



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday March 12, 2026 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), 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 Mar 12, 2026 at 8:33 AM.

C. Approve Minutes 1

L. Doherty made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 12-11-25.

A. Errichetti seconded the motion.

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

D. Approve Minutes 2

L. Doherty made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 02-12-26.

A. Errichetti seconded the motion.

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

II. Academic Achievement

A. Q3 Academic Data Report

Amy began the meeting with a Quarter 3 academic data update. Enrollment across the middle and high school currently stands at 730 students, down from 758 reported in December. TJ noted a discrepancy between current figures and the Open Architects system, which had shown slightly higher enrollment earlier in the year. The team discussed student mobility trends, noting that the school has experienced 20 student departures this year, most of which occurred in the middle school grades, particularly fifth and sixth. Despite these departures, the school's mobility rate remains approximately 4% better than the end of the previous school year, and Rachel noted that overall student mobility in Springfield remains high compared to the school's rate.

Further analysis of departures showed that 28 middle school students have left year-to-date, including 18 in-state transfers and 10 out-of-state moves. Leadership will continue analyzing these transfers to determine how many remained within Springfield versus moving to surrounding districts such as Holyoke, West Springfield, Chicopee, and Ludlow. Some student departures are also attributed to specialized placements, including special education services. The committee also discussed the financial implications of enrollment shifts, noting that the loss of 20 students represents approximately \$250,000 in lost revenue. The finance committee monitors enrollment monthly, and the school has set a goal of filling any open seat within two weeks, a target the team has consistently met. However, the group acknowledged that filling vacancies becomes increasingly difficult later in the school year, with February 15 typically marking the point when enrollment recruitment slows significantly.

Amy began the meeting with a Quarter 3 academic data update. Enrollment across the middle and high school currently stands at 730 students, down from 758 reported in December. TJ noted a discrepancy between current figures and the Open Architects

system, which had shown slightly higher enrollment earlier in the year. The team discussed student mobility trends, noting that the school has experienced 20 student departures this year, most of which occurred in the middle school grades, particularly fifth and sixth. Despite these departures, the school's mobility rate remains approximately 4% better than the end of the previous school year, and Rachel noted that overall student mobility in Springfield remains high compared to the school's rate.

Further analysis of departures showed that 28 middle school students have left year-to-date, including 18 in-state transfers and 10 out-of-state moves. Leadership will continue analyzing these transfers to determine how many remained within Springfield versus moving to surrounding districts such as Holyoke, West Springfield, Chicopee, and Ludlow. Some student departures are also attributed to specialized placements, including special education services. The committee also discussed the financial implications of enrollment shifts, noting that the loss of 20 students represents approximately \$250,000 in lost revenue. The finance committee monitors enrollment monthly, and the school has set a goal of filling any open seat within two weeks, a target the team has consistently met. However, the group acknowledged that filling vacancies becomes increasingly difficult later in the school year, with February 15 typically marking the point when enrollment recruitment slows significantly.

B. ANet Data Review – Middle School

Amy then reviewed middle school ELA ANet assessment data, which shows generally positive trends across most grade levels. While some fluctuation occurred between assessment periods, seventh and eighth grade students are steadily progressing toward the school's goal of 60% proficiency. Fifth grade saw strong gains between the first and second assessments but declined slightly on the third, while sixth grade showed the opposite pattern, recovering after a dip in the second assessment. Leaders emphasized that the team is now focusing more closely on the quality of student work, rather than simply whether tasks were completed. Teachers had previously emphasized annotation quantity during reading assignments, but leadership has shifted the focus toward ensuring annotations support deeper comprehension, including identifying main ideas and responding directly to focus questions.

The committee discussed how teams are conducting more detailed analysis of standards and assessment questions to better understand student errors and misconceptions. In particular, fifth grade students are struggling with identifying main ideas in informational texts, often selecting appealing details rather than central concepts. Teachers are now reviewing student work samples to identify patterns and develop targeted reteaching strategies aligned to specific skills and standards.

The discussion then turned to Math ANet data which shows more significant challenges across grade levels. Teachers have struggled with deeper conceptual understanding of math content needed to effectively teach grade-level standards. The school's partnership

with Mount Holyoke College has focused on strengthening teachers' conceptual knowledge rather than relying solely on procedural instruction. Leadership noted that professional development must be more closely aligned to curriculum units and provided in advance of instruction to better support teachers.

The committee also discussed changes to the fifth grade model, including a shift toward a departmentalized structure with dedicated math and science teachers. Recruitment efforts are focused on candidates with strong math backgrounds who can also teach science content. Leadership reported that several promising candidates are currently in the hiring pipeline, and early hiring could allow new teachers to participate in Mount Holyoke's summer training programs.

Teacher retention and staffing continuity were also discussed. Most ELA teachers plan to return next year, which will allow the school to enter the third year of implementing the Wit & Wisdom curriculum, a point at which teachers typically reach higher levels of proficiency with a new curriculum. Salary adjustments implemented this year have contributed to stronger retention. However, leadership is also planning for three anticipated maternity leaves next year, which will require thoughtful coverage planning using instructional leaders rather than substitutes.

The committee discussed professional development structures, with Rachel recommending that Rebecca facilitate teacher and leader focus groups to explore ways to move toward more teacher-driven professional learning communities. As the staff becomes stronger and more experienced, the team is considering shifting away from a highly centralized model of professional development toward one that empowers teachers to collaborate and lead their own instructional improvement efforts.

