

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday November 30, 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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+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 879 4469 7628

Find your local number: <https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/u/k8aG053ZG>

Trustees Present

A. Errichetti, A. Mendelson, D. Ford, D. Fuller, M. Landon, R. Martin, R. Sela (remote)

Trustees Absent

L. Doherty, M. Freeman, T. Maxey, 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 Nov 30, 2023 at 4:34 PM.

C. Approve minutes

D. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 10-26-23.

D. Ford seconded the motion.

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

II. Board Chair Report

A. Board Chair Updates

Ann welcomes the Board members and Principals. The prospective trustee that was supposed to come had to cancel. She will join us in January.

The Board members and Principals introduce themselves.

III. CEO Report

A. Development Update

Rachel updates the Board that the annual appeal letter went out. We set the goal of raising \$12,500 by December 31st (25% of our annual goal of \$50,000). We are using this annual appeal to vet the donor base.

From this Rachel will create an annual plan fund. This is part of a bigger plan for advancement/stakeholder engagement.

We also have a proposal submitted to the Davis Foundation for \$100,000 operating funds.

IV. Academic Achievement Committee

A.

Principal's Report

TJ Hebert - Middle School Principal's Report

Key Highlights:

3 Goals set for the year:

Goal #1: Improve academic achievement

- a. Co-teaching
- b. 100% student engagement
- c. Teacher lesson prep

TJ presents why the teacher lesson prep initiative has been difficult (i.e teacher retention).

Goal #2: Closing Learning Gaps

ANet/MCAS scores and what they told us:

- 1.) Writing is a priority because students were having trouble formulating essays.

David asks about the drop off from 7th grade to 8th grade related to ANet scores:

TJ says it is a mix between the teacher turnover in 8th grade and the high number of students with IEPs in 8th grade.

- 2.) Math has seen improvements in some areas and declines in others.

Robbie asks what the lower scores in Math in 7th grade are attributed to?

TJ says in the other grades math lessons tend to build on each other whereas in 7th grade they learn new concepts.

Aaron asks about how 8th graders will be prepared for the high school?

TJ says we are building in stronger supports for these students like our new Dean of Student Services. Also, we are teaching the students to read their IEPs so they know what is in them and can advocate for themselves.

Denise asks did the pandemic lead to these IEPs?

TJ says no, most of them came with them. We do not have a limit on the amount of students with IEPs we will take.

Rachel says for example, we are in a place where we have to back fill seats and we offered to 6 5th graders yesterday and the ones that are saying yes have substantial needs - one we would need to hire a staff person to support them.

Ann asks who devises the IEP?

TJ says a school psychologist will evaluate the student and then the team will come together to determine if the student needs one.

Rebecca says a student needs to be diagnosed with a very specific list of criteria to be placed on an IEP and you can get off of one.

Rachel explains that the idea behind an IEP is to provide students with the supports they need to be successful in school but this requires the team that provides those supports to go above and beyond to provide them.

Denise asks when she saw that Veritas was in Level I - does that correlate with location and population demographics?

Rachel says yes.

TJ talks about the levers we will be using to close these gaps.

- 1.) Data-Driven Intervention blocks
- 2.) Strong Data Meetings & Reteaches
- 3.) Academic Monitoring

TJ goes into more detail about academic meetings and reteaches. He provides an example of how reteaches are working in 5th grade (comparing decimals) and 8th grade (exponents).

Aaron asks how you catch up the 6th graders who did poorly last year.

TJ says part of it is pre-teaching and re-teaching as well as math block labs (same with ELA - literacy blocks).

Ann asks if this takes over some of the standards you are supposed to be teaching at grade level?

TJ says no, we are teaching grade level standards to all students everyday. We are closing the gaps during those math and literacy blocks.

Rebecca says it is a multi-tiered level of supports.

TJ says we are continuing to track the data, we are not having success with reteaches at all levels but we are working with teachers to script and prepare for reteaches.

Goal #3: Align to our college-ready mission

With our new early college high school we are now able to more directly show middle school students why the math they are learning is important - they need it so they can take college level courses in their first year of high school.

