

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday October 26, 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, D. Fuller, M. Landon (remote), R. Sela, X. Delobato (remote)

Trustees Absent

L. Doherty, M. Freeman, R. Martin, T. Maxey

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 Oct 26, 2023 at 4:35 PM.

C. Approve minutes

D. Ford made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 09-28-23.

D. Fuller seconded the motion.

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

II. Board Chair Report

A. Board Chair Updates

We will have a combined November/December meeting on November 30th.

WNEC VP of Marketing, Assoc. Provost at CCSU - recruiting as potential Board members.

III. CEO Report

A. Development Update

Rachel provides the Board with a development update.

We have a draft of an appeal letter - touchpoint with our donors. Rachel will share the draft of the letter with Katie Zobel - we have entered into a coaching relationship with her to develop a strategy for fundraising and determine if we need a full time consultant. We are looking to leverage what we are already doing to support our development initiatives. We also want to begin developing relationships with local employers to partner with us and support our early college program goals. Then in 2-3 years, if we decide to take on a capital campaign, we will already have several people invested in our work. Rachel and Katie will set goals and we will share those with the Board next month.

Matt asks if we are working with Katie pro bono?

Rachel says no, she is charging a fee - it will be hourly or a monthly retainer.

Katie has also looked at the two proposals we've gotten so far and she will help Rachel accomplish our goals in a more efficient way. If or when we go into a capital campaign, we will need to work with a development firm but we are still in the first stages of that process.

Matt asks what a goal would be for an annual appeal?

Rachel says she ambitiously set it as \$50,000 a few months ago but that is the most we've ever raised from individual donations.

Denise adds anything we get will be helpful.

B. Talent Report

Shannon Langone, Director of Talent, gives the Board a talent update.

Current Talent Landscape:

1. 44% of teachers are burned out
2. 55% percent of educators now indicate that they are ready to leave the profession earlier than planned.
3. 35% of teachers say they are likely to quit within the next 2 years.
4. 80% of educators say that taking on more work due to unfilled job openings within their district is a serious problem.
5. Only 52% of BIPOC teachers said they were likely to stay in classroom.
6. 78% of educators say that low pay is a serious issue for teachers.
7. Only 10% of educators would strongly recommend the profession to a young adult.

David asks if universities are preparing on what teachers need to know to in the classroom?

Shannon says not really, there is a big mismatch here.

The Board discusses the implications of this landscape, generational changes, the changing needs of today's students, and the attitude towards the field of teaching in general.

Denise asks about competition with online education programs?

Shannon says if a teacher can find a remote position, they will choose that over an in-person position.

Matt brings up competitive compensation as being an important factor in this.

Veritas is in a good place - we currently have one vacancy at the MS and two at the HS. Shannon is still constantly talking to people and anticipating future vacancies.

Aaron asks where people who leave us are going?

Shannon says some go to SPS, some leave the profession all together.

David asks if there are any limitation on leading mid year?

Shannon says no - too hard to track and follow up on.

Retention 2022-23: 85% (68% overall, 70% actual MS, 62% actual HS)

Retention adjusted for termination and non-renew: 78%

73% of staff did not return for 23-24 were BIPOC. We have to look at this trend over time to make sure that we are creating a supportive culture that retains BIPOC teachers. There are also a lot of nuances to this data - so we need to consider that as well.

Who left and why?

50% of respondents to the Exit Survey said that a secondary reason for leaving was quality of

supervision/management. (Function of the fact that during the pandemic we didn't give the feedback we needed to be giving and now that we are back on track, some folks are having a hard time being held accountable).

Shannon mentions that she will be running focus groups this year to gather more information from staff about what keeps them here and what makes them think about leaving and then look at the patterns that emerge over time.

23-24 Hiring Goals:

75% by 4/1/24

80% by 5/1/24

98% by 6/1/24

100% 8/7/24

Shannon discusses **hiring metrics** including:

1. Application details
2. Application sources
3. Selection 23-24
4. Candidates who declined or withdrew applications
5. Staff diversity - we are doing great here.

Talent strategy for 24-25: Recruitment and Selection

- Expand the new Talent Brand (developed with Matterlab) into targeted recruitment campaigns (social media) and materials
- Create focused outreach campaigns for hard to fill roles.
- Continue to build and leverage partnerships with local colleges and universities who have Education programs: Westfield State, Elms, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, UMASS
- Continue to utilize and improve presence on highest yield application sources
- With school leaders, develop a strong Employee Value Proposition that highlights benefits of working at a public charter in general and Veritas specifically
- Utilize partnership with Union Capital Springfield for recruitment of students and families; engage families in the the recruitment of applicants
- Continue targeted outreach to passive candidates on LinkedIn and Indeed
- Analyze outcomes and hires for this year to set goals and to revisit and revise candidate must-haves and selection process with school leaders.
- Ensure candidates are moving through the pipeline quickly and set a goal for time to hire.
- Utilize stay conversations and focus groups with teachers and staff to determine why they stay and what makes them think about leaving (use testimonials for recruitment and retention planning and feedback to identify pain points and solutions).
- Explore retention bonuses for high-performing teachers as a tool.
- Ensure we are recognizing educators monthly through the Educator of the Month program and regularly through manager feedback, shout outs, etc.
- Continue to communicate an aligned and focused mission, vision, and values from all levels of leadership.
- Set new retention goals with “good attrition” in mind and around retention of teachers of color.

