

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday February 8, 2024 at 8:30 AM

Location

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

Committee Members Present

A. Errichetti (remote), R. Sela (remote)

Committee Members Absent

L. Doherty

Guests Present

A. Clark (remote), 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 Feb 8, 2024 at 8:34 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Errichetti made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 01-11-24.

R. Sela seconded the motion.

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

II. Academic Achievement

A. ANet Q2 Data Overview for Math and ELA

Presenter: Kali Vadnais, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI), Humanities Charmayne Wright, DCI, Math and Science, was unable to attend (Amy will cover her part of the presentation)

Students took the 2nd ANet in January - we have seen a significant deficit in writing which has been prioritized this year. We focused on three writing standards (argument development, evidence, and conventions (i.e. fluency)). We saw improvements in argument development and evidence in 5th and 6th grade - similar scores in 7th and 8th grade as ANet 1 and we are starting to work on conventions across the board. We have seen significant improvement, specifically in 5th grade.

What we have done so far:

- 1.) Prioritize writing (reading is returning to pre pandemic levels).
- 2.) We have adopted the Collins writing program
- 3.) Incorporated writing across all subjects
- 4.) PD for teachers is a 12 week program around developing writing instruction, providing, feedback, and using data to inform instruction.
- 5.) Implementation of smaller interim assessments before ANet to focus on the three writing priorities previously mentioned.

Moving forward:

Teach teachers to strengthen their writing instruction - we're digging into the third priority of conventions.

Amy adds that we have discussed writing gaps a lot in this committee - we were happy to see progress in this area in just two months.

Amy and Kali expressed the change in feeling/attitude around the writing portion of the ANet from the students' perspective. They wrote much more than before and took it very seriously. Students and teachers are becoming much more invested in their work. We should continue to see improvements in ANet 3.

Rachel confirms that there is a change in attitude and a recommitment to a culture of achievement.

Rebecca says in her experience, writing does not improve overnight, so to see significant improvement in such a short period of time is very encouraging. She also talks about the current 7th graders and recognizes that something exciting is happening there if you look at their 2nd ANet from last year compared to this year.

Ann asks about 8th grade scores?

Amy says our 8th grade students are still recovering from pandemic learning loss in addition to strength of teaching this year at their grade level.

Amy provides an example of a current student and how his significant needs were missed/overlooked until high school due to pandemic learning loss and challenging teacher situations (i.e. teacher turnover).

Ann asks how we prepare these 8th graders for high school?

Kali says she and Adrienne work together and are trying to focus on catching 8th graders up before the end of the year as well as providing professional development and instruction for teachers to be able to catch them up. It's not that teachers don't want to do these things for students, they just don't know how. So now that teachers are being provided clear instruction related to teaching, things are getting better.

Adrienne adds that giving teachers the tools and techniques in the classroom really has a positive effect on the mentality and culture in the classroom. It gives both teachers and students a huge confidence boost.

Amy talks about high school ANet Math scores.

Big picture: Students who enter 9th grade ready for geometry (took algebra in 8th grade) are on track for college math courses. If 8th graders do not pass algebra I, they're not moving to geometry in 9th grade. Since the pandemic, we bumped up the number of sections of algebra I but we are seeing many students struggling with the content. We are working with consultants to figure out what is happening here - maybe we are putting too many students in algebra I who are not prepared, or we need to change what we're doing in math in 6th and 7th grade.

ANet 2 Math scores - they were lower but something major changed with math this time. It was the first year that students began taking the full math assessment as opposed to just 4 standards. We may look lower than the ANet 1 but the scores do look more similar to 18-19 which is the last time our students took the full assessment. We are working on

figuring out why we aren't seeing the rebound in 8th grade math scores we saw in previous years (after the normal dip we tend to see in 7th grade).

Amy talks about the standards that our students struggle the most with in Math and how it is panning out in each of these standards.

Rebecca reminds the committee to think about the Math assessment completely differently, in terms of analyzing the data, then the ELA assessment. We also know that nationally Math was the most impacted by the pandemic.

Amy adds that we take a growth assessment for math, reading, and science during the year and shows the results from those (look at growth compared to achievement). On the other hand, 6th and 7th grade math scores were bright spots.

Rebecca adds this is great because 6th and 7th math is so important to all other math foundationally.

Ann asks if we are doing the same in math as we are in ELA - prioritizing it?

Amy says yes - we are focusing on the following three things:

- 1.) What are we not getting right about the algebra transition
- 2.) Coaching Math DCI to have better coaching meetings
- 3.) PD focused on math lab (created a rubric for this block, etc.)

Ann asks about new curriculum that was mentioned in a previous meeting.

Amy says we are piloting Wit and Wisdom in 5th grade (ELA curriculum) next year.

B. Early College Pass Rates and Enrollment (Semester 2)

Presenter: Adrienne Mantegna, Dean of Early College

Adrienne talks about indicators that determine when a student is ready for early college

- 1.) Habits of success scores
- 2.) Writing assessment - are you able to communicate at the early college level. (CRA score).

Our threshold is a 2.4 (out of 4.0).

Last semester we had 100% pass rate in our college courses (all taken by 10th graders).

Our Early College Liaisons (ECLs) are a huge reason why our program is successful.

This semester we have seven college courses running and we just began our first core class. So far things are going very well. As we move forward we will be offering even more classes.

As background, our 9th graders don't take a college course until second semester so they can acclimate to the school and the program first.

Ann asks if the students in the college classes are all Veritas students?

Adrienne says yes and the plan, even when they take classes on STCC's campus next year, is to cohort our students together. In the future, it is possible our students will be with some STCC students or dual enrollment students from other schools.

Amy says we are planning on having 40-50 students on STCC's campus everyday next year. 20-30 students will be at STCC part time.

Adrienne has been thinking about what our program looks like in 11th and 12th grade and how students on a college campus full time can still get all the other aspects of a high school experience that they need.

We do not have students that will be going to take classes at Worcester State at this point due to distance but professors from WSU do come here to teach classes. We are also thinking about how we can partner with WSU to introduce our students to university life and a four year college experience. Adrienne has received great feedback from professors who are teaching the classes about our students.

Rebecca asks about ECLs?

Adrienne says the way she orients them for the role is as coaches but they are learning alongside the students - they basically audit the class and track students habits in the class. The third meeting period for every college course is run by the ECL who helps the students with everything required by the college class including: completing assignments, communicating with the professor, managing their time, navigating college systems, etc. It is a bit of a different position than a typical teacher. The ECLs will join students on the college campuses next 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 9:32 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- Q2 Data Report - Middle School - February Meeting.pdf
- Q2 Data Report - High School - February Meeting.pdf
- Early College Pass Rates - February Meeting.pdf