



**Voyageur Academy
Board of Directors**

**4366 Military
Detroit, MI 48210
P 313.748.4000
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**Approved Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 16, 2025**

Mission Statement:

The mission of the ***Voyageur School District*** is to prepare students to be ***College Ready and College Bound***. This mission will be achieved through the foundational pillars of Discipline, Focus, Hard Work, Perseverance and Character; and the humanitarian pillars of Empathy and Compassion.

Call To Order 6:34 pm

Roll Call

Curtis Wade – **Present**, (Wayne County, Detroit, MI)
Minika Benning – **Present**, (Macomb County, Macomb, MI)
Anita T. Washington – **Present**, (Oakland County, Farmington Hills, MI)
Barbara Smith – **Present**, (Wayne County, Inkster, MI)
Dale Williams – **Present**, (Oakland County, Southfield, MI)
Robert Redmer – **Present**, (Oakland County, Oakland Twp., MI)
Laura Benedict - **Present**, (Oakland County, Oakland Twp., MI)

Others Present: Vergil Smith(Superintendent), Angela Gilbert(TRG), Rod Atkins(Deputy Superintendent & K-8 Principal), Patricia Crosson(HS Principal), Jason Rider(IT Director), Belinda Cleary(K-12 ESL Director), Zulmari Barrientos(VA ELL Para 4 - 5), Mariana Arellano(VA ELL K - 3), Jeneen Castleberry(VA 3rd Grade Teacher), Dasha Simkins(VA Kindergarten Teacher), Andriana Farmer-Mohamed(VA Kindergarten Teacher), Shirleia Franklin(VA Kindergarten Teacher) and Ronnie Phillips(Ferris State University)

**Reading of the Mission,
Vision and Core Values
Statement**

Anita T. Washington

Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve the September 16, 2025 Board Meeting Agenda

Moved by Washington, supported by Benning

Yes – 7

No - 0

Consent Items

Approval of the August 19, 2025 Proposed Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Moved by Smith, supported by Washington

Yes - 7

No - 0

Approval of the August 19, 2025 Proposed Annual Organizational Meeting Minutes

Moved by Williams, supported by Benning

Yes – 7

No - 0

Correspondence

Ferris State Board Newsletter - September 2025

ESP/School

Admin, Contractors

1. Authorizer Report – Ronnie Phillips
 - A. Conflict of Interest form given to all board members
 - B. Visited new building
 - C. Annual School Safety and Security Checklist
 - Received a score of 32 out of 32
 - D. Student Records Policy
 - All student records must be available onsite
 - Electronically archived and onsite
 - E. Legal Requirements
 - Board of Directors of a public school academy are required by Michigan Law to collect, maintain and make available to the public information about the operation and management of the school
 - F. New Legal Requirement
 - Effective April 2, 2025 Michigan law requires the name of the authorizing body and the primary educational service provider must appear on the following:
 - Signage that is on the property
 - Promotional material
 - Websites
 - School Applications
 - G. 2025-2026 Competitive Grant Program up to \$20,000
 - H. In-Person Professional Development Opportunity for Board Members
 - Scheduled October 23, 2025 at Voyageur Academy
2. ESP Report - Vergil Smith
 - A. Board approved purchase of the new refrigeration unit for the walk-in storage in the kitchen, \$16,000
 - B. Installation of the privacy screen fence
 - C. Construction
 - Waiting on permanent Certificate of Occupancy
 - Temporary certificate expires October 31, 2025
 - Permit issue around fire alarm inspection

- Paperwork submitted and will be reviewed
- D. Tools, shelving and hands on purchases have been made
- E. Installing audio/visual systems
- F. Elevator has been Logo'd
- G. Finances
 - Liquidated Damages
 - \$500 a day for the month of July = \$15,500 in liquidated damages
 - 2% retention of the total contract until we received the permanent certificate of occupancy
 - Will meet with contractor about what is being paid versus what's being withheld
- H. No state budget yet
 - September 30 is the estimate date as to when the budget should be received
 - First payment of the new school year is received in October
 - If payment is late, may need to talk to vendors about delayed payments
- I. Orlando trip
 - Great trip
 - Valuable sessions
 - Visited a session on how New Orleans built their schools after Hurricane Katrina
 - Attended a session on fundraising

3. IT Director Report - Jason Rider

- A. No major interruptions as we are into a couple of weeks of the new school year
- B. Hit the ground running, day 1
- C. Help Desk
 - Charter Tech
 - New person, Ali
 - More tickets with staff being on campus
 - 112 tickets opened and closed
- D. Smart TV training in new building
 - Can be used as stand-alone
- E. AV project in common area of new building
 - Motorize screen
 - Ceiling speakers
- F. Leveraged phone system with clocks and bells
- E. NWEA testing started
 - No issues

4. K - 8 School Leader Report - Rod Atkins

- A. Start of 2025-2026 SY has been well implemented
 - Solid numbers
 - Effective PD
 - Home communication increased as measured by Class Dojo
 - K - 5 using Back to Basics Approach
 - Piloting PSAT-8 with Praneet

- Based on NWEA score and GPA, top 15 8th graders will participate
- Will solely focus on math

2025 - 2026
Breakdown K - 5

Enrollment

Grade	Total	Returning	New
K	84	1	83
1	88	62	26
2	90	72	18
3	95	75	20
4	95	74	21
5	90	70	20
TOTAL	542	354	188

2025 - 2026
Breakdown 6 - 8

Enrollment

Grade	Total	Returning	New
6	112	85	27
7	84	67	17
8	107	76	31
TOTAL	303	228	75

- The number of middle school students is at a record high.

