

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday January 11, 2024 at 8:30 AM

Location

Join Zoom Meeting <https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/j/3131719731>

Committee Members Present

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

Committee Members Absent

None

Guests Present

N. Gauthier (remote), R. Romano (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 Jan 11, 2024 at 8:36 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Errichetti made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 12-14-23.

R. Sela seconded the motion.

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

II. Academic Achievement

A. Chronic Absenteeism Data Report and Resource Share

Presenter - William Davis - Middle School Director of Culture

Rebecca begins that there has been a major cultural shift in the country in regard to attitudes related to attendance in school post pandemic across all demographics/populations.

Rachel adds that yesterday, Commissioner Riley called a zoom for charter leaders to discuss the severity of this issue which is impacting every school across the state. Rachel talks about what the state is doing to address this issue. Veritas made a big improvement last year and is continuing to see improvement (may not be as big of a jump as we saw last year).

Amy says our goal is 20% chronic absenteeism or less.

Ann asks what is the state average?

Rachel says pre pandemic it was 19%, now it is 22%.

Amy says last year, Veritas was at 25%.

William begins that we have made concerted efforts to implement interventions related to chronic absenteeism. They have been persistent as well as tied everything into how it impacts academic achievement. His team has been having consistent conversations with parents about the importance of attendance. Parents have pushed back this year because we used to have Saturday and Sunday school on zoom but now that it is in person, people don't want to attend. William talks about logistics around Saturday school that help promote the importance of showing up, being on time, etc.

Amy shares a spreadsheet of interventions around this issue and how we track them.

Rebecca asks about what family thoughts are on attending Saturday school?

William talks about multiple reasons why students are attending Saturday school.

Lisa asks about a specific percentage that appears contradictory.

Amy says it is average number of students at school on a given day, the other column shows what percentage of kids are missing school regularly.

Lisa talks about an article related to this issue she saw which goes to show that there will be a publicity campaign around this issue.

Rachel and Nikki talk about Veritas' Attendance Matters Campaign.

Ann talked about an article she read related to attendance and the societal shift that has occurred related to the importance of regular attendance.

Rachel talks about how we have placed a focus on culture over the past few years and have increased the team reporting to William as we recognize the importance of supporting students outside of the classroom so they can achieve inside the classroom. She talks more about sustaining staffing in this area now and in the future.

Ann asks if parents are surprised or concerned when you approach them?

William says that families can be defensive at first but now, staff members have been working with the families for over a year and they've built relationships. Families are starting to understand, trust, and work with us. It is more families are dealing with big issues that effect attendance as opposed to families who just don't care about school.

B. Student Pass Rates

Presenter, Bianca Charles, High School Dean of Curriculum and Instruction

Rebecca begins that historically, pass rates is one of her least favorite metrics with an exception for Veritas because of our approach to grading and the rigor that comes with grading at our school.

Bianca presents the current data - each month she tracks how students are doing in each course.

Ann asks what is considered passing?

Bianca says 69% - the sheet attached shows the percentage of students who are passing certain subjects.

Rebecca reminds us that we are always thinking about what to bring back to the larger Board, can you explain why 69% is passing and not a "D".

Bianca tells the committee that we want students to have a "C" average and we're following college partner advisement.

She continues, at Veritas, we are talking about ways to intervene when students are not passing courses. We shifted focus from just making up missed assignments to looking at what standards student are performing well on and which ones they are having trouble with. Now we can retrain teachers and counselors to focus on those standards instead of just making up missed work. Our goal for the year is that 85% of students are passing their courses. We have the most work to do in History and Science. Changes being implemented in terms of standards focus: students can go to office hours during personalized learning block (PLB), leadership taking over structured study periods to model how to help students re-learn the material, coaching teachers how to focus on standards and re-teach effectively, counselors using PLB to reinforce the importance of standards with students, redesigning lessons to focus on re-teaching to meet the standards, and focusing on grade accuracy.

Ann asks how you look at the subjects that have lower pass rates?

Bianca says she determines what the issue is: teacher instruction, materials, etc? In History grade 9, we see issues with student executive functioning skills (assignments not turned in as opposed to struggling with assignments). In Science, we looked how how skills and concepts are being re-taught.

Ann asks if grades are objective (grade inflation)?

Bianca would think about that for Math - we are structuring department meetings around grading practices to make sure grades are being reported and recorded accurately.

Rebecca asks if there is a percentage of the grade that is standards based as opposed to habits based?

Bianca says 80% of the grade is the standard and 20% is the habits of success. We noticed an issue with standards only being assessed once in a classroom which made students have poor grades. If the standard is assessed multiple times students have the opportunity to re-learn concepts and improve their grades.

Ann asks if at some point we go back and correlate the subject grades with standardized testing?

Bianca says yes, and provides an example related to ANet.

Ann asks if this is happening in the middle school as well?

Amy says there are different platforms but similar practices at the middle school. There has been a bigger learning curve at the high school than we expected. We'll be better prepared next year to train teachers on this grading system from the beginning of the year.

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 9:29 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- Student Attendance - Open Architects January Meeting.pdf
- Attendance Tracker 2023-2024 - 5th Grade - January Meeting.pdf
- Attendance Meeting Letter - January Meeting.pdf
- High School Pass Rates by Subject 1.8.24 January Meeting.xlsx