

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday January 9, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Location

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

Committee Members Present

A. Errichetti (remote), A. Hickson-Martin (remote), L. Doherty (remote), R. Sela (remote)

Committee Members Absent

M. Freeman

Guests Present

A. Clark (remote), N. Gauthier (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 Jan 9, 2025 at 8:30 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

L. Doherty made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 11-14-24.

A. Errichetti seconded the motion.

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

II. Academic Achievement

A. Principal Hiring Process Update

Amy provided an update on the principal hiring process, identifying a strong candidate with a great reputation in Springfield that has emerged as a front runner in the search. The candidate is currently working in Holyoke and has extensive experience in education. The candidate shadowed Amy for half a day in December and seemed to be a good fit for the school. The school plans to bring the candidate in on January 17th to meet with the team, students, and potentially a parent panel. If hired, they would start in the next school year but may have some capacity to work on key decisions before then. Their potential hiring is seen as a significant opportunity for the school.

The candidate is expected to retire within the next five years, so the school is already considering succession planning if they are hired.

B. Middle School Q2 Report

Middle School Enrollment and Retention

Middle school's enrollment and retention numbers are strong, with current enrollment at 430 out of 432 spots. A few recent departures were quickly filled, and the school aims for 90% student retention, exceeding this goal. Since August, only 38 students have left, mostly during the summer months. The school has improved its processes for tracking potential departures and reaching out to families. Exit interviews and surveys are conducted to gather feedback from departing students and their families. The middle school has been able to fill 100% of open seats within seven days.

While enrollment has been a challenge nationally for schools post-pandemic, Veritas is managing well in this area.

Math Performance

Data on math performance was presented, broken down by ethnicity and other subgroups.

About 12% of students are scoring in the top bracket (75-100%), with 22% in the next bracket (50-74%). A significant portion of students are still scoring in the lower brackets. English Language Learners and students with disabilities are particularly struggling in math.

Focus Students

The school is tracking a group of focus students who were not meeting expectations last year.

For these students, only 30% met the 60% or higher benchmark on their first unit assessment, with performance declining on the second unit. Homework completion and attendance remain significant challenges for these struggling students.

English Language Arts (ELA) Performance

ELA performance is showing some slight improvements, but results are mixed across grade levels.

The school implemented a new ELA curriculum this year, noting that it typically takes 2-3 years to see significant improvements from a new curriculum.

Curriculum Implementation Challenges

Discussion highlighted the challenges of implementing new curricula, including the time it takes to see results. Teacher buy-in is crucial for successful implementation. Allowing sufficient time for a curriculum to take root before making changes is important.

Broader Issues in Education

It was noted that it typically takes 2-5 years to see significant results from new curriculum implementation. Rebecca pointed out a lack of cohesive national vision or leadership in education currently, which affects local efforts and priorities. Emphasis was placed on celebrating small victories and supporting teachers through challenging changes to maintain morale and retain staff.

C. Semester 2 High School Priorities

New reading and math interventions will be implemented starting in the second semester (January 21st).

Focus on improving the school's physical environment to make it less sterile includes installing bulletin boards and TVs in hallways to showcase student work and announcements.

Classrooms have been reorganized to group 9th grade on one floor and 10th-11th grades on another to improve communication and student management.

Four new staff members were hired over the break, including a Spanish teacher, two early college liaisons, and a history teacher. All new hires are experienced and seen as strong additions to the team.

About 47% of 9th graders qualified for college classes, which is close to the 50% goal. 99% of students in the Stick program passed all their college classes this semester.

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 9:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- Q2 Data Report Middle School.pdf
- HS Semester 2 Priorities.pdf