2025 - 2026
Breakdown HS

Enrollment

Grade	Total	Returning	New
9	156	85	71
10	142	116	26
11	128	109	19
12	115	110	5
TOTAL	541	420	121

- Budget Enrollment Goal
 - 1,365
- Actual Enrollment Total
 - 1,386

B. Small victories

- Record enrollment numbers at all levels
- Solid staffing K - 8
- Support from Ferris State University
- Supportive Board of Directors
- Security is well stocked
- First two weeks of school has been smooth
- Introducing Flag Football for the MS girls
- Will start Midnight Golf Club
- PSAT with Praneet will begin next week
- Integrating new students to the VC way

C. Challenges

- Concerns regarding the impact of the new students
- New teacher adjustments
- Integrating new students to the VC way
- Low, academic quality of incoming students

5. 9-12 School Leader Report - Patricia Crosson

A. Curriculum Changes

- ELA
 - Ordered anthologies and workbooks
- Math
 - CPM is the new curriculum
- Science
 - Open Scied is the new curriculum
 - Integrated Science
- Social Studies
 - Used in the past
- Scope and Sequence
 - Every teacher must submit a scope and sequence outlining what they are teaching for the semester
- Content Expectations
 - Clear expectations set for each department

B. 1st Quarter Initiatives and Events

- Midnight Golf
 - Scholarship opportunities
 - Builds connections
- Elective Choices
 - Added two additional electives plus CTE
 - African American Studies, Latin Culture
 - Computer Technology
- VCP Vision
 - On Time, On Task and On a Mission
- Staffing
 - Three Open Positions

- Two teacher positions
 - Physics and ELA
- One part-time Social Worker

C. Testing

- NWEA
 - 9th & 10th Graders
 - Reading - Sep 15, 2025
 - Math - Sep 22, 2025
- PSAT
 - 8th & 11th Graders
 - Oct 15, 2025

D. Cougar Crew

- Academic Check-In
 - The Crew Teacher will meet with each student every other week for a Crew Check-in. BAGS focus
- Cares List
 - Teacher will refer students as necessary to the CARES list.
- College and Career and Lifeskills
 - Lessons related
 - How to write an email, How to interview
- Crew Competitions
 - Crew competitions, national celebrations or awareness activities
 - Meeting every Friday, on a rotating basis

E. VCP Future Needs 2026-2027

- Expand CTE Program
 - Carpentry, Cyber Security and Construction
- Add instructional coach

Discussion Items

1. August 2025 Financial Report - None
2. Board Report on Orlando National Charter School Convention
 - Board President
 - Great event
 - Governance
 - Struggles other school boards are going through
 - How schools fund themselves
 - High performance Charter Schools
 - 12,000 students and 1,600 staff members
 - Book "A Matter of Life or Death" Why black men must save black boys in American Public Schools
 - Essays on the black experience
 - Board Vice President
 - Thank you for entertaining the idea of attending the convention
 - Magnitude of the number of people attending
 - Good, overwhelming feeling
 - Very structured
 - First two days contained heavy hitting content
 - Everyone together in one room
 - One of the classes was: Leading through change, Navigating, Shifting Federal Policies

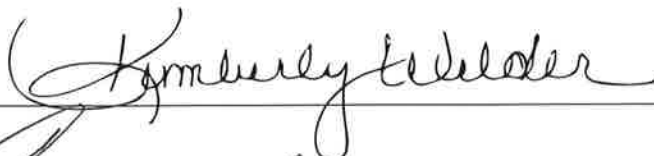
- Policies change so much
- Put together a luncheon where the heavy hitters are honored; this could be one way to obtain support

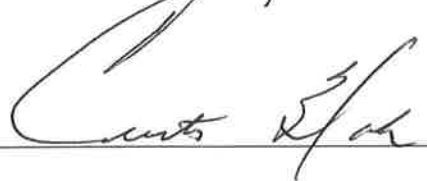
This meeting is a meeting of the Board of Directors in public for the purpose of conducting the Academy's business and is not to be considered a public community meeting. There is a time for public comment during the meeting as indicated in the agenda.

*Individuals wishing to address the Board of Directors under items II and XII above are requested to sign in with the Board Secretary prior to the start of the meeting. Individual comments are limited to no more than three (3) minutes each and a total time allowance not to exceed thirty (30) minutes. The Board will not verbally respond to public comments but may follow up in the most appropriate and time-effective manner.

*Complaints or concerns regarding Board members or school employees associated with the Academy shall first be addressed in writing and delivered to the Board President at least five (5) days prior to the Board meeting or such complaints or concerns shall not be heard by the Board. The Board will not verbally respond to public comments but may follow up in the most appropriate and time-effective manner.

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Board Recording Secretary  Date 9-21-25

Board Secretary  Date 10/21/25