

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday April 13, 2023 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 Apr 13, 2023 at 8:02 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Errichetti made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 03-09-23.

L. Doherty seconded the motion.

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

II. Academic Achievement

A. MCAS Updates

Students took MCAS on Monday and Tuesday - we have a 94% completion rate already and we have two weeks from Friday to get to 100%. The testing atmosphere finally felt like it did pre-pandemic.

9th graders will take the biology MCAS in June.

B. ANet

We use ANet as a predictor of how our students will perform on MCAS.

ELA

Took three of these tests this year (Oct., Jan. and last month). You can see how the school is doing on average as compared to the network (other MA schools). Students did really well on the 2nd ANet (A2) and fell a little on the A3 which was focused on non-fiction texts. It was good information because we were able to focus on this before ELA MCAS this week.

6th grade performed well and are beating the network. We are excited about this data because we really wanted to improve scores in this grade and have been implementing interventions to help improve performance.

7th grade was similar to 5th where they were not as prepared as we wanted them to be with non-fiction text. Again, we have been very responsive to this data and hope to see improvements here on the MCAS.

8th grade has made a lot of progress and shot up to 54% on their last ANet scores.

Amy's overall takeaway is this is inconsistent data so we need to work on that still.

Follow up: Accountability from the state May meeting.

Dale asks about the metric at the top?

Amy says we pick the metric at or above 55% (the percent of students who scored 55% or above on the test).

Rebecca reminds the committee that 55% sounds low but it is not, try not to relate it to a grade.

Ann asks about what ANet is a predictor of?

Amy says it evaluates academic readiness on grade level standards.

Rebecca talks about DESE saying that four years should be the amount of time it will take our students to recover from the pandemic in terms of test scores.

Amy says in 2019 we were really focused on our accountability metrics, there were goals created based on these metrics, and then we were assigned a performance level. This has just come back this year. They put schools into quartiles based on how far your data fell. Based on how far our data fell, we ended up in the 4th quartile and so we have four years to get back to our 2019 data. They will set benchmarks for us every year but they will consider us in recovery for this entire time. We are currently in year one of this recovery process.

Rachel says we are planning for the fact that not all 9th graders may pass MCAS and we are thinking about what we need to do to support them to pass it.

Math

Fewer schools in MA take the Math ANet (only 3 of 20).

Rebecca mentions that less schools are taking the exact test we are taking in math - they are taking ones that are more aligned to their specific curriculum in scope and sequence.

Math data is tracking similar to ELA - there are peaks and valleys.

7th grade had a more challenging test on A3 but did really well A1. We are excited about these results because 7th grade is typically our lowest performing grade on the math ANet.

5th and 6th did really well on A2 and fell a little in A3.

Ann asks if we had been seeing consistent performance?

Amy says yes. This is good and not good because it shows we are still having some trouble moving kids past their performance level.

Lisa asks about 7th grade scores?

Amy says their math is inconsistent. They were higher in ELA earlier in the year (fiction vs. non-fiction). We are looking into what is impacting this - like a change to our teaching model.

Jonathan adds that 7th grade does have the largest number of students with disabilities (almost twice as much as 5th and 6th grade).

Amy says Algebra I is being taken by our 9th graders (3 classes) - we are using the same metric at or above 55%. We know 8th and 9th graders took the biggest hit in the pandemic. We have a new math teacher that started in January and we don't think the results have demonstrated the gains of their instruction yet. We're thinking about tutoring and summer school and how we will get these students to pass this MCAS because they have to in order to graduate.

C. College Coursework 23-24

Amy talks about the college courses that will be offered at the high school next year.

Semester 1: 9th graders - no college courses in semester 1. **10th graders** - Another computer basics class and the Spanish 102.

Semester 2: 9th graders - Computer basics and public speaking. **10th graders** - English 101, public speaking, and entrepreneurship.

Semester 1: 11th graders - Many students will primarily be in college classes.

Rebecca asks about the criteria we use to choose these classes?

Rachel says all the classes we use are part of the MA transfer agreement so they are most likely to transfer to MA state schools. They are also all from the general studies degree track at STCC. The next few decision points come from our discussions and collaboration with our college partners from STCC and WSU. We consider what courses are best suited for 9th and 10th graders, scheduling logistics, etc. Finally, we are looking at our career pathways and what courses align with these - this is more of a consideration for 11th and 12th grade.

Rebecca asks about what happens when our students are struggling in a college course - what is the support in place?

Amy talks about our Early College Liaisons (ECL) and their role in supporting our students in their early college classes. Amy gives an example of how a current ECL is working with our students and supporting those who were at risk of failing.

Rachel elaborates on the ECL role and the impact it has on students, especially first generation college students. She says how important it is that through their high school years we help them develop agency and the ability to seek the supports and resources they need on their college campus because they won't always have an ECL to guide them. She attended the early college convening yesterday and shared what she took away. One major point was that not a lot of places are doing what we are - saying that EVERY student in our school will take a minimum of 12 credits. Often, schools are just offering this type of program to a subset of students, it is not wall-to-wall.

Rachel mentions the stakes are so high around accountability measures in MA that it is often hard to innovate. Jonathan shares about his experience in Harford schools and the difference of accountability at the state level.

Rachel mentions that the state budget is coming through with a lot of funds backing early college - so that is exciting for us.

D. Springpoint Site Visit and School Improvement Team

Amy talks about the Springpoint site visit. We know we are in recovery so we reached out to an organization, Springpoint, that works primarily with innovative high schools. They came and did a site visit - they started at the middle school. They spent an entire day meeting with teachers, staff, and leadership. They held panels, observed classrooms, etc. We feel like they captured us extremely accurately in just a day. Their report was very validating and helpful. In the future we can share the whole report but below are the highlights.

2 Strengths:

1. Organization focused on continuous improvement.
2. Systems to support strong instruction. We have so many of the right pieces, we just need them to work better together.

2 Recommendations:

1. Developing and communicating a shared mission across students, staff, families across the Veritas community. (Amy talks about our work with Matterlab and the development of our identity guide and Rachel elaborates on our work with them).
2. Clarifying our instructional vision.

Lisa asks if it is a one and done with Springpoint? She thinks it is a very good investment and the benefits of outside accountability are numerous.

Amy says we can hire them anytime but this was the free option through the Barr Foundation partnership and they will do the same visit at the high school later in the Spring.

We already had plans to begin a school improvement team. We received 11 applications internally. We are going to gather as a group, use data from this site visit, and see what we can do to implement these recommendations and other initiatives to improve the school overall.

The committee discusses how school improvement plans are used at other schools (i.e. district schools).

Follow Up: Matterlab materials - identity guide May meeting.

III. 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 9:04 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- ELA Anet April Meeting.pdf
- Math Anet April Meeting.pdf
- College Courses 23-24 April Meeting.pdf
- School Improvement Team Application April Meeting.pdf