APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

In Person

Date and Time
Thursday August 28, 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. Martínez, A. Mendelson, D. Ford, D. Fuller, L. Doherty, M. Landon, R. Leonard, R. Sela

Trustees Absent
M. Freeman, R. Martin, X. Delobato

Guests Present

K. Turner, N. Gauthier, R. Romano

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Landon called a meeting of the board of trustees of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Aug 28, 2025 at 4:35 PM.

B. Approve minutes

D. Ford made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 07-24-25.
A. Errichetti seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. CEO Report

A. School Opening

School Updates

Staff & Culture
Overall, things are going well. New staff are adjusting smoothly, and returning staff are doing well and are especially excited at the high school.

Curriculum & Professional Development
The new curriculum is off to a strong start. The Math PD provided by Mount Holyoke was excellent, helping math teachers unpack grade-level content and accelerate learning. The focus is on identifying what students need to know to succeed in 5th grade math (and achieve 7th grade standards) while filling in potential gaps from 3rd and 4th grade at other schools. Strong reading and math interventions are in place. The three weeks of PD leading up to the first day of school were very productive, allowing interventions to be implemented from day one.

Staffing
As happens most years, a few staff departures occurred after PD. While challenging, it’s better to identify these changes early.
A new 9th grade history teacher was hired to replace a staff member lost during PD.
A high school physics teacher will be leaving in September, which could be a difficult role to fill.
At the middle school, a science teacher left but has already been replaced. One 6th grade math position remains open.
Overall, staffing is stronger than in recent years, and the outlook is cautiously optimistic.

Enrollment
Enrollment is currently strong. The team did well with summer touchpoints to retain students. About 11 potential drops are anticipated at the middle school—significantly fewer than in past years. Some attrition is expected throughout the year, and seats will be filled as they become available. Enrollment is a critical metric to watch this year. Waitlists shrink in the upper grades, with 6th grade having the longest list.

Back-to-School Events
Both schools held successful events: the high school hosted a cookout and 9th grade orientation, while the middle school held its own back-to-school gathering.

Leadership
Amy has returned as CAO, providing stability, while Steve is thriving as the new high school principal. He has established a strong team, reinforced culture, and enforced higher expectations, which has been much needed. Matt emphasized the importance of institutionalizing Steve's leadership style for future continuity. There is already an assistant principal eager to learn from Steve, but succession planning remains a priority to ensure a deep leadership bench at both schools. Denise asked if potential leaders might come from SPS, and Rachel noted that could be possible.

Board Discussion
The Board discussed having principals attend Board meetings more regularly. This would not need to be a heavy lift—perhaps just a 15-minute segment. Rachel noted it would be especially valuable to hear directly from principals on key areas such as achievement results and staff culture. The first opportunity could be after the results of the staff survey, with a presentation at the December Board meeting. Lisa also suggested inviting them sooner—potentially in October—with a lighter, "win-focused" topic to share.

B. Development Update

Development Update – Katrina Turner, Manager of Communications & Development
Katrina Turner presented to the Board on development results and strategies.

FY25 Results
Katrina had set a goal of raising $250,000; while that target was not met, $155,592.10 was secured through a combination of the Davis Foundation grant, trustee donations (over $16K—our highest ever), and the spring appeal. The Early College Convening, while not primarily a fundraising event, was highly successful in donor cultivation and engagement, with strong attendance as the key goal.

Donor Growth & Cultivation
Under Katrina's leadership, the number of donors has grown significantly from 39 in FY24 to 105 in FY25. Key funding partners currently include: Barr Foundation, Mass Life

Sciences Center, One8 Foundation, Davis Foundation, and Mass Cultural Council. Katrina emphasized that cultivation takes time, and previously Veritas did not have a dedicated staff member focusing on this work.

Challenges
Proposal rejections from previous funders.
Limited new foundation opportunities, especially in Western MA (many foundations are Boston-focused).
Lower donor retention rate of 40%.
Katrina noted that every rejection letter this year cited the overwhelming volume of proposals foundations are receiving. She added that as Veritas's academic achievement continues to rise, foundation support may follow.

Board Q&A & Discussion
AnnMarie asked whether foundations specifically ask about academic results. Katrina explained they do not, but our silence on the subject may be noticeable.
Matt asked if funders who declined were invited to the Early College Convening. Katrina said yes, but many of her prior contacts have moved on, creating continuity challenges. The team is reapplying to Amelia Peabody, will seek a smaller request from Davis Foundation, and will continue applying to others.
Rachel emphasized the importance of increasing individual giving, both as a current opportunity and as preparation for a future capital campaign.
Denise raised donor-advised funds through the Community Foundation; Xiomara will facilitate a reintroduction this month. Lisa noted there is a staff member at the Community Foundation specifically focused on education whom Katrina should connect with.
Board members shared additional contacts: Aaron suggested Joanna Ballantine at the Community Foundation; Andrea mentioned Chris Allard (Square One) who cultivated significant Red Sox Foundation support over time and will connect Katrina.

FY26 Goals & Strategy
Katrina presented FY26 goals totaling **$240,000**, broken down as follows:
Foundations: $150,000
Corporate: $30,000
Individual: $60,000
Growing major individual gifts.
Strengthening donor retention.
Expanding corporate sponsorship opportunities.
Pursuing all grant opportunities, including smaller ones.

