Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

In Person

Date and Time
Thursday December 18, 2025 at 3:30 PM

Location
In Person at the High School: 225 Carando Drive Springfield, MA 01104

One tap mobile +13126266799,,87944697628#

Dial by your location
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 879 4469 7628
Passcode: 912934

Find your local number: https://vpcs-org.zoom.us/u/k8aG053ZG

Trustees Present
A. Errichetti, A. Hickson-Martin, A. Martínez, A. Mendelson, D. Ford, D. Fuller (remote), L. Doherty (remote), M. Landon, R. Leonard, R. Martin, R. Sela, X. Delobato

Trustees Absent
M. Freeman

Guests Present

A. Clark, J. Swan, K. Turner, N. Gauthier, R. Romano

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Landon called a meeting of the board of trustees of Veritas Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Dec 18, 2025 at 3:39 PM.

B. Approve minutes

D. Ford made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 10-23-25.
A. Errichetti seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Board Chair Report

A. Review Agenda

Matt opened the extended Board meeting, welcomed Trustees, and provided a brief overview of the agenda, which included a review of strategic priorities, updates from the CEO and senior leadership team, and discussion of organizational goals for the year. The Board approved the minutes from the October 23 meeting. Matt noted that strategic priorities should be revisited more than once a year to ensure they continue to reflect the school's evolving needs and that updates or refinements are made as necessary.

B. Strategic Priority Step Back

The Board engaged in a step-back discussion of the four core strategic priorities: organizational viability, academic success, college and career readiness, and school climate and staff culture. Under organizational viability, members acknowledged that the school has the potential to end the year with a surplus and emphasized the importance of ongoing trustee recruitment and succession planning, including the recent participation of a prospective trustee at a Board meeting. Teacher compensation and retention remain essential components of long-term sustainability and were flagged for deeper discussion later in the meeting.

In reviewing academic success priorities, the Board reaffirmed the goal of returning to pre-pandemic performance levels and continuing to strengthen instruction across both campuses. For college and career readiness, Trustees highlighted the continued value of the Early College Program, especially as broader questions emerge nationally about the financial feasibility of traditional four-year college pathways; the program's ability to reduce costs and expand opportunity was noted as a significant advantage for Veritas students. Discussions of school climate and staff culture focused on cultivating strong community engagement, reinforcing consistent expectations, and maintaining a positive environment for students, families, and staff.

The Board also acknowledged several successful community events, including Harvest Fest, and noted that the 3rd Annual Spelling V Competition will take place on January 14, with Trustees encouraged to attend.

III. CEO Report

A. Development Update

Katrina, Communications and Development Manager, provided an update on annual giving progress and recent development activity. She noted several encouraging gains since the presentation materials were prepared, including strong community mobilization around the SNAP benefits emergency appeal, which generated meaningful donor engagement. As highlighted in the development slides, Veritas has raised $44,000 to date, compared to $25,000 at this point last year, with higher average gift amounts and continued enthusiasm among new and returning supporters. Corporate giving is also trending upward, with several businesses contributing for the first time and new opportunities to cultivate ongoing partnerships. Foundation funding continues to be challenging, though Veritas secured a significant $70,000 grant from the Davis Foundation to support Early College programming. The Board achieved 100% participation in giving for the second consecutive year, and two new scholarships for graduating seniors were generously launched by Denise and Aaron.

Katrina emphasized that the philanthropic landscape has changed, with many foundations showing less interest in charter school funding, requiring greater creativity and persistence in donor outreach. She shared that Giving Tuesday was less successful than last year but noted there are still 13 days remaining in the calendar year to close the gap toward the FY26 annual fund goal. Trustee outreach continues to be one of the most powerful drivers of donations, and Katrina encouraged members to consider direct asks or other ways to engage their networks with the school's work. Board members also discussed the possibility of charging companies to participate in the spring Career Fair as a long-term revenue opportunity. Katrina highlighted the importance of engaging organizations and individuals in meaningful aspects of the school's mission so that support grows organically from belief in Veritas's impact.

B. Quarter 1 Progress Report Review

Jonathan presented the Quarter 1 progress report beginning with an update on enrollment, student mobility, and the implications for both campuses. The school's enrollment goal for the year is 766 students; as of December 12, enrollment stands at 758, eight students below target despite having exceeded the goal earlier in the fall. Seventeen students have exited since the first day of school, with most mobility occurring in grades 5, 6, and 8, though these grade levels also have the strongest waitlists and therefore the greatest ability to refill seats. The reasons for student departures—ranging from family convenience to academic pathways, behavior challenges, adjustment difficulties, and life circumstances—were reviewed using the data in the Quarter 1 report. Jonathan emphasized that because high school waitlists are much smaller, enrollment losses at the high school level have a greater long-term impact. The team is working to strengthen recruitment for 9th grade and noted that as Veritas begins to graduate more high school alumni with Early College success stories, recruitment may improve.

Comparative mobility data shows Veritas's current 2.2% mobility rate remains well below most local charter and district peers. Trustees discussed the complexity of midyear transitions, particularly for new middle school students, and the increased orientation support now in place. The conversation also touched on long-standing perceptions of larger class sizes at the middle school; leaders noted that teaching quality and consistency are more significant drivers of student experience than class size alone.

