

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday October 27, 2022 at 4:30 PM

Location

Join Zoom Meeting <https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/j/87944697628?pwd=RE43LzRVRWhpVC9iOTBwZEZ4YS9NZz09>

Meeting ID: 879 4469 7628

Passcode: 912934

One tap mobile [+13126266799](tel:+13126266799),87944697628#

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 879 4469 7628

Find your local number: <https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/j/87944697628?pwd=RE43LzRVRWhpVC9iOTBwZEZ4YS9NZz09>

Trustees Present

A. Errichetti (remote), A. Mendelson (remote), D. Ford (remote), D. Fuller (remote), D. Janes (remote), M. Landon (remote), T. Maxey (remote)

Trustees Absent

L. Doherty, R. Martin, R. Sela, X. Delobato

Guests Present

L. Goncalves (remote), Michael Freeman (remote), N. Gauthier (remote), R. Romano (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Errichetti called a meeting of the board of trustees of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Oct 27, 2022 at 4:32 PM.

C. Approve minutes

A. Mendelson made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 09-22-22.

D. Fuller seconded the motion.

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

II. Board Chair Report

A. Updates and Information

Ann talks about all we've heard on the news lately about school violence. Lynne will, therefore, be presenting to the Board today on school safety.

The ED contract is still in the works and should be ready for a vote next Board meeting.

III. Executive Director Report

A. School Safety Presentation

Lynne presents on school safety.

We are working with the Springfield police dept. about safety policies and procedures.

Safety Plans, Inspections, Drills, and Training

Emergency Systems Plan

Reviewed annually by Veritas Safety Committee, Springfield Fire Department, and DESE (updated as necessary)

Inspections (most are annual)

Fire Safety & Alarm, Sprinkler, Fire Extinguisher, Building Department, Mechanical Systems, Health Department, Insurance Risk Review

Evacuation and Lockdown Drills

A minimum of 10 drills are conducted each school year and more than half are with the SFD

Safety Committee Meetings and Reviews

Semi-annual meetings are conducted with all Committee members. After each drill the respective School Team members convene to review what worked and what needs to get better.

Trainings

All Staff

Mandatory Trainings (USP, Asthma, etc.), CPI (de-escalation) Training, Evacuation Drills, Lockdown Drills, CPR optional

Crisis Team Members

Restraint Training, BLS Mental Health Support PD, Other PD as requested

Safety Committee Members

Restraint Training (limited), BLS, First Aid (limited), Active Shooter Training (limited), Concussion Training (limited)

Respective School Crisis Team Members

When we say “Crisis” what do we mean?

The definition in regards to this slide and the School Crisis Teams is the well being of our students as it is related to their mental health and physical safety. Emergencies can create or exasperate a person’s trauma and how we respond and support recovery could make all the difference. Training and practicing is critical to us being prepared.

Our Responsibilities Related to School Safety

BE PREPARED

Review Emergency Systems document
Review Emergency Systems with all staff Safety Drills
Fire and Lockdown (minimum 10 annually)

BE PREVENTATIVE

Complete annual maintenance and inspections
Address identified hazards immediately
Discuss concerns with Operations Team

BE RESPONSIVE

Know your role and act in the moment
Stay Calm
Follow direction from Incident Commander and Law Enforcement Officers

SUPPORT RECOVERY

Make sure you are good first
Make sure the people in your care are good and have been connected with necessary services

Safety Committee meets after any and all emergencies to make sure our school community has what it needs to recover.

David asks if we've had any incidents over the past five years?

Lynne says there have been a few like a science experiment gone wrong, student crises, etc. but it there has been nothing major.

Matt asks about our current front door policies?

Lynne says we have monitors at the front desk that have views of the exterior doors. All doors to the outside are locked. Our facility managers do door checks throughout they day. All visitors have to use the intercom systems to gain access to the building.

Denise asks about defibrillators?

Lynne says we do have them. She also adds that we have a prep only kitchen.

Ann asks about whether we've ever had to confiscate a weapon in the school?