Attendance data showed encouraging improvements. Middle school chronic absenteeism has dropped to 11.2%, significantly below the state accountability threshold of 31%. At the high school level, chronic absenteeism improved from 31.9% to 26.8%, even during winter months when attendance typically declines due to illness. While 12th grade absenteeism remains an area of concern, overall attendance trends across other grade levels have improved significantly. The high school has implemented attendance buyback opportunities, allowing students to complete four hours of work to recover one day of absence. These sessions have been offered during school breaks and Fridays after school, and participation has been strong.

High school academic outcomes also show improvement compared to the previous year. The percentage of A and B grades has increased across grade levels, while overall failure rates have dropped from 12% to 7%. Additionally, the percentage of students with at least one failing grade has decreased from 33% to 19%. Students with IEPs have also shown notable gains in earning higher grades. Leaders credited these improvements in part to the implementation of more consistent grading policies, which now include 20% habits of success, 30% tests and quizzes, and 40% midterms and finals.

The committee concluded with discussion of next steps. Leadership will conduct a deeper analysis of student departures and mobility trends for a future presentation. The Mount Holyoke partnership will be restructured to better align content support with upcoming curriculum units, and teacher recruitment will continue focusing on candidates who support curriculum fidelity and collaborative instructional practices. The team also plans to devote increased leadership attention to mathematics instruction, balancing the previous focus on ELA. In preparation for upcoming state testing, teachers will emphasize constructed response practice during the remaining weeks of instruction to strengthen students' analytical writing and reasoning skills.

Amy then reviewed middle school ELA ANet assessment data, which shows generally positive trends across most grade levels. While some fluctuation occurred between assessment periods, seventh and eighth grade students are steadily progressing toward the school's goal of 60% proficiency. Fifth grade saw strong gains between the first and second assessments but declined slightly on the third, while sixth grade showed the opposite pattern, recovering after a dip in the second assessment. Leaders emphasized that the team is now focusing more closely on the quality of student work, rather than simply whether tasks were completed. Teachers had previously emphasized annotation quantity during reading assignments, but leadership has shifted the focus toward ensuring annotations support deeper comprehension, including identifying main ideas and responding directly to focus questions.

The committee discussed how teams are conducting more detailed analysis of standards and assessment questions to better understand student errors and misconceptions. In particular, fifth grade students are struggling with identifying main ideas in informational texts, often selecting appealing details rather than central concepts. Teachers are now reviewing student work samples to identify patterns and develop targeted reteaching strategies aligned to specific skills and standards.

The discussion then turned to Math ANet data which shows more significant challenges across grade levels. Teachers have struggled with deeper conceptual understanding of math content needed to effectively teach grade-level standards. The school's partnership with Mount Holyoke College has focused on strengthening teachers' conceptual knowledge rather than relying solely on procedural instruction. Leadership noted that professional development must be more closely aligned to curriculum units and provided in advance of instruction to better support teachers.

The committee also discussed changes to the fifth grade model, including a shift toward a departmentalized structure with dedicated math and science teachers. Recruitment efforts are focused on candidates with strong math backgrounds who can also teach science content. Leadership reported that several promising candidates are currently in the hiring pipeline, and early hiring could allow new teachers to participate in Mount Holyoke's summer training programs.

Teacher retention and staffing continuity were also discussed. Most ELA teachers plan to return next year, which will allow the school to enter the third year of implementing the Wit & Wisdom curriculum, a point at which teachers typically reach higher levels of proficiency with a new curriculum. Salary adjustments implemented this year have contributed to stronger retention. However, leadership is also planning for three anticipated maternity leaves next year, which will require thoughtful coverage planning using instructional leaders rather than substitutes.

The committee discussed professional development structures, with Rachel recommending that Rebecca facilitate teacher and leader focus groups to explore ways to move toward more teacher-driven professional learning communities. As the staff becomes stronger and more experienced, the team is considering shifting away from a highly centralized model of professional development toward one that empowers teachers to collaborate and lead their own instructional improvement efforts.

Attendance data showed encouraging improvements. Middle school chronic absenteeism has dropped to 11.2%, significantly below the state accountability threshold of 31%. At the high school level, chronic absenteeism improved from 31.9% to 26.8%, even during winter months when attendance typically declines due to illness. While 12th grade absenteeism remains an area of concern, overall attendance trends across other grade levels have improved significantly. The high school has implemented attendance buyback opportunities, allowing students to complete four hours of work to recover one day of absence. These sessions have been offered during school breaks and Fridays after school, and participation has been strong.

High school academic outcomes also show improvement compared to the previous year. The percentage of A and B grades has increased across grade levels, while overall failure rates have dropped from 12% to 7%. Additionally, the percentage of students with at least one failing grade has decreased from 33% to 19%. Students with IEPs have also shown notable gains in earning higher grades. Leaders credited these improvements in part to the implementation of more consistent grading policies, which now include 20% habits of success, 30% tests and quizzes, and 40% midterms and finals.

The committee concluded with discussion of next steps. Leadership will conduct a deeper analysis of student departures and mobility trends for a future presentation. The Mount Holyoke partnership will be restructured to better align content support with upcoming curriculum units, and teacher recruitment will continue focusing on candidates who support curriculum fidelity and collaborative instructional practices. The team also plans to devote increased leadership attention to mathematics instruction, balancing the previous focus on ELA. In preparation for upcoming state testing, teachers will emphasize constructed response practice during the remaining weeks of instruction to strengthen students' analytical writing and reasoning skills.

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 9:31 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Sela

Documents used during the meeting

- Quarter 3 Report Middle School - March Meeting.docx
- 5th Grade A3 Math Anet Data Analysis - March Meeting.docx
- 5th Grade A3 ELA Analysis Template - March Meeting.docx