APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday October 9, 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), M. Freeman (remote), R. Sela (remote)

Committee Members Absent
L. Doherty

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

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

N. Gauthier called a meeting of the Academic Achievement Committee of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Oct 9, 2025 at 8:37 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Errichetti made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 09-11-25.
M. Freeman seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Achievement

A. Teacher Highly Qualified Status Review

Amy provided background information on the current status of tracking Highly Qualified Teacher designations, explaining that the process had been disrupted following Shannon Langone's departure. During the transition, multiple people were involved in maintaining records, but no clear ownership was established. The current focus is on reestablishing consistent communication with teachers about their qualification status and ensuring that all documentation is accurate and up to date.

Amy reviewed the Massachusetts charter school requirements for teachers to be considered "Highly Qualified," which include holding a bachelor's degree, passing both the Communication and Literacy MTEL and the relevant subject area MTEL, and obtaining an SCI endorsement. Teachers are given one year from their start date to achieve Highly Qualified status.

Amy shared that, at present, only 26% of teachers across the middle and high schools meet Highly Qualified status, while 72% do not. Approximately 40–50% of those who are not yet qualified are new staff members within their first year. The majority of unqualified teachers are missing their subject area and/or Communication and Literacy MTEL requirements. However, the SCI endorsement requirement is expected to reach nearly 100% completion through the internal course offered at Veritas. Letters were sent to non-qualified teachers notifying them that they must achieve Highly Qualified status by March in order to be eligible for contract renewal.

Rachel provided historical context, noting that in earlier years, the school's approach to tracking qualifications was relatively loose. Following a Department of Education site visit, the process was strengthened and certain special education teachers who had not become qualified within a year were required to be replaced. Tracking systems became highly effective under Shannon Langone's leadership, but consistency declined during the pandemic when emergency licenses were extended statewide. During that time, the school eased pressure on teachers to complete qualification requirements, given the uncertainty around state policies. Rachel added that several teachers were ultimately not renewed in June after multiple years of failing to meet the Highly Qualified standards.

B. Middle School – Week in Review Quizzes

Amy presented an overview of the new *Week in Review* assessments (WERA), which are administered every Friday in all middle school classes. The dashboard used to track these assessments provides a clear picture of student performance across standards and grade levels.

Amy noted that fifth-grade results are particularly concerning, with only 42% of students demonstrating proficiency on recent assessments. Seventh grade continues to perform consistently well, while sixth grade shows greater variability in results. Writing performance across all grade levels remains significantly lower than reading, and overall, upper grades are outperforming lower grades—a trend that aligns with the school's most recent MCAS results.

Rachel provided context regarding the second year of *Wit & Wisdom* curriculum implementation in ELA, which represents a major shift from previous instructional practices. The curriculum offers less scaffolding than the prior approach, which has created challenges for teachers, particularly in fifth grade, where students are still developing foundational skills needed to access grade-level material. Teachers have less flexibility to revisit prerequisite content and are finding it difficult to balance grade-level rigor with necessary skill-building. Classroom observations revealed that some teachers are accepting lower-quality responses from students rather than pushing for deeper critical thinking, an area leadership plans to address through ongoing coaching and professional development.

In reviewing math data, Amy reported that performance patterns are more variable. Some classes demonstrate strong and consistent results, particularly those that performed well on MCAS last year, while others show greater inconsistency. Eighth grade continues to perform at a high level, maintaining outcomes similar to previous years when over 80% of students met or exceeded expectations. However, seventh-grade math performance was negatively impacted by a teacher's car accident and medical leave, which disrupted continuity. Fifth-grade math also showed a notable decline in performance during the transition from place value to multiplication concepts.

Amy also expressed concern regarding instructional practices and intervention systems. She noted that while teachers are aware of student struggles, they often delay responding rather than acting immediately. Although math intervention blocks and tutoring sessions are in place, they are not being utilized effectively to shift outcomes. Teachers have expressed frustration that many students lack prerequisite skills—such as basic multiplication facts—and leaders have observed that when students struggle, teachers sometimes panic rather than systematically addressing learning gaps. Amy emphasized that the school previously had highly effective systems for responding to data in real time and that leadership intends to restore those practices.

Rachel added that the structured nature of new curricula has, in some cases, reduced teachers' sense of empowerment. Many teachers have abandoned effective previous practices, such as daily fact fluency exercises, and communication gaps have led to confusion about how to integrate supplementary supports alongside required curriculum components. Teachers are often following the curriculum too rigidly rather than exercising professional judgment to meet student needs. Leadership emphasized the importance of helping teachers view the curriculum as a tool rather than a script and restoring confidence in their instructional decision-making.

The discussion concluded with a reflection on student expectations and academic rigor. Teachers and leaders acknowledged that students are entering with larger academic gaps than in previous years, but there is concern that some teachers are lowering expectations as a result. Rachel highlighted that Veritas previously had a strong culture of unapologetically high expectations, which has weakened over time. The team agreed that part of the current work must focus on reestablishing that mindset—helping teachers and students alike see challenging work as both necessary and rewarding.

C. High School – Q1 Instructional Walkthrough Report

Amy presented an overview of the new quarterly instructional walk-through structure now being implemented at both the middle and high schools. She explained that this updated process is designed to focus more deeply on instructional practices and learning outcomes rather than solely on classroom management. Each walk-through is conducted by a team that includes members of the senior leadership and school leaders, ensuring multiple perspectives and consistent alignment across campuses. Following each round of visits, the senior leadership team produces a formal written report outlining key strengths, areas for growth, and specific, actionable recommendations tied directly to student achievement goals. These reports are intended to guide targeted professional development and to support ongoing instructional improvement throughout the year.

Rachel discussed how the new process also strengthens the overall leadership accountability structure within the organization. She explained that this approach allows senior leaders to remain strategically engaged in instructional oversight without being involved in daily school operations. Both school principals have now reached a level of competence and confidence that allows them to lead their respective campuses with greater autonomy. The new system ensures that expectations and feedback are clearly communicated while preventing micromanagement, fostering a culture of trust and empowerment among school leaders. In addition, the walk-through reports provide valuable formal documentation that will contribute to the school's evidence base for upcoming charter renewal processes.

III. Other Business

A.

Next Steps

- The team will analyze fourth-grade data to determine if incoming students actually have larger gaps than previous years.
- Fifth-grade teachers will receive data-driven feedback about student preparedness to address misconceptions.
- Teachers will be encouraged to maintain effective supplementary practices alongside new curriculum implementation.
- The school will reinforce a culture of high expectations without apology for academic rigor
- Quarterly walk-through reports will continue to provide structured accountability and support for school leaders.

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 9:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela