



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday December 11, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Location

Join Zoom Meeting <https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/j/3131719731>

Committee Members Present

A. Errichetti (remote), L. Doherty (remote), M. Freeman (remote), R. Sela (remote)

Committee Members Absent

A. Hickson-Martin

Guests Present

A. Clark (remote), J. Swan (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 Dec 11, 2025 at 8:35 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Errichetti made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 11-13-25.

L. Doherty seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Achievement

A. Review of Quarter 1 Academic Report

The meeting began with a review of the upcoming board Q1 report presentation. Amy and Jonathan planned to preview their presentation for the committee to gather feedback before the extended board retreat, where they will have 75 minutes to present.

Committee members were asked to focus their feedback on the appropriate level of detail and content rather than the full presentation itself. The goal is to refine the report based on committee input prior to next week's extended board meeting.

The committee then reviewed current enrollment and student mobility data. Veritas currently enrolls 758 students, eight fewer than the budgeted target of 766. Seventeen students have exited since the beginning of the school year, although several new students have also enrolled. Enrollment remains strong in grades 5–8, despite some mobility in grades 5 and 6. Grade 8 has experienced more significant losses that have impacted overall enrollment stability. The current mobility rate is 2.2%, compared to 8.5% at the end of the 2023–24 school year, and is expected to increase as the year progresses.

Committee members anticipated board questions regarding student departures and exit interviews. Jonathan confirmed that the team tracks when students leave, whether they transfer to other schools or move out of state, and whether they were new or returning students. Of the 17 students who left, eight were new to Veritas, and nine were returning. The team maintains detailed historical data on student tenure and mobility that can be shared during the board discussion.

A comparative analysis of mobility rates across regional charter schools was also reviewed. Last year, Veritas's 8.5% mobility rate was the lowest among local charters, with Springfield Prep at 8% as the closest comparison. Committee members found this comparative context useful for board understanding while cautioning that it should not be used as justification for underperformance.

The committee then reviewed an overview of the state accountability system. DESE rates schools across multiple metrics and assigns individualized targets. Last year, Veritas earned 37% of possible points, achieving "moderate progress." Middle school

performance was stronger and carried more weight in the overall score. Growth metrics were particularly strong, as were English language proficiency outcomes. Middle school chronic absenteeism also exceeded state expectations.

A deeper breakdown of accountability scoring highlighted that achievement represents 60% of the overall score, yet Veritas earned only two of twelve possible points in this category. Growth accounts for 20% of the score, where the school performed significantly better. Achievement and high school chronic absenteeism will continue to be primary areas of focus. Additionally, new metrics for the high school—such as chronic absenteeism, advanced coursework, and four-year graduation rates—will begin contributing to accountability calculations.

The committee reviewed chronic absenteeism data in greater detail. Middle school chronic absenteeism is currently 11.8%, trending below the state target of 26%. High school chronic absenteeism remains a significant concern, with rates increasing across grade levels and reaching the highest levels in 12th grade. Data corrections this year improved accuracy, resulting in lower rates than previously reported. Although the 31% chronic absenteeism rate at the high school is problematic, it is close to the state target and would still earn accountability points. Committee members recommended including comparative data with state, district, and peer charter schools. The team noted that meeting state targets is not sufficient, as chronic absenteeism is inconsistent with long-term college persistence outcomes.

MCAS achievement results were also discussed. Performance remains strongest in grades 6 and 7, while grades 5 and 10 show substantial challenges. Many students fall into the “partially meeting expectations” category, suggesting they are close to proficiency. The primary challenge is moving students into the “meeting expectations” category. The first academic snapshot of the year shows mixed outcomes when compared to last year's MCAS data.

Committee members requested additional cohort progress charts to track the same students over time rather than comparing different groups of students year-to-year. Rebecca emphasized the importance of monitoring longitudinal student growth. The current curriculum, now in its second year of implementation, shows promising results for students who have experienced it for multiple years, although grade 5 continues to struggle.

The committee reviewed mathematics performance challenges, particularly a decline in grade 7 resulting from a six-week emergency medical leave by the classroom teacher. A substitute covered ratios and proportions during this period, significantly impacting student progress. Amy acknowledged weaknesses in substitute selection and outlined policy changes to ensure higher-quality instructional continuity during teacher absences moving forward.

Comparative data with other districts showed that Veritas outperforms Springfield and Holyoke in math achievement but currently falls between Libertas and Longmeadow. Pre-pandemic 2019 data showed Veritas performing at a level similar to higher-achieving districts, while recent declines mirror broader statewide trends.

Amy shared insights from her recent visit to Libertas Charter School, which has seen dramatic academic improvement. Libertas's academic culture is much stronger, with 100% compliance compared to Veritas's roughly 60% engagement rate. Their academic quality is not necessarily higher, but their enforcement of behavioral expectations is more consistent. The visit reinforced the value of integrating culture and academic leadership rather than operating separate culture teams. The committee will discuss this visit in more detail at a future meeting.

Amy described new culture and academic integration strategies, including stricter hallway expectations and a January rollout of detention for lack of academic effort rather than incorrect work. This approach shifts responsibility for culture management back to teachers, aligning with staffing and compensation adjustments planned for next year.

B. Accountability Report & Targets

Embedded in the report above.

III. Other Business

A. Academic Achievement Committee Classroom Visits 1/8

The committee finalized plans for the January 8th in-person meeting at the middle school campus, which will extend to 10:30 AM. Members will observe classrooms at varying performance levels and speak directly with students. Only Academic Achievement Committee members will participate initially, with broader board visits planned for the spring.

B. Next Steps

Next Steps

- Revise the board report presentation based on committee feedback
- Add cohort tracking charts to better illustrate longitudinal progress
- Reduce text in the presentation and shift toward strategic bullet points
- Strengthen the narrative around curriculum implementation and teacher retention
- Prepare comparative chronic absenteeism data for the December board meeting
- Begin planning for the extended January school visit, including classroom observations and student conversations

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

Documents used during the meeting

- Veritas Quarter 1 Report_ Board Copy December Meeting.docx
- Image 12-8-25 at 6.20 PM.jpeg
- Image 12-8-25 at 6.19 PM.jpeg