

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday January 25, 2024 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, M. Freeman (remote), R. Martin, X. Delobato (remote)

Trustees Absent

D. Fuller, L. Doherty, M. Landon, R. Sela, T. Maxey

Guests Present

J. Swan, 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 Jan 25, 2024 at 4:36 PM.

C. Approve minutes

II. Board Chair Report

A. Board Chair Updates

Ann introduces our guest Annmarie Martinez, prospective Board Member.

Annmarie introduces herself to the Board - VP of CPCM (Managed Care Contracting) at Baystate.

Ann reminds the Board that the annual Conflict of Interest training emails were sent and they are due in June. Nikki will re-share the spreadsheet.

Ann congratulates everyone on the work that went into preparing for the DESE site visit on January 18th.

III. CEO Report

A. Coordinated Program Review

Jonathan Swan, Chief Operating Officer, presents our most recent Coordinated Program Review.

Jonathan talks about our tiered focused monitoring approach. This is the way the state monitors if we are meeting special education and civil rights standards at Veritas Prep. The last review was 3 years ago. He reviewed the Group A and Group B Universal Standards and Monitoring Requirements as well as the Targeted Standards which we were evaluated on.

Ann asks if we self-report and came on site?

Jonathan responds yes to both. He continues that during the state visit they went to all the specials education, ESL, and reflection room spaces at both schools. They also held interviews with staff in related positions and parents, and conducted a parent survey. They recommended minor changes to make sure policy statements are in alignment across all of our documents and with the language they use.

Key takeaway: Review internal practices and update data dashboards, to include relevant information related to access and protected classes including:

- academic progress
- extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)
- early college

Ann asks if there is the same set of criteria for charter schools as there is for public schools?

Jonathan says yes.

Ann asks who manages this?

Rachel says we hired a Director of Special Education at the beginning of the year but they left in the Fall.

Ann asks if we are going to re-hire for the role?

Rachel says in the FY25 budget, we have the position listed as half-time. We have already made some internal changes to support this work. There have also been discussions around hiring a compliance officer.

B. CEO Goals

CEO Goals

1. **Develop a 3-year plan for advancement/development that includes a detailed purpose statement.** (*Rachel's Comments:* We have seen progress with Development this year and the struggle we are seeing across the state related to enrollment. Due to these priorities, Rachel has been thinking about our overall advancement strategy - see the vision in the following section. The Board talks about expanding to elementary or starting in 6th grade as opposed to 5th.)
2. **Develop a stakeholder engagement plan for FY 25 + to support the advancement vision** (see in the following section.)
 1. Will identify key stakeholder groups and opportunities to engage each
 2. engage the VPCS team/staff around the vision and development of the plan
3. **Develop and execute an annual fundraising plan with key priorities to execute in FY24** (*Rachel's Comments:* This has been kicked off with the Annual

Appeal we sent in November. We also know we loose ESSER funding next year so we need fundraising to close the budget gap that we will have in FY25).

1. solicit private grants with an eye toward operating relief and cash reserve in FY24
2. Raise \$50,000 by June 30,2024 from individual donors
3. Plan for/secure philanthropic commitments to close FY25 budget gap
4. **Revamp communications/marketing to promote our org identity & early college program (*Rachel's Comments:* Our Early College Program is complex and finding the right way to market it is important work. We are also going to revamp our website and student recruitment materials to be more aligned with our overall vision/identity.)**
 1. student recruitment materials and 2024-2025 strategy aligned with advancement vision
 2. Creating and revising content for the website (site map w/ copy, photos, videos and plan to implement)
 3. Designing and developing content for an electronic and print annual report
5. **Research and develop a plan to retain high performing teachers: (*Rachel's Comments:* We want to make some strategic compensation choices with the goal of retaining our most high performing teachers. The committee discusses the benefits and downside of taking money out of the investment portfolio to give a few teachers bonuses and the potential of it being something that would be sustainable long term.)**
 1. Engage team to gather input and design a recruitment and retention plan for FY25 with focus on retaining high performing teachers
 1. inquiry with teachers around what will keep them, float ideas for feedback
 2. develop models and financial projections
6. **Research and develop an Education Pathway for HS students, long term "grow your own" pipeline for FY25 +**
7. **Assess student interest and demand, get input and pilot some elements with TDG\$**
8. **Engage partners at 4-years IHE's for smooth transition and alumni engagement (Worcester, Westfield, UMass)**
9. **Codify pathway elements and experiences to promote and market/blueprint for other pathways**

C. Advancement Vision

Rachel talks about engaging the overall team around student recruitment and enrollment and have it be owned more by the whole organization rather than just one or two people. Rachel thinks we were more effective previously in our recruitment efforts.