The Board then reviewed chronic absenteeism data, a key component of state accountability targets. Middle school chronic absenteeism is currently 11.8%, far below the state target of 26.8%. High school absenteeism, however, remains a significant challenge at 31.5%, though this rate narrowly meets the state benchmark of 31%. Trends show that seniors have the highest absenteeism, while eleventh graders attending STCC demonstrate much stronger attendance. Steve has implemented an attendance buyback initiative to help reduce chronic absence status at the high school, and the team is reviewing attendance recordkeeping for Early College students to ensure accuracy. Trustees discussed whether senior absenteeism reflects academic struggle or simply typical senior-year prioritization, and the importance of understanding those patterns for college persistence.

Amy provided the academic performance update, beginning with a review of the state accountability results, where Veritas earned 36% of possible points, indicating moderate progress toward targets. The school received high marks in middle school growth, English proficiency, and middle school attendance, but achievement scores remain low across grades and subjects. Quarter 1 interim assessment data, however, shows promising early progress. ELA results indicate continued strength in grades 6 and 7, significant improvement among most cohorts, and alignment with the positive trends expected from the second year of the Wit & Wisdom curriculum. Fifth grade remains a major focus area given the rigor of the curriculum and students' transition into middle school, though early ANet results this week suggest movement in the right direction. Trustees asked to revisit these graphs in January to monitor progress.

Math results follow a similar pattern, with eighth grade showing the strongest performance and grades 5 and 10 presenting ongoing concerns. Cohort analyses revealed meaningful growth in several grades but also highlighted where instructional disruptions—including extended teacher absences—impacted learning, particularly in seventh-grade math. The Board discussed the importance of consistent staffing, stronger proactive structures for navigating extended leaves, and the role foundational math skills play in student success, especially given the diverse academic backgrounds of incoming fifth graders.

The academic update concluded with broader context from district comparisons, which show Veritas outperforming Springfield and Holyoke in most tested areas but still trailing top-performing regional charters and pre-pandemic outcomes. Leaders described recent collaborative learning with Libertas, whose rapid academic gains offer insight into effective culture and instructional alignment. Trustees also discussed how regional declines in academic performance—even in strong suburban districts—validate the challenges being seen statewide while reinforcing the need to maintain high expectations at Veritas.

C. CEO Goals

Rachel provided an update on her FY26 CEO goals, outlining areas of strong progress as well as those identified for continued development during her evaluation. Her goals span three major priority areas—Faithfulness to Charter, Academic Success, and Organizational Viability—each with specific key results that guide her work. She began by reviewing progress under **Priority 1: Faithfulness to Charter**, which includes meeting accountability plan metrics, advancing toward the 2026 charter renewal application, and monitoring progress on college and career readiness benchmarks. These goals underpin much of the data reporting and postsecondary systems work discussed earlier in the meeting.

Under **Priority 2: Academic Success**, Rachel highlighted her focus on strengthening systems that recruit and retain top educators, particularly through the redesign of the teacher compensation system. She noted that compensation remains a core driver of retention and instructional quality, and the revised salary framework is intended to ensure Veritas remains competitive with Springfield Public Schools while also addressing equity and transparency concerns. This work, paired with climate and culture improvement efforts, is designed to support her goal of ensuring that 75% of renewal letters are returned by May 2026. She also discussed her support for accelerating academic growth and closing gaps, particularly in light of state accountability ratings—a key result that requires showing “substantial progress” toward DESE targets.

Rachel then provided an update on **Priority 3: Organizational Viability**, which includes goals related to financial sustainability, operational effectiveness, enrollment, facilities planning, fundraising, and stakeholder engagement. She noted that the organization remains on track to meet or exceed the FY26 surplus target and continues to maintain enrollment near the 766-student benchmark. Work is also progressing toward the long-term facility strategy, including planning for the future purchase of 225 Carando Drive. On stakeholder engagement and fundraising, Rachel highlighted the strong results achieved this year—including 100% Board giving and growth in individual and corporate donors—

while also acknowledging the need to continue expanding donor networks and strengthening community engagement through events such as Harvest Fest, Spelling V, and the Early College Convening.

Throughout her update, Rachel acknowledged the goal areas highlighted for improvement in her evaluation—particularly compensation implementation, continued alignment across academic and culture leadership, and ensuring consistency in college and career readiness systems. She expressed appreciation for the Board's feedback and reiterated her commitment to continuing to make progress across all priority areas.

IV. Closing Items

A. Final Items

Next Steps

- Board will receive detailed budget scenarios and five-year projections for teacher compensation plan in January before renewal letters are distributed.
- Finance committee will continue vetting the compensation proposal through the regular budgeting process with final approval expected in May.
- Communication strategy will be implemented during winter break to inform staff about upcoming compensation changes without specific details.
- Position eliminations and restructuring will be announced after listening sessions in January to assess staff readiness for operational changes.
- Recruitment for next school year will begin with new salary ranges posted to attract competitive candidates.
- Committee chairs will review and update their strategic priorities established in August to ensure alignment with current organizational goals.
- Charter renewal preparation will continue with focus on accountability metrics and key design principles review.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Landon

Documents used during the meeting

- VPCS Trustee Strategic Priorities_7.24.25.docx
- Development Update - December Meeting.pptx
- Veritas Quarter 1 Report_ Board Copy December Meeting.docx

- FY26 CEO Goals_summary.docx
- Committee Feedback for Strategic Priorities August 2025.docx