Lynne says yes but these situations have all been handled well by our team and many of them were things students had on their person for their own personal safety (they walk home from school) and we discovered due to other circumstances.

Matt asks if we could get access to a police officer for the school?

Rachel says we could hire a school resource officer but it can create other issues and there are strong opinions around this idea.

Denise asks about the culture in the school and do we think students would report if something dangerous was going on?

Rachel and Lynne say they do.

Denise asks if we have bullet proof glass in the front?

Lynne says the ballistic rating of the high school front entrance is higher than your regular home but Lynne would like to improve those at the middle school.

Ann asks about our trainings, do students take it seriously?

Lynne says pre-COVID there was a level of professionalism about our drills but now they seem to be taking it less seriously. We are working on it.

IV. Academic Achievement Committee

A. Academic Achievement Committee Report

Rachel updates the Board about MCAS results:

ELA

Compared to Springfield Public Schools (SPS) our proficiency is a bit higher on average in grades 3-8 (26% compared to 20%). In the past, we have been higher, we have a lot of growth to make.

MCAS: 3 domains: Language and Reading are ok, Writing is where we see our lowest scores. This is something we can tackle. We will also continue reading and phonics interventions as well as promoting direct fluency instruction.

Math

Our proficiency rates here are 28% and 15% in SPS. In 2018-19 53% of our students were proficient. Again, a lot of work to be done.

Science

Our performance here plummeted. A lot could be vacancies that happened last year in these classes. We have shifted this year to having subject specific teachers which should help in this area. This definitely has our attention in terms of accelerating learning.

All this to say, the pandemic really took a toll on our students and we need to focus on growth or Student Growth Percentile (SGP). SGP is calculated by taking the MCAS performance of an individual student and then comparing it with their academic peers across the state. Historically, our SGPs have been significantly higher than SPS.

Dale asks about the culture of teaching and how that has changed and how that affects student outcomes?

Rachel says the pandemic has taken a toll in so many areas but especially in the retention of teachers and we are at a crisis level in terms of education talent. Many teachers have left the profession and many who may be in their third year with Veritas may not have much experience in an actual classroom. There is so much re-building to do and we have to re-teach everyone about what we do and why we do it.

V. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Report

Denise updates the Board related to the monthly financial reports.

Cash balances are recovering as grant money comes in. The line of credit was paid to zero in October. On the income statement, we are in the process of revising the budget based on 501 as opposed to the planned for 505 students. That will be ready for a vote of approval at the November Board meeting. The tuition didn't really change even though we have four less students than we planned for because there was an increase in reimbursements. In grants, we have pulled some ESSER funds to offset some additional expenses. The revenue will be a bit higher on the projections. We currently have a deficit but we also have a contingency that should cover us.

B. Investment Sub-Committee Meeting Update

Matt updates the Board about the most recent quarterly investment sub-committee meeting. The performance summary and Seeley Howard's presentation is included in this meeting's packet. We are about a year into our portfolio and we are down 11% which we feel pretty good about considering the current market. We are on the conservative side right now and we expect what they are doing now will pay dividends as we move forward.

VI. Governance Committee

A. Prospective Trustee Appointment Vote

D. Fuller made a motion to appoint Dr. Michael Freeman to the Veritas Board of Trustees and allow for him to serve on the College and Career Advisory Board as opposed to our three traditional Board committees.

A. Mendelson seconded the motion.

David presents Michael Freeman to the Board and he introduces himself.

Rachel proposes an alternate committee appointment for Michael as a Board member. She would like for him to serve on the College and Career Advisory Board based on his previous experience.

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

B. Trustee Obligations and Responsibilities Spreadsheet

Nikki shares the trustee obligations spreadsheet with the Board.

VII. 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 5:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Errichetti

Documents used during the meeting

- Safety Committee Board Presentation.pptx
- Financial Reports to the Board October.pdf
- Veritas YTD 2022 10.14.22.pdf
- VERITAS Update 1022.pdf
- Michael Freeman, Ph.D. Resume.doc
- Charter School Boards of Trustees Requirements Cheat Sheet.pdf
- Trustee Obligations Spreadsheet.xlsx