APPROVED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday November 13, 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), L. Doherty (remote), M. Freeman (remote), R. Sela

Committee Members Absent
None

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

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

R. Sela called a meeting of the Academic Achievement Committee of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Nov 13, 2025 at 8:35 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

L. Doherty made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 10-09-25.
M. Freeman seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Achievement

A. Q1 Data Review — Middle and High School

Amy presented the first quarter data reports for both the middle and high schools, explaining that these reports are compiled quarterly in a formatted presentation and include extensive data across multiple organizational goals. She asked the committee for guidance on whether they preferred to hear high-level highlights, spend time independently reviewing the documents, or focus on specific areas of interest moving forward.

Amy then reviewed middle school enrollment and retention. The middle school is currently meeting its enrollment targets, with steady numbers and waitlists in every grade. Since the first day of school, eighteen students have exited—thirteen remaining in Springfield and five leaving the state. Of these students, two had IEPs and one was a multilingual learner; by grade level, departures included six fifth graders, four sixth graders, one seventh grader, and one eighth grader. The school aims to reduce student departures by 20% from last year's 50-plus exits, targeting 32 or fewer departures this year. All open seats have been successfully backfilled, maintaining the goal of 105 students per grade.

In discussing middle school ELA performance, Amy highlighted seventh grade as a major success, with 59% of students scoring 60% or higher on assessments. Students with disabilities in seventh grade also performed strongly, with 45% reaching proficiency, significantly outperforming all other grades. Fifth grade remains a key concern, with only 12% of students meeting the 60% benchmark. Amy emphasized the need to replicate seventh grade's effective strategies—driven by a teacher who is "obsessed with data" and uses consistent accountability measures—across other grades, especially fifth.

Middle school math performance largely mirrors last year's MCAS results, with limited improvement across grade levels. Seventh grade math scores were affected by a core teacher being out on short-term disability, requiring substitute coverage. No multilingual learners reached proficiency in math at any grade level. To address instructional gaps, the school has launched professional development led by a retired Mount Holyoke

professor to strengthen teacher content knowledge. Leadership also identified tutoring as a critical but underutilized support, noting it exists on the schedule but is not being effectively implemented.

Middle school culture and climate data showed several promising trends. Staff attendance improved significantly to 96–97.2%, averaging only one to two staff absences per day. Student daily attendance is consistently above the 95% target for the first time in years. Chronic absenteeism remains a challenge at approximately 11–12%, affecting around twelve students. Student survey results were mixed: belonging scores decreased from 52% to 47%, while excitement about classes nearly doubled from 24% to 47%. Staff surveys reflected slight decreases in relationship positivity but modest improvements in perceptions of the working environment and colleague enthusiasm.

Rachel next discussed high school enrollment challenges. Ninth grade enrollment remains below target at 75 students instead of the projected 91, creating a 12-student shortfall. This gap stems from intentional decisions to counsel students who were not ideal fits for the early college program toward other high schools, as well as decisions not to socially promote eighth graders who were not academically ready. Some students repeated eighth grade, while others transferred elsewhere. These decisions were made to prevent future attrition by ensuring only students suited for the early college model enter ninth grade. Rachel also noted that earlier tensions with Springfield Prep were resolved after clarifying that Veritas Prep's mission centers on early college rather than simply being a smaller high school option.

High school academic updates reflected several areas of progress. New curricula have been implemented across ELA, math, science, and history. Ninth grade ELA improved by 7% compared to the previous cohort. Tenth grade demonstrated the strongest gains, with proficiency increasing from 38% to 58% and growth seen across all subgroups. All students were registered for the PSAT to support college readiness, though not all ultimately took the test. Math results were mixed; new teachers in some roles contributed to lower geometry performance, while algebra outcomes remained stable.

The most urgent concern discussed was the high school attendance crisis. Daily attendance is significantly below target, though some data may be inaccurate due to tardies being incorrectly counted as absences. Chronic absenteeism affects roughly 25% of high school students, with tenth and twelfth grades nearing 50% chronic absenteeism. Approximately twenty seniors are currently at risk of not graduating because of attendance-related credit issues. Leadership acknowledged that current interventions are not effectively addressing the problem and that natural consequences—such as failing grades due to excessive absences—may soon be necessary.

Steve reviewed the current attendance intervention strategies. He holds weekly attendance meetings, and each chronically absent student is assigned a case manager, often their counselor. Individual conversations are occurring to identify barriers, but the

effectiveness of these interventions remains uncertain. The high school does not yet have the automated attendance intervention systems that have proven effective at the middle school level. Leadership is considering whether attendance patterns may reflect broader engagement issues with the early college model itself. Saturday school and makeup day options are available to help students recover absences for accountability purposes, though their impact is not yet clear.

B. CEO Annual Goals Review and Feedback

Nicole opened the discussion by asking committee members to review Rachel's CEO goals ahead of the December board meeting. Rachel framed that these goals were initially drafted following the June retreat and were recently refined based on evaluation feedback. Committee members were encouraged to consider how the goals align with the board's broader strategic priorities and to suggest any revisions. Rachel noted that some goals naturally span multiple domains—for example, attendance is embedded within the accountability system even if not stated explicitly in the goals document. Final approval of the goals is planned for the December retreat, with opportunities for members to provide additional feedback via email or during committee discussions beforehand.

III. Other Business

A. Food Bank/Drive Update

Food Bank Initiative Update

Rachel shared that the recent food drive was intended primarily as an internal initiative for teachers and staff, rather than expecting significant participation from external supporters. The strategic messaging focused on reminding the community of Veritas Prep's student demographics, noting that 85% of students rely on SNAP benefits. Leadership intentionally chose not to include a monetary donation link in order to avoid cannibalizing the annual fund appeal. During the discussion, Lisa suggested that many supporters might actually prefer making online monetary donations instead of purchasing and delivering physical food items. Rachel and Katrina revisited whether the appeal should have been sent to external supporters, acknowledging the need to follow up now that the government shutdown has ended. The food drive itself was designed as a short-term response to ensure students had food to take home during the immediate crisis period.

B. Next Steps

Next Steps

- Follow up on the status of the food bank initiative and notify supporters that food donations are no longer needed.
- Amy will correct formatting issues in the data presentation, including graph scaling and mismatched graphics between reports.

- Leadership will report back on ninth grade recruitment progress in March or April to ensure adequate enrollment for fall 2026.
- The high school team will intensify attendance intervention efforts and evaluate whether current strategies require significant revision.
- Committee members will review the CEO goals and submit feedback prior to the December combined board meeting for final approval.

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 9:36 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- 2025 Q1 High School Report November.pdf
- 2025 Q1 Middle School Report November.pdf
- FY26 CEO Goals_summary.docx
- VPCS Trustee Strategic Priorities_7.24.25.docx