APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

In Person

Date and Time
Thursday February 27, 2025 at 4:30 PM

Location
In Person at the High School: 225 Carando Drive Springfield, MA 01104

One tap mobile +13126266799,,87944697628#

Dial by your location
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 879 4469 7628
Passcode: 912934

Find your local number: https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/u/k8aG053ZG

Trustees Present
A. Errichetti, A. Hickson-Martin, A. Mendelson, D. Ford, D. Fuller, M. Freeman, M. Landon, R. Sela

Trustees Absent
A. Martínez, L. Doherty, R. Martin, X. Delobato

Guests Present

N. Gauthier, R. Romano

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Errichetti called a meeting of the board of trustees of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Feb 27, 2025 at 4:34 PM.

B. Approve minutes

M. Freeman made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 01-23-25.
R. Sela seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Board Chair Report

A. Board Chair Update

No update.

III. CEO Report

A. CEO Update

Leadership Changes at Veritas High School
Dr. Steve Mahoney, a former assistant superintendent in Holyoke, has been hired as the new principal for Veritas High School. He is currently working as a contractor and will officially start on July 1st. Steve has extensive experience in education, including founding Renaissance School in Springfield. He has already begun assessing the school's needs and planning changes.

The leadership team is being restructured, with some positions being eliminated and new ones created. This includes adding an assistant principal position and broadening the scope of existing roles. All current leadership team members will need to reapply for positions, as job descriptions are changing. The restructuring aims to better align roles with student needs rather than adult desires. Steve is working closely with the current administration to implement these changes.

Academic and Cultural Challenges
Steve has identified several key areas for improvement at Veritas High School. There is a disconnect between the two campuses, leading to a feeling of two separate schools rather than one unified institution. This situation affects students, faculty, staff, and families.

Students desire more voice and involvement in school decisions and culture. The student leadership structures on each campus are disconnected and need better coordination.

The current schedule, including a 15-minute staggered dismissal, is not developmentally appropriate for high school students and needs revision. The professional learning time, personalized learning block, advisory, and seminar programs lack cohesion and clear ownership.
There is a need to better align the 9th and 10th grade experience with developing academic skills and autonomy. The 11th and 12th grades should focus more on post-secondary preparation.

IV. Governance Committee

A. ICE Policy – Vote

A. Hickson-Martin made a motion to to approve the ICE policy as presented.
R. Sela seconded the motion.
ICE Policy Approval
The board reviewed and approved a new policy regarding potential Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) visits to the school.

Key points of the policy include designating specific staff members to interact with ICE agents. The procedures for verifying warrants and contacting legal counsel have been established. Protocols for notifying parents and protecting student privacy are included. The school does not collect information about students' immigration status.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Academic Achievement

A. Staff Survey Data Review (Middle & High School)

We ran out of time and will revisit this discussion in a future meeting.

VI. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee Report

Financial Update
The school's financial position is stable, with $1.9 million in cash, representing 46-47 days of cash on hand. The operating budget shows a positive change of $912,537, though this is expected to decrease to around $200,000 by year-end.

Expenses are being carefully managed.

Enrollment and Funding Concerns

The school lost 13 students in January, bringing total enrollment down to 683, which is below projections. This decline could impact funding.

There are also concerns about potential changes to federal education funding, particularly Title I funds, which make up about 15% of the school's budget. If these funds were cut, it would likely result in staffing reductions, particularly among associate teachers. The school is monitoring the situation but is not making drastic changes yet. They may seek additional private funding if necessary to maintain core programs.

B. DIF Exit & IntraFi (Insured Cash Sweep Product)

The finance committee is exploring options for better protecting the school's deposits above the FDIC-insured limit of $250,000. They are considering using a service called IntraFi, which would spread deposits across multiple banks. There are some concerns about the complexity and potential risks of this approach.

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 6:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Errichetti

Documents used during the meeting

- Veritas ICE Policy and Protocol (K&B Draft 01.31.2025)(2173397.1).docx
- Parent Communication Re_ - ICE.docx
- Veritas Prep - SPARK Survey PPT - Fall.pdf
- Financial Reports to the Board February.pdf