

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday August 24, 2023 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,,87944697628#](tel:+13126266799,,87944697628#)

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Trustees Present

A. Errichetti, A. Mendelson, D. Ford, L. Doherty, M. Freeman, M. Landon (remote), R. Sela, T. Maxey (remote)

Trustees Absent

D. Fuller, D. Janes, R. Martin, X. Delobato

Guests Present

N. Gauthier, R. Romano

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 Aug 24, 2023 at 4:41 PM.

C. Approve minutes

D. Ford made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 07-27-23.

M. Freeman seconded the motion.

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

II. Board Chair Report

A. Board Chair Updates

School starts next week. No official update.

III. CEO Report

A. Development Update

Matt, Denise, Ann, and Rachel have met with two consulting firms over the past few months.

Scott Berg, Director of Development at Baystate: Gave some great ideas, advice, and guidance. He pointed us to a consulting group he has worked with from whom we solicited a proposal.

Prosper: A second consulting group we solicited a second proposal from.

Consulting groups talked with us about our pitch, doing a feasibility campaign, and putting together an annual fundraising strategy.

All involved felt like one proposal was a better fit and we also wanted to solicit a third proposal. Lisa Doherty recommended Katie Zobel.

Rachel and Lisa spoke with Katie. The conversation with Katie went very well and had Rachel second guessing hiring a consultant. Lisa and Rachel talked with Katie about how we could leverage her support in terms of choosing a consultant if we do go in that direction, etc. Rachel provides the Board with a few examples of why she is questioning whether or not we need a consulting firm. She did validate what has always been our concern which is the body of work for our size organization may not be worth the price of a consulting firm.

Ann mentions that the reason we got proposals from outside firms was the lack of internal resources.

Lisa says the best person to do this work is Rachel because she can best speak about and sell the school. She also says we are going to need to tap into funders who are funding charter schools across the country. If we look at this goal as part of our mission in terms of dissemination, it is something Rachel should be committing a good amount of time to.

Rebecca agrees that now that Rachel is CEO, she should start moving to bigger picture work like this and having others doing the work she has been doing.

Terry says in Springfield there are only a small amount of donors that would be able to donate a significant amount of money.

Matt thinks it would be good to speak to a few charter schools these consulting groups have worked with and see what that work looked like. Matt has always envisioned Rachel being the spokesperson for the organization but he worries about someone internal/external not dedicated to this - will it ever become a priority?

Lisa agrees that someone within the organization has to be responsible for moving this work forward.

Rachel says that Katie did agree with Terry about the fact that there are so many non-profits in our area and a small pool of donors. When we're talking about raising money on a larger scale we have to have a broader scope. If we had more capacity, we could be tapping into these resources.

Michael asks if we have a strategic plan for capital? We need a plan first and then a case needs to be built for that after the plan is developed. A resource person, here, is essential.

Denise says we need to define what our needs are. Denise thinks having an annual giving program should be a priority. We need a strong development arm at the school to support this.

Aaron says in a previous job they tried to start to development office and what they ended up doing was hiring a recent college graduate and then using Rainmaker to help that person develop the processes that needed to be created.

The Board continues to discuss our priorities related to development; is it a capital campaign, is it grants, or something else? They also discuss what that looks like in terms of organizational capacity.

The Board will continue to have these conversations and maintain the urgency on this matter. Rachel has committed to 1.) soliciting \$50,000 in private donations this year, 2.) continuing to meet with more development folks to get the lay of the land, and 3.) continuing to have these conversations at the Board level on a monthly basis.

B. PD and Staffing Updates

We are almost fully staffed. Priority for open positions is a 7th grade math teacher. We also need an instructional coach and a special projects coordinator at the high school.

Our August PD was very successful and our values and identity were echoed throughout the week in all sessions.

We are well positioned and starting strong.

C. Early College Update

In your packet there is a document that outlines the college courses that our students will be taking. We are continuing with Spanish and Digital Imaging from last year and we are adding some new classes in. Many 10th graders will be taking their first content course: English 101 starting the second half of the year. We are also expanding our offerings to include: Marketing, Spanish 2 and Public Speaking. Public Speaking currently only has a remote professor option and that is not ideal so we are thinking about that.

In our MOU, we said we would only put 15 students in a class which is tricky because in some classes we could get 20 but others 13. We asked if we could take an average over all college classes but we can't.

D. Program Highlight: Seminar

Rachel wanted to lift this up for the Board because its growing in its importance and has become a central piece of our program.

Rachel reminds the Board about the portrait of a graduate that we created while building the high school. What we have done to bring this portrait of a graduate into practice is unpack the pieces that comprised the portrait into our "Habits of Success". These are the things that it takes for kids to be independently successful post high school. We have created a seminar curriculum that is rooted in these habits. We have also integrated

these habits into each of their core classes and we will continue to build this out through 12th grade. Each teacher teaches a seminar class and this is where students will develop their college and career plans. We are also using these habits as a one of the credentials that helps us determine if a student is ready for a college level course.

In the packet you can see our seminar curriculum.

Denise asks if you take a seminar class all four years?

Rachel says yes but what it looks like in 11th and 12th grade is still being developed.

Rebecca asks if we the Board can also see what a "week in the life" looks like so they can see how all these robust supports fit together?

Rachel says we are piloting a 5-12 seminar curriculum that begins the development of these habits in 5th grade. We are working with Integral Ed in collaboration with our team and they developed a curriculum for the 10th and 5th grade. Last year, 9th graders took part in student-led conferences and we actually want to begin this skill in 5th grade so by the time they get to high school, they already know how to do this.

This will be an important thing to use in future marketing once we have some results.

Denise asks if we have shared this with the Barr Foundation?

Rachel says yes and they are funding our work with Integral Ed. In terms of dissemination, we would do something with Barr.

IV. Academic Achievement Committee

A. 2022-2023 Accountability Goals Metrics

Rebecca reminded the board that these are goals we've selected, that represent faithfulness to charter and there is a blend of met, partially met or not met in our progress report. The board discussed the metrics and results.

B. MCAS Data Release

We will discuss this further in September. We know from preliminary results that writing, open response lowered the scores from the first release. We will have Student Growth Percentile's next month and be able to share more. Rebecca explained what the SGP is and how it is measured.

V. Governance Committee

A. Governance Committee Report

Meeting cancelled in August. Nothing to report this month.

VI. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Report

Meeting cancelled in August. Nothing to report this month.

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 6:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
N. Gauthier

Documents used during the meeting

- Final EC Courses SY23-24 August Meeting.docx
- Habits of Success at VPHS August Meeting.docx
- Seminar PPT August Meeting.pptx
- Accountability Goals August Meeting.pdf