Additional Discussion
Denise emphasized the importance of having specific asks when meeting with funders (e.g., "support a student's trip to Washington, D.C."). Katrina noted the need for flexible funding, which sometimes makes specific asks more challenging.

Matt asked about thank-you acknowledgments, suggesting mailed letters instead of emails for donor appreciation.
Nikki will circulate an updated presentation to the Board.

Board Support:
100% Board Giving by 10/31
Social Media Engagement: LinkedIn reposts; invite others to follow
Foundation Research & Connections: identify opportunities and leverage relationships
Giving Tuesday: set pledge amounts; utilize social media and email campaigns
Trustee Support: provide warm introductions to potential donors and partners

C. Website Revisions

Katrina and Nikki dedicated significant time this summer to enhancing the website. New additions include a **Family Resources page**, an **Athletics page**, and a **High School Program page**, with a **Middle School Program page**, **Donations page**, and other updates coming soon. These improvements are the result of feedback, user experience, and identifying what families and community members most need. Please take a few moments to explore the site when you can!

D. Save the Date: Harvest Fest 2025

Join us on **Friday, October 24, 2025, from 5–7 p.m. at the High School** for an evening of fun and community. Come hang out, decorate your trunk for Trunk-or-Treat, or lend a hand in any way you'd like. Your support helps make this event special—we can't wait to see you there!

III. Board Chair Report

A. Strategic Priorities Confirmation

Matt introduced this section by noting that the goals created at the June retreat were brought back to each committee this month. Committees then developed their own goals aligned to those strategic priorities. We will now review each committee's goals to update the Board on what was discussed and decided in their individual meetings.

IV. Governance Committee

A. Draft Goals

David presents the Governance goals to the Board.

V. Academic Achievement Committee

A. Draft Goals

Rebecca presented the academic achievement goals and highlighted areas of overlap with the Governance Committee. She explained how the committees determined whether to separate or share responsibilities in order to ensure clarity and alignment.

B. MCAS Data (Embargoed)

Rebecca updated the Board on MCAS data, noting that while the results are currently embargoed, they can already be used as a planning tool. DESE will take additional time to finalize and release the full data set, which is expected in October.

She explained that **Student Growth Percentiles (SGP)** were scheduled to be released today. Since Veritas now partners with Open Architects, that team will compile and analyze the information for us. The Academic Achievement Committee will review SGPs at their next meeting. SGP measures student progress compared to peers who scored similarly in the past; scores of 60 or higher are needed each year to ensure we are outpacing peers and driving achievement growth.

Rebecca shared that this year's results show **more wins than last year**, particularly in math—an encouraging surprise—though there are also gains in ELA. She also noted that our average scaled score may be close to the state's accountability target.

VI. Finance Committee

A. Draft Goals

Denise presented finance committees goals to the Board.

B. Monthly Financials

Financial Position (as of July 31, 2025)
Total Assets: $11.2M
Total Liabilities: $9.0M
Net Position: $2.19M (including $186K in restricted funds).

Revenue & Expenses
YTD Revenues: $1.40M (8% of budget).
YTD Expenses: $949K (5% of budget).
Operating Change in Net Position: +$452K.
Net Position Change (after below-the-line items): +$448K.

Key Funding Notes
Restricted funds include a $185K Barr Foundation grant (final year of Early College expansion) and a $1K PeoplesBank donation for HarvestFest.
Federal grants are fully funded, totaling over $1M, requiring continued annual audits (~ $12K–$15K).

Highlights
Depreciation now reported above the line per DOE requirements, impacting financial reporting but not cash.
High school facility improvements (~$25K) are underway, funded through contingency reserves.
Early College Convening and development efforts continue to strengthen donor cultivation and position Veritas for future capital campaign work.

C. Audit & FY25 End-of-Year Financial Update

Audit Update: Preparatory work for the FY25 annual audit is underway, with auditors conducting their initial review. The audit is expected to close in early September. The committee agreed to extend its September meeting to 90 minutes (4:00–5:30 p.m.) to allow for a 45-minute presentation of audit findings.

Financial Reporting & Grants: Depreciation will now be reported above the line in financial statements, per auditor request and Department of Education requirements. All five federal grants—totaling over $1 million—are expected to be fully funded. Amy and Rachel are developing allocation and spending plans to ensure compliance. These grants require annual audits costing approximately $12,000–15,000.

High School Initiatives: New principal Steve Mahoney is implementing building and culture improvements, with about $25,000 in contingency funds used for graphics, bulletin boards, and other enhancements to make the high school more inviting.

VII. Action Items

A. Action Items

Action Items

- Matt to connect with Joanna Valentine at the Community Foundation to explore funding opportunities.
- Nikki to send an updated PowerPoint presentation with revised foundation numbers and fundraising goals.
- Board members to help make connections for Katrina related to development initiatives.
- Board Members to review and explore the revamped website, including new family resources page, athletics page, and high school programs experience page, and provide trustee spotlights for website addition.
- Board Members to sign up and participate in the Harvest Fest trunk-or-treat event at the high school on October 24th, 5-7pm.

VIII. 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,
M. Landon

Documents used during the meeting

- Veritas Prep_FY26 Development Plan.pptx
- Committee Feedback for Strategic Priorities August 2025.docx
- Financial Reports to the Board August.pdf