APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Governance Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time
Friday February 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Location
Join Zoom Meeting
ID: 84901910623
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)

Committee Members Absent
X. Delobato

Guests Present
N. Gauthier, 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 Friday Feb 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

II. Governance

A. Review of Immigration Enforcement Response Policy (ICE Policy)

ICE Policy Development and Purpose
The school has developed a new policy regarding interactions with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in response to recent changes in federal immigration enforcement, including threats that ICE might come to public schools.

- This policy aims to protect students' rights to education regardless of immigration status while complying with legal requirements.
- It was developed in collaboration with the school's legal counsel, Corktis and Bluestein, who represent multiple charter schools.
- The policy is based on a template provided by the legal team, which was then customized to fit the school's specific procedures and designated personnel.
- While the school does not expect ICE to target their charter school, they wanted to be prepared with clear guidelines.
- The policy has already been shared internally with school staff, and the school is seeking board approval to make it an official part of their policies.

Key Components of the ICE Policy
The policy outlines specific procedures for staff to follow if ICE agents come to the school.

- Front desk staff are instructed not to allow ICE agents into the school building proper, instead directing them to a waiting area and contacting the principal.
- The principal is to immediately contact the CEO and legal counsel if ICE agents arrive.
- The school will not share student information or allow student questioning without parental consent or a valid judicial warrant.
- If a warrant is presented, it will be immediately scanned and sent to legal counsel for review.
- The school will comply with valid judicial warrants but will do the minimum required by law to protect students.
- If student questioning is legally required, the school will inform the student of their rights before the questioning occurs.

- The policy includes post-visit procedures and resources for supporting affected families.
- The school has also sent a letter to families outlining these key points to reassure them and encourage continued school attendance.

Student Information and Privacy
The school intentionally collects minimal information about students' immigration status or country of origin.

- They do not keep birth certificates or social security cards as part of enrollment records.
- This approach aims to protect student privacy and make the school accessible to all public school students, regardless of immigration status.
- The school wants students to feel safe coming to school without fear of deportation.
- While some information might be included in transferred records from other schools, the Veritas team tries to remove such details from their files.

Employee Immigration Status
Unlike with students, the school must collect immigration status information for employees due to legal hiring requirements.

- They have I-9 forms and working papers for all employees.
- Some staff members are in the process of obtaining citizenship or green cards, such as an eighth-grade math teacher from Africa who is on a working visa.
- The school acts as a sponsor for some employees in this process.
- The immigration process is described as long, expensive, and challenging, requiring significant resources and employer support.

Potential Impacts and Concerns
The school leadership acknowledges that while they do not expect ICE to target their school, the policy could potentially impact some staffing if employees are found to be out of compliance with immigration laws.

- There are also concerns about supporting students whose parents might be deported, even if the students themselves are U.S. citizens.
- The school recognizes the broader societal issues surrounding immigration and the potential for severe disruption to students' lives.

Other Recent Policy Changes
The discussion briefly touched on other recent federal executive orders, including one aimed at dismantling diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in schools.

- The school leadership emphasized that despite these orders, Veritas will maintain its mission and values.

- They noted that while federal funding changes could impact the school, most decisions about fund allocation would be made at the state level.
- The school aims to continue its work without drawing undue attention, focusing on its core mission.

School Athletics Success

On a positive note, the school's varsity boys' basketball team has been highly successful in its first year.

- They have won their league championship and are advancing to state-level competition.
- A playoff game was scheduled for the evening of the meeting, with the team receiving recognition at state athletic director meetings for their performance.

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 11:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Fuller

Documents used during the meeting

- Veritas ICE Policy and Protocol (K&B Draft 01.31.2025)(2173397.1).docx