What is the purpose of Advancement at Veritas?

Advancement is a set of systems and resources focused on developing engaging and compelling communications, activities and relationships that result in steady enrollment and consistent philanthropic support. With a deep waiting list and consistent support from stakeholders, Veritas will have reliable and robust financial resources to better serve our students and teachers.

Student/Teacher Recruitment & Retention

If we develop and implement a strategic series of events and opportunities for teachers, families and students to engage in the recruitment process, all stakeholders will be more engaged with the school.

- VPCS hosted community events - plan and leverage key school events as opportunities to engage our community in order to promote our program in a more authentic way
- Communications - new and improved strategic messaging
- team engagement
- student life -- athletics & extracurriculars

Donors & Ambassadors - *Sponsorship opportunities for businesses can grow our supporter list and provide opportunities to engage individuals who can donate, become trustees, advocates, mentors, connectors, etc.*

- Community Event Sponsorships
- Annual Fund
- Employer partners for WBL opportunities for students

Philanthropic Partnerships - *The majority of our funding and resource needs will be met through philanthropy and grant making. We will continue to access resources, close funding gaps, seed new initiatives and raise capital funds by engaging philanthropic partners in our work.*

Student Recruitment:

School Hosted Events to build community, recruit and fundraise

- Harvest Fest (October) - Director of Culture to Lead
- Holiday Event (December) - ? maybe in future
- Basketball Clinic/Athletic (February) - Athletic Director to Lead

*** sponsored by local businesses (banner and on flyer)

Ambassadors (students, parents & staff):

- Community Events
- Social Media Ambassadors
- Parent to parent calls post-lottery (phone-a-thon)

- 5th graders send letters to 4th graders post lottery

Feedback from the Board:

Board members think this is a very smart strategy. They can meet teachers and connect to the Veritas community in a more authentic way which will lead to buy-in and commitment to attending the school. It is an outward facing approach and it differentiates us from other charter schools in the area.

Rachel talks about our current marketing strategy related to student recruitment.

D. FY24 Annual Fund Update

Rachel updates the Board about the status of our current annual fund campaign: \$28,820 in total so far. We did receive a \$10,000 anonymous donation. Rachel is going to do some more targeted follow ups. She also discussed the possibility of making a match.

Denise and Ann recommend follow up throughout the year - not just once. Follow up and let donors know what there money has done (letter can come from students).

IV. Academic Achievement Committee

A. Data Updates

Ann updates the committee briefly about the presenters who came to Academic Achievement. Rebecca can expand next month.

V. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Report

Denise updates the Board that liquidity is stable and improving (reasons include: Davis Foundation grant, tightening spending practices, and change in grant fund reimbursement timing). We are working on FY25 budget now and hope to get it in front of the Board in May/June.

B. Quarterly Investment Subcommittee Update

7.79% growth over the past 12 months. There is still a high market risk so we are remaining conservatively invested. The Board should continue to have conversations about whether or not we want to punch it up or not.

VI. Governance Report

A. Governance Committee Update

No 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 6:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Errichetti

Documents used during the meeting

- Veritas Prep CPR Final Report January Meeting.docx
- FY24 CEO Goals - January Meeting.docx
- Advancement Purpose & Strategy - January Meeting.docx
- Attendance Tracker 2023-2024 - 5th Grade - January Meeting.pdf
- Student Attendance - Open Architects January Meeting.pdf
- Attendance Meeting Letter - January Meeting.pdf
- High School Pass Rates by Subject 1.8.24 January Meeting.xlsx
- Financial Reports to the Board - January.pdf
- Veritas Performance Monitor January Meeting.pdf