

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday September 8, 2022 at 8:00 AM

Location

Join Zoom Meeting <https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/j/3161659740>

Committee Members Present

A. Clark (remote), A. Errichetti (remote), D. Janes (remote), L. Doherty (remote), R. Romano (remote), R. Sela (remote)

Committee Members Absent

None

Guests Present

J. Swan (remote), N. Gauthier (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

R. Sela called a meeting of the Academic Achievement Committee of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Sep 8, 2022 at 8:01 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

D. Janes made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 08-11-22.

L. Doherty seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Back To School Update

A. Back to School Update

Amy says we lost a lot of people last year. We are fully staffed at the middle school currently. At the high school we have one open Associate Teacher (AT) role. We are in a much better place this year than we were last year.

Rachel adds that our retention number is at 65% - a decent number. We are really hoping to keep most people this year and in 2025 we will land where we need to be and not have to cut a lot of positions.

Amy summarizes the beginning of the year is off to a great start. We have good leaders at both schools and things are going well.

Lisa asks Amy how she is fairing in her new role?

Amy talks about adjusting to her new role. We will revisit how it is going in November.

III. Academic Achievement

A. Academic Update

A recent report from the Department of Education stated that:

- We have seen that the pandemic has impacted academic performance significantly.
- Recovery will not be a one-year process.
- Due to the results that came out last week, people have been calling on President Biden to declare a national emergency.
- Over the past 50 years, we have been making progress on closing the achievement gap but the last two years have brought us back to square one.
- Math scores overall went down significantly for the first time in 50 years and Reading scores are down significantly for the first time in 30 years.
- The learning loss has effected students of color more than others.

- We must continue to demonstrate or talk publicly about our continued commitment to or investment in the acceleration of learning and supporting student growth academically and social-emotionally.

Rebecca says there is a great New York Time article that addresses this learning loss as well. She thinks educator felt this could be the case but this is the first data that has come out that demonstrates the scale of the loss.

Jonathan shares the MCAS data spreadsheet and reviews the data points with the committee. Highlights include:

- This was a shortened assessment, they usually take two tests per subject and last year they only took one test per subject.
- 2021 to 2022 ELA 6th grade - there was a lot of teacher turnover. The cohort that lost the most traction was 5th to 6th (our current 7th graders).
- In some areas there is very positive Student Growth Percentile (SGP) data. Veritas Prep students have performed as well or better than students from the district who they have typically performed similarly to in the past.

Lisa is concerned about the SGP and the performance of our students.

Amy reminds the committee that this data is in comparison to the entire state. The next step is to compare our results just to Springfield schools.

Rebecca reminds the committee that learning loss was greater in Math than ELA.

Dale asks how do we get these students who perform above average - if we accept "partially meeting" as the mean. He is thankful that we now have a high school where we can continue to address this learning loss long-term.

Lisa has two questions: What were our numbers in 2019 - to see how much we are having to build back? Secondly, it would be good to look at a few classes from 5th all the way to 8th to see how much we really are moving them.

Rebecca is wondering how this data has impacted our programming at our high school and are our students ready for early college classes?

Lisa asks that we update the excel sheet to include 2019 (to see a more "traditional" year).

Amy just added the data. We are around half of where our results used to be.

Jonathan says at the next meeting we will have some comparison and sub-group data related to MCAS.

Amy says currently we are doing better interventions in Math and ELA than we've ever done.

Dale asks if there is a portion of each group (not meeting, partially meeting, meeting) that can be moved and a portion that can't? Who do you focus on?

Jonathan thinks we have to look at all of them but still identify which students are where within the groups and then make sure that we are implementing the appropriate interventions for each individual student.

Amy agrees and says that the state accountability measures force you to look at everyone, especially the ones struggling the most.

Rachel says what we do is differentiated instruction. This is different than tracking.

Lisa mentions the allocation of resources and how this plays a part in how effective we can be at moving students forward.

Rachel says that by design the school was created with the assumption that most students would be coming in below grade level and the core goal would be to closing those gaps and getting them to grade level. The piece that we needed to work on (area of growth) but have gotten better at, is enrichment for "exceeding" students.

Rachel shares about our partnership with Open Architects (OA). OA is a MA based company started by Seth Racine who used to work for BPS. We had worked with him previously and he began a company to help schools get better at visualizing and using data. He has created some standard dashboards where he can include publicly reported data from DESE and we can look at this data for free. We are talking about contracting with him so he can create custom dashboards for our specific needs.

Amy talks about our acceleration plan:

- At the middle school we have adjusted the schedule to make sure intervention blocks can be more targeted and impactful.
- In the literacy block we're working on fluency and they are also getting a block called math lab where they are getting interventions and tutoring from their teachers.
- All of this is carrying over to the HS as well. The blocks are called Personalized Learning Blocks - where they work on reading and math here as well.
- Rachel mentions that we are trying to tighten up spending in all expenses and get people more disciplined about spending so we can in turn keep more of the positions we have hired for that are addressing these learning loss issues.
- Amy says we have also adjusted our co-teacher model a bit. Teachers can now be in different places throughout the day because we don't do the same subject at the

same time school wide. Every math and ELA class has two teachers in it rather than one teacher and one floating through all the classes in that subject.

IV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- VPCS 2021 - 2022 Preliminary MCAS Data Comparison.xlsx