

APPROVED



Veritas Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

In Person

Date and Time

Thursday February 26, 2026 at 4:30 PM

Location

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

One tap mobile [+13126266799](tel:+13126266799), [87944697628#](tel:+187944697628)

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/j/k8aG053ZG>

Trustees Present

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

Trustees Absent

A. Martínez, R. Martin

Guests Present

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 Feb 26, 2026 at 4:36 PM.

B. Approve minutes (1)

A. Hickson-Martin made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 12-18-25.

D. Ford seconded the motion.

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

C. Approve Minutes (2)

A. Hickson-Martin made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 01-22-26.

D. Ford seconded the motion.

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

II. Board Chair Report

A. Board Chair Updates

Matt opened the meeting and shared brief updates celebrating recent student accomplishments and school community activities. Matt highlighted a student-led fundraising effort in which students organized a donut sale, noting the importance of these small but meaningful leadership opportunities for students. He also recognized the Veritas Prep Middle School Boys Basketball Team, which had recently advanced to the playoffs, congratulating the team and coaches for their success and school pride. The playoffs will be held this weekend at the South End Community Center. Tip off on Saturday begins at 4:45 and he encouraged trustees to attend if they are able.

Matt noted that these moments reflect the broader mission of Veritas to build a strong and supportive community where students are able to thrive academically and personally.

III. CEO Report

A. Charter Renewal

Rachel provided an overview of the charter renewal process, which will occur in 2027, marking the school's fifteenth year of operation. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is expected to publish revised charter renewal guidelines in

March, after which the school will begin preparing its renewal report. The renewal report will provide a five-year retrospective review of the school's performance. The Board will vote on the school's annual report in July, and the charter renewal report will be submitted to the state by August 1.

Rachel explained that the Department will conduct a site visit in the fall, likely between October and November, and that the review will be conducted by an external organization contracted by the state. Trustees will participate in meetings and interviews as part of the site visit process. Rachel noted that the Board's familiarity with the school's mission and performance positions them well for the renewal process, though areas such as teacher qualification compliance and academic data performance will require continued attention.

B. High School Senior Events

Rachel shared updates on plans for the Class of 2026, the school's first graduating class. Senior activities will culminate in graduation at Springfield Symphony Hall on June 15. Leading up to graduation, students will participate in a series of milestone events, including Senior Week activities and Declaration Day on May 28, when seniors will take the stage to announce their post-graduation plans.

Rachel noted that 37 of the 75 seniors are on track to graduate with associate degrees through the Early College program, while the remaining students will graduate with a substantial number of college credits that will transfer to four-year institutions. Trustees reflected on the significance of this milestone and the success of the school's Early College model, which is being implemented at a scale that is rare in the region.

Leadership also shared reflections on lessons learned from this first graduating class. While the Early College program has been highly successful, the school continues to evaluate how best to support students navigating postsecondary pathways, particularly students entering college as juniors who may feel pressure to declare a major earlier than they are ready.

C. Teacher Compensation Update

Rachel then presented a detailed update on the new teacher compensation system. The compensation plan is designed to strengthen teacher recruitment and retention while ensuring the school remains competitive in the local education labor market.

The new salary scale places teachers based on years of experience and includes additional compensation for advanced degrees, including \$5,000 for a master's degree and \$500 for a doctoral degree. Annual increases are built into the scale through step progression, with the potential for additional cost-of-living adjustments based on financial conditions and tuition revenue.

Rachel explained that the goals of the compensation system are to:

Maintain a **competitive salary and benefits package**
Devote **maximum possible budget resources to teacher salaries**
Ensure **pay equity across staff**
Reward **experience and professional advancement**

Access to the salary scale is contingent upon teachers meeting **highly qualified status**, which requires a bachelor's degree and passing required licensure exams in communications, literacy, and subject matter areas. Leadership acknowledged that some teachers continue to face challenges passing these exams, particularly educators of color who may face systemic barriers related to standardized testing. To support teachers in meeting these requirements, the school will reimburse testing fees and provide additional preparation resources.

Trustees discussed the long-term sustainability of the plan, including the potential impact of incentives tied to advanced degrees. Rachel committed to providing ten-year financial projections to demonstrate the long-term sustainability of the compensation structure and to guide future adjustments based on economic conditions.

Although the compensation system does not require a formal board vote, trustees expressed unanimous and strong support for the initiative. Board members asked that the minutes clearly reflect their endorsement of the compensation plan as a strategic priority for the organization, particularly given its importance for teacher recruitment, retention, and long-term program quality. Trustees noted that documenting this support in the minutes will ensure clarity for future reference and for any potential review by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

IV. Finance Committee

A. Monthly Financials

Denise Ford provided an overview of the monthly financial reports. The school remains in a strong financial position with approximately \$2.2 million in cash reserves. Liquidity has improved, expenses remain well controlled, and projections indicate positive income in the coming months.

The school continues to operate without needing to draw from its line of credit and is taking advantage of available vendor discounts where possible. Current projections indicate that the school may add approximately \$300,000 or more to cash reserves this year. The contingency fund is not expected to be used during the current fiscal year.

Leadership noted that updated policies and procedures related to cash investment strategies will be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

V. Governance Committee

A. Board Vote: Andres Gomez

The Governance Committee had planned to present a vote to appoint Andres Gomez to the Veritas Prep Board of Trustees. Due to time constraints, this item was postponed. The Governance Committee will review the candidate at its upcoming meeting and bring the recommendation back to the full Board for consideration and vote at the March meeting.

VI. Academic Achievement Committee

A. Principals' Updates

Rebecca shared highlights from the Academic Achievement Committee meeting, including updates from both school principals.

At the high school, Principal Steve Mahoney reported on several academic initiatives, including the expansion of credit recovery programs, February Vacation Academy learning opportunities, and more intentional SAT preparation efforts, particularly aimed at addressing disparities in standardized testing outcomes that affect students of color.

At the middle school, Principal TJ Hebert reported strong student growth and achievement in language arts, with seventh grade demonstrating both high growth and high achievement. Eighth grade students are showing positive growth but have not yet reached the same level of achievement benchmarks. The middle school continues to operate under a more rigorous academic accountability system than the high school, which requires careful monitoring of assessment data.

Leadership also discussed plans to restructure the fifth grade instructional model beginning next year in response to persistent academic challenges. Many students arrive in fifth grade significantly behind in foundational literacy skills, which creates long-term academic barriers. The school will return to a self-contained classroom model, with two teachers assigned to each classroom covering multiple subjects. Two additional core teaching positions have been included in the budget to support this structure. Leadership believes the model will allow for more targeted instruction, stronger relationships with families, and more effective literacy support.

VII. 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 6:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Landon

Documents used during the meeting

- Charter Renewal Key Dates and Actions 2027.docx
- Senior Families 2.23.26.docx
- Teacher Compensation Salary Scales.pdf
- Teacher Compensation Slides 2026.pdf
- Financial Reports to the Board February.pdf
- Andres Gomez Resume.docx