of Veritas Prep in Holyoke. The process has been complicated by the recent announcement of the receiver being placed on leave. DESE has stepped in to support Veritas and HPS to come to an agreement and has expressed their desire for Veritas to continue our work in Holyoke

with another 3 year contract. The issues we are working out are the length of the contract, the enrollment and finances and the grade configuration. We hope to continue our work but must have the right conditions to operate in and we aren't yet sure we can secure them. Rachel is getting support from her team and the directors of the Friends of VPCS.

Deadline it will be March 11th to make the Decision and have clarity of what are how to move forward.

C. High School Planning

High school planning is going really well, they have great candidates for the principal and are exploring early college partnerships with local partners (Elms, UMass, AIC, SC). Rachel formed an advisory board, allowed us to bring a lot of the community people. The design team will create a vision of high level design elements for the High School, it will be the principal, with support from our existing leadership, who plans and executes the operational details next year. The inclusive process we are leading with a design team and advisory board has enabled us to engage parents, students, alumni and community and has been terrific.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

D. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on 02-18-21.
A. Mendelson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Castrillon