

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday January 8, 2026 at 8:30 AM

Location

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

Committee Members Present

A. Errichetti, A. Hickson-Martin, L. Doherty, R. Sela

Committee Members Absent

M. Freeman

Guests Present

N. Gauthier

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 Jan 8, 2026 at 8:30 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

II. Academic Achievement

A. Middle School Classroom Visit & Instructional Debrief

Following classroom observations at the middle school, the Academic Achievement Committee engaged in a reflective debrief focused on instructional practices, student engagement, and systemic conditions impacting teaching and learning. Committee members noted that **large class sizes** presented a significant challenge to effective instruction, limiting teachers' ability to monitor student engagement and respond to individual needs. In some classrooms, the size of the group made it difficult for teachers to notice disengaged students while simultaneously providing individualized support to others. The committee emphasized that classes with 25–27 students make it challenging to accurately assess student skill levels and tailor instruction accordingly.

The committee observed several **instructional strengths**, particularly in the implementation of the sixth-grade intervention program. Members were encouraged to see consistent use of end-of-quarter fluency assessments to determine whether students could exit intervention, viewing this as a strategic and well-coordinated approach that reflected strong execution and alignment. Additionally, there was positive feedback regarding the **volume and quality of student work**, with students actively writing and producing work on paper across classrooms. This represented a notable improvement compared to prior years, when technology use did not consistently translate into meaningful student engagement.

Classroom culture and routines were identified as another strength. In multiple classrooms, **clear rituals and expectations** were evident, including students entering late and transitioning independently without disrupting instruction. Robotics and other STEM electives were highlighted as examples of effective technology integration, where students demonstrated authentic understanding, applied feedback, and remained actively engaged in learning.

At the same time, the committee raised several **instructional concerns**, particularly related to over-scaffolding and student independence. Members observed that students often relied heavily on detailed instructions and supports, limiting opportunities for independent thinking and problem-solving. This was discussed as part of a broader pattern of **learned helplessness**, affecting both students and educators. The committee noted that teachers, like students, may be conditioned to follow prescriptive guidance rather than exercising professional judgment, creating a cycle of over-direction in classrooms.

The discussion also highlighted gaps between **professional development and classroom implementation**. While teachers have received relevant training, members observed missed opportunities to apply that learning in practice, particularly in areas such as questioning strategies, student discourse, and gradual release of responsibility. Excessive teacher talk and repeated instructions were noted, along with limited opportunities for students to grapple with content independently. Committee members also raised concerns about **cognitive overload**, observing that excessive use of graphic organizers and supplemental materials sometimes distracted from core learning objectives and, in some cases, hindered understanding—especially for students receiving special education services.

Relatedly, the committee identified a need for stronger **special education support structures**, noting that general education teachers are often attempting to meet diverse learning needs without sufficient specialized training or staffing. This was seen as contributing to over-scaffolding and instructional strain.

The committee emphasized the importance of **board visibility into classroom conditions**, noting that firsthand observation provides critical context for understanding instructional challenges and informing budget decisions. In this context, members discussed the urgency of **reducing class sizes** and acknowledged that doing so will require difficult financial decisions and additional staffing investments. The committee also discussed the need to move forward with **teacher compensation increases**, framing this as an essential investment.

Overall, the committee concluded that while there are clear strengths in instruction, engagement, and culture, addressing class size, instructional independence, staffing supports, and alignment between training and practice will be critical priorities moving forward.

III. 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 10:36 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- Agenda - Instructional Walk Through - January Meeting.docx

- Instructional Walk Through Debrief Questions - January Meeting.docx