APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Governance Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday January 16, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Location
Join Zoom Meeting
ID: 84901910623
Passcode: 636689

(US) +1 929-205-6099
Passcode: 636689

Meeting host: ngauthier@vpcs.org

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/j/84901910623?pwd=vr9afxTKSOHINjqkf7PWZ8SmbM6J3i.1

Committee Members Present
A. Mendelson (remote), D. Fuller (remote), X. Delobato (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Guests Present
N. Gauthier (remote), R. Romano (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Fuller called a meeting of the Governance Committee of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Jan 16, 2025 at 10:05 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

D. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes from Governance Committee Meeting on 11-08-24.
A. Mendelson seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Governance

A. Charter School Advocacy

Charter School Advocacy Week
The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) is organizing Charter School Advocacy Week from February 3-7 to celebrate charter schools and advocate for equal funding.

- Board members are encouraged to register for the virtual kickoff rally on February 3 from 6:00-6:30 PM, even if they are unable to attend, to show support for Veritas Prep.
- Daily activities will include easy actions like emailing legislators to increase the Facilities Per Pupil (FPP) funding for charter schools, which is currently lower than district schools.
- The school invited MCPSA members to a recent parent education forum to mobilize families around Advocacy Week.
- Veritas has been asked to host a visit with three legislators - Senator Adam Gomez, Representative Carlos Gonzales, and Representative Orlando Ramos - to showcase the school and have students and parents speak about their positive charter school experiences.
- The goal is to build relationships with legislators and demonstrate constituent support for charter schools.

Shift in Advocacy Strategy
The MCPSA has shifted its advocacy strategy in recent years from pushing for charter school growth to focusing on increasing facilities funding.

- This approach has been successful, with two increases in facility funding achieved.
- The association also works to defend against anti-charter bills introduced annually.

- Advocacy efforts are challenging due to the strength of teachers' unions and limitations on charter schools' ability to mobilize staff and families for political activities.
- Public opinion of charter schools has decreased since a 2017 ballot initiative to increase the charter school cap, leading to a more defensive advocacy stance.
- The current strategy aims to protect charter school autonomies and increase facility funding rather than expand the number of charter schools.
- The association is working to rebuild public support for charter schools while facing increased unionization efforts and enrollment challenges.

B. Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying Title IX Policy Changes and Leadership Training Updates

Title IX Policy Changes

Recent federal policy changes have caused fluctuations in Title IX regulations.

- The school updated its policies and procedures based on 2024 changes, but regulations have now reverted to 2020 standards.
- The main difference is the threshold for Title IX violations; the 2020 rules require both persistent and severe behavior, while 2024 rules allow for either persistent or severe behavior to constitute a violation.
- The school is consulting with legal counsel on how to handle these policy changes and may propose a flexible approach to the board.
- The Office of Civil Rights is increasing focus on K-12 schools' Title IX compliance, including thorough investigations, training requirements, and notification procedures.

Training Program by McGrath Training Solutions

The school leadership team attended a comprehensive training program by McGrath Training Solutions, focused on handling Title IX complaints, harassment, discrimination, and bullying investigations.

- The training provided valuable tools and protocols for documenting incidents, conducting investigations, and making decisions in complex cases.
- Key takeaways include the '50% and a feather' burden of proof standard for decision-making and the importance of creating a school culture where staff and students feel empowered to report concerning behavior.
- The training emphasized the need for clear documentation trails and proper handling of complaints to protect the school from potential litigation.
- The school plans to implement these protocols and may send additional staff for training to improve overall handling of such incidents.

C. Principal Search Update

High School Principal Candidate

The school has identified a top candidate for the high school principal position.

- The finalist will be visiting the school to meet with stakeholders.
- The leadership team plans to move forward with a decision and make an announcement the following week, coordinating communication plans with the candidate's current employer.
- The school leadership expressed enthusiasm about the quality of leadership they have been able to recruit for this important position.

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 11:02 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Fuller

Documents used during the meeting

- Advocacy Week 2025 Email to Board Members.docx