APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday August 14, 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), M. Freeman (remote), R. Sela (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Guests Present
A. Clark (remote), N. Gauthier (remote), R. Romano (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 Aug 14, 2025 at 8:34 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Hickson-Martin made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 06-12-25.
L. Doherty seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Achievement

A. Committee Goal Setting for FY26

Board Strategic Priorities Review
The committee reviewed the draft strategic priorities for the board including a three to five hundred thousand dollar surplus plan, organizational viability goals, academic success targets, and college and career readiness objectives.

Lisa suggested removing the restriction to allocate surplus funds specifically for capital projects to maintain flexibility for other uses like teacher compensation.

The committee provided feedback that the strategic priorities are comprehensive and supported them as drafted.

Rachel clarified that the governance committee will oversee the college and career readiness priority, allowing the Academic Achievement Committee to focus on academic success.

Academic Achievement Committee Goals Setting
The committee discussed establishing three main goals for the year including teacher quality accountability, professional development evaluation, and consistent achievement data review.

Teacher quality goals would encompass both compliance reporting on highly qualified teacher status and ongoing discussions about professional development effectiveness.

The committee agreed to build reporting schedules into their agenda with September and March meetings focusing on highly qualified teacher data to align with state reporting requirements.

Lisa emphasized the need for measurable goals and suggested tracking both basic licensing requirements and broader professional development infrastructure.

The committee decided to examine how the school's professional development supports teachers in driving dramatic gains in student achievement.

Rebecca suggested building specific data review dates into committee agendas to help school leadership manage compliance requirements more effectively.

Teacher Quality and Professional Development Discussion
Amy requested regular reporting on teachers who have not passed required MTELs to help with accountability and planning.

The committee discussed the difference between highly qualified teachers as defined by state requirements versus effective teachers who achieve results with students.

Rachel explained that the school can analyze student performance data by individual teachers and classrooms when needed.

The discussion covered the school's associate teacher program as a pipeline for developing qualified lead teachers and the investment this represents in the budget. The committee agreed that professional development structure and effectiveness should be evaluated, particularly regarding whether current approaches support the school's design principle of driving dramatic student achievement gains.

B. Preliminary MCAS Data Review

MCAS ELA Test Results Analysis
Amy presented the 2025 MCAS ELA results showing mixed outcomes across grade levels with significant concerns about fifth grade performance.

Fifth grade ELA results dropped dramatically to only ten percent of students meeting or exceeding expectations, which was unexpected and concerning.

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grades showed excellent growth in the number of students meeting and exceeding expectations despite implementing a new ELA curriculum.

The school's overall average scaled score was 484 compared to a target of 489, representing a slight decline from the previous year's 488.

Rebecca noted that having more students meeting expectations while the average scaled score declined suggests potential bifurcation in student performance.

The new ELA curriculum implementation was in its first year, and Rebecca explained that fifth graders face unique challenges as they come from different feeder schools with varying ELA experiences.

Writing scores declined across most grades even as overall ELA performance improved, which aligns with the new curriculum's focus on reading comprehension over explicit writing instruction.

MCAS Mathematics Test Results Analysis
Mathematics results showed significant improvement across most grade levels with eighth grade nearly doubling their achievement rates.

Sixth grade improved by four percent, seventh grade by seven percent, and eighth grade showed dramatic improvement in students meeting or exceeding expectations.

The school's mathematics target was 490 and most grades came close to or exceeded this target, with the overall school average expected to meet the accountability goal.

The improvement was attributed to implementing Math 180 intervention, increased focus on data meetings and reteaching, and better placement decisions for algebra readiness.

The school stopped forcing half of seventh graders into Algebra 1 and instead used data to determine readiness, sending only thirty percent who were meeting or exceeding expectations.

Two additional math interventionists were added to the team to provide longer intervention chunks for more students.

III. Other Business

A. Student Enrollment and Staffing Updates

Student Enrollment and Retention Strategy
Rachel reported strong fifth grade enrollment with 105 registered students, which represents good recovery from previous enrollment challenges.

The school implemented a more strategic approach to eighth to ninth grade transitions by counseling out students who were not good fits for the early college program.

This approach resulted in retaining about 70 percent of eighth graders instead of the usual 80 percent, but leadership feels this better serves students who need different high school options.

The school added more community engagement events and touchpoints for prospective families including Harvest Fest as an initial invitation and welcome parties for accepted students.
Nikki described a successful outreach event where staff made personal calls to all applicants and accepted students to answer questions and help with registration processes.

The school used direct mailers to fourth grade families and created multiple opportunities for families to connect with the school before making final enrollment decisions.

Staffing Update for Current School Year
Amy reported that the school is almost fully hired for teaching positions with only one non-teaching special education position remaining unfilled.

There are concerns about science teacher retention, but backup planning is in place to address potential departures.

Rachel emphasized that Amy will focus specifically on curriculum, instruction, and achievement while other administrative responsibilities will be handled by other staff members.

IV. 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 9:26 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- VPCS Trustee Strategic Priorities_7.24.25.docx