Reimagine the Associate Teacher/Grow Your Own program

- Some ATs are not interested in becoming teachers and misaligned with the purpose of the

program

- We have a few ATs without bachelor's degrees who are excellent but need support getting that degree
- Revise selection process to ensure ATs that are hired want to become lead teachers.
- Split program into ATs (those with bachelor's degrees) and Paraprofessionals (with associate degree)
- Partner with Elms College to get paras into their urban education program (grants for paras, philanthropic dollars, and a contribution from Veritas make this a very affordable pathway)
- Hiring more paras will also help with attracting more Hispanic/Latinx candidates and supporting them to become teachers

Create a pathway for our high school students

- Identify 2-4 rising juniors who are interested in exploring teaching
- Provide training for serving as a teaching assistant during summer school
- Provide a small stipend for summer teaching assistant work
- Advise on education classes they can take as they complete their associate degree
- Partner with Elms to get these students into the Urban Ed Program
- Students work as paras at Veritas while earning their degree
- Students become teachers at Veritas!

David asks about tenure?

Veritas doesn't have that.

Aaron says what if we asked the Davis Foundation to back one or two teachers - create a Veritas Fellowship that would give that teacher 4-5 thousand dollars extra (it would change who got it each year).

Rachel says we have talked about this before and we could do it. We would have to figure out an equitable process to distribute the fund but there are ways we could create funds that we budget in and would be meaningful to a teacher.

Denise says we could do both - one funded by us and one funded by an outside source like the Davis Foundation.

IV. Academic Achievement Committee

A.

MCAS Update

High level overview of the MCAS data as well as debriefed the MCAS result conversation at the last Board meeting.

Some examples of how the results have informed our decisions on how to move forward in the classroom can be seen in the data meetings that Amy led related to ELA and Math:

These data meetings led teachers through looking directly at student work (high, medium, and low) and tried to find the gaps. It was across the board, very obvious that our students do well with finding evidence that supports their point but they almost never directly answer the question and the organization of their writing is poor. These observations have given us very specific direction in terms of moving forward i.e. no more graphic organizers - students should be writing on blank pieces of paper and have a specific template for open responses. We hope to see progress in writing on our first ANet due to these changes. In terms of Math, teachers looked at how their grade performed across the different domains. They then zoomed into the lowest standards and determined what students couldn't do i.e. in 5th grade students struggled with comparing numbers. Amy says that this means that we need to be continually re-teaching and re-assessing the standards throughout the year.

All this is to say that Amy and team have a plan moving forward in all subject areas that will be progress monitored over the year through multiple assessments and modalities.

B. Data Updates

We looked at staff and student attendance data at the last academic achievement meeting. Some of the staff attendance data was a bit alarming.

Rachel says this is another post-pandemic related issue that all charters in the area are facing. We have been organizing this data in different way i.e. how are these absences effecting student achievement. We are looking at this data at our bi-weekly district meetings to really determine who this is impacting our students.

The Board talks about the implications of AI on student work now and in the future.

The Board discusses the future of MCAS.

V. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Report

Denise says liquidity remains strained due to the timing difference between required cash outlay and receiving the cash reimbursement for it. We are relying on our line of credit more than we have in past years. We talked at finance committee about the possibility of

some kind of increase in our \$600,000 line of credit if we were to have a major cash need. Right now, Lynne has been using it to support payroll.

Otherwise, expenses are being carefully monitored.

B. Quarterly Investment Subcommittee Update

Denise updates the Board that portfolio results for the 3rd quarter are flat. We were down less than 1%. We remain conservatively invested and continue to lower exposure to equities to offset the market volatility.

Matt adds that we are still being conservative and we have to let this play out over more of a market cycle. Longer term is we feel like Seeley Howard has too much latitude we will have to tighten the guardrails.

VI. Governance Report

A. 2023-2024 Goals

David updates the Board that Governance created their 23-24 goals and encourages the other committees to create or update their 23-24 committee goals (can be 3-5 year goals).

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 6:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Errichetti

Documents used during the meeting

- Talent Update 23-24 October Meeting.pdf
- MCAS Analysis 23-24 - October Meeting.pdf
- MCAS Writing Data Meeting - October Meeting.pdf
- Staff Attendance Tracker - October Meeting.pdf
- Student Attendance - Open Architects - October Meeting.pdf
- Financial Reports to the Board - October.pdf
- Veritas Performance Monitor October Meeting.pdf
- Veritas October Meeting.pdf

- Governance Committee Goals FY2024.docx