Aaron asks about how much we follow up with parents related to absenteeism?

TJ says we do but we could do more.

Rachel says we are also starting an attendance campaign but we did improve chronic absenteeism last year by a good amount.

Denise asks about teachers absenteeism?

Rachel says it's just as bad as student absenteeism.

Ann asks about the multi-year turnaround we are in as a school - are the teachers with us?

TJ says last year we didn't have a clear message or vision and teachers were feeling the inconsistency. This year we are clear and consistent, teachers are feeling better and our survey data is showing that.

Kori Alston - High School Principal's Report

Goal #1: Increase Academic Achievement

MCAS scores and what they told us:

In HS you must meet a threshold in Biology (9th grade), Math, and ELA (10th grade).

Kori reviews the rates of not meeting, partially meeting, meeting, and exceeding. As an example, we have about 20 students who will need to retake the Biology MCAS.

Where we are going:

70% students meet/exceed in 10th grade ELA and Math MCAS

75% of students meet/exceed on 9th grade Biology MCAS

95% of students will need graduation requirements in all three MCAS subjects

100% of students will pass and receive college credits in which they are enrolled

Kori says that 70 of our students are currently enrolled in a college class. That number will go up to about 120 when our 9th graders begin taking college courses in the Spring.

Kori goes over metrics highlights:

-Our tenth graders are doing better than 9th graders - shows our 10th graders have improved from 9th grade which is what we want.

-Both 9th and 10th graders are performing better in ELA and Math than Science and History.

(TJ points out that the 9th graders has a lot of time without a science or history teacher in 8th grade and were out of school the previous two years due to the pandemic).

Kori highlights assessments where we have seen improvements (i.e. most recent science unit).

Kori talks about scores that we want our students to attain in Seminar class so they can be qualified to enter into an early college course in the Spring of their 9th grade year and where we are currently.

Robbie asks about class 10 E because they have the highest scores?

Kori doesn't have the teachers name but thinks it was a teacher who was a 9th grade teacher last year and understands the program and what is needed to achieve the results we are looking for related to habits of success.

Rachel adds that now that we are starting this work related to habits of success in 5th grade, in a few years our students will enter high school with the understanding of these concepts already and the ability to implement them from the get go.

David asks what percentage of our high schoolers came from the middle school?

The founding class had approximately 20% new students. This year's class is a little less.

Matt asks if the early college PR is getting out there?

Rachel says yes but it is a complicated model to explain on a flyer. We are working with a communications company to refine our strategy around this.

Goal #2: Establish a Culture of Engagement, Support, and Accountability

Kori talks about chronic absenteeism at the high school. He explains the interventions that occur as the number of absences increase.

100% of students have had an academic advising conference.

Referral submissions - there were real discrepancies across race/ethnicity lines. We are not seeing nearly the variability by race and ethnicity related to referrals as we did last year.

Robbie asks about percentages being higher than school population.

It's not a unit measure.

Matt thinks goals with levers to drive results is a good plan. This is part COVID recovery, redefining who we are, etc. This seems unique to us - using data strategically to drive instruction.

Rachel thinks many schools are now doing this but we are working to triangulate a lot of different pieces of data to inform decision making. We seem to finally have found the right data to strategically track to give us the information that is most useful in producing results for our students.

Aaron would like to see another presentation like this in May or June.

V. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Report

Liquidity is holding at approximately \$100,000. Grant funds were received in October that helped us pay down the line. We will have to continue borrowing and then paying back off the line of credit. We were seeing some attrition but we had not initially planned to backfill.

Rachel is not sure why there is a lag in our monthly enrollment report but we are not at 612, we are more around 604. We can't go lower than 604, so we are going to backfill.

Denise continues that the team is doing an excellent job at controlling the spending but we are still only one step away from an emergency. She is happy to see that folks are watching the pennies.

VI. 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 6:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Errichetti

Documents used during the meeting

- Annual Appeal Letter 2023.pdf
- Q1 Data Report (Middle School) November Board Meeting.pdf
- Q1 Data Report (High School) November Board Meeting.pdf
- Financial Reports to the Board - November.pdf