

# **Veritas Preparatory Charter School**

Founders and Proposed Board of Trustees

*This is prepared by the founding group of the proposed Veritas Preparatory Charter School.*

Lisa Doherty is the Founder and CEO of Business Risk Partners (BRP), a national program administrator providing specialty insurance coverage to businesses. BRP underwrites on behalf of several major carriers, providing specialty insurance products including E&O, D&O, EPLI and fidelity coverage. Since its inception in 2000, Ms. Doherty has led BRP in the development of an extensive distribution network, including national endorsements within industry associations. Ms. Doherty's commitment to technology has allowed BRP to develop a national portfolio of small/middle market commercial insurance buyers by providing excellent service and real-time information for decision-making, and Ms. Doherty assembled a group of talented, motivated, and experienced individuals to create this successful specialty insurance underwriting firm. Ms. Doherty began her insurance career as a Specialty Insurance Underwriter with AIG in New York City, then spent several years as a D&O Underwriter at Executive Risk and moved west to run the Pacific Northwest FINPRO practice of Marsh. She returned to the east coast to develop Executive Risk's international operations. She left Executive Risk to start BRP. Ms. Doherty has a BA from Brown University with a dual concentration in International Relations and Economics.

Rosemary Hernandez is a project manager developing early educators for the Regional Employment Board of Hamden County. She manages a unique partnership that includes institutions of higher education and early education programs to meet the needs of the early childhood workforce by providing opportunities for training and higher education. Prior to her work in Springfield, Ms. Hernandez was the Operations Manager at the Community Day Charter School in Lawrence, MA. She was responsible for managing daily operations, supervising the transportation, custodial, and kitchen staff, as well as screening and hiring non-teaching staff. Responsible for all school-wide communication, Ms. Hernandez worked closely with parents and staff in planning the school calendar, parent meetings, and nutritional menus. She oversaw the maintenance of the facility, keeping school grounds safe and accessible for all. Ms. Hernandez managed relationships with vendors, managing purchasing for the school. She maintained all student data and tracking systems for food reimbursement, attendance, and supply inventory. She brings first hand, working knowledge of charter school operations and a deep commitment to bringing a high quality charter school option to parents in Springfield. Ms. Hernandez holds a BA from the University of Massachusetts and a MBA and MS in Project Management from Southern New Hampshire University.

Anthony Hill is the Associate Director of Field Work for the School of Social Work at Smith College where he participates in the design and implementation of internship-based training for approximately 250 MSW students in over 120 agencies throughout the United States. Prior to his work at Smith College, Mr. Hill worked for the Springfield Public Schools for over ten years as a School Adjustment Counselor and school Administrator. Mr. Hill was Assistant Principal of Chestnut Middle School, where he was responsible for 375 seventh grade students and supervision of 30 teachers. Mr. Hill

was appointed Principal of Liberty Elementary School, a K–5 school serving 280 students. Mr. Hill has taught courses at several local colleges, including Baypath, Smith, and Springfield Colleges. As a parent of two young children attending the Springfield Public Schools, Mr. Hill brings a unique perspective to the founding group. He himself was a Springfield Public School student, employee and now compliments those experiences with his knowledge about institutions of higher education. Mr. Hill holds a BS from Springfield College, MSW from the University of Pennsylvania and is currently working towards earning a Doctorate of Education at the University of Massachusetts.

Ashley Martin is Managing Director of School Support in Western Massachusetts for the Achievement Network. She coaches school leaders and teachers with planning and tools to effectively use interim assessments to drive student achievement. Prior to joining the Achievement Network, Ms. Martin worked at Duggan Middle School in Springfield, a Commonwealth Pilot turn-around school as teacher, instructional guide and Assistant Principal. Ms. Martin spent five years at The SEED Charter School in Washington, DC as an AP English Language and Composition Teacher, seventh and eighth grade English Teacher, and Literacy Coordinator. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in Adolescent/Young Adult English Language Arts, and has over twelve years ELA teaching experiences in middle school, high school, and college. Ms. Martin brings a deep understanding of the educational challenges and opportunities that exist in the City of Springfield. She is a National Writing Project Teacher-Consultant and has presented professional development for teachers and school leaders on a variety of topics related to increasing student achievement. Ms. Martin holds several certifications, including: Principal/Assistant Principal for Grades 5-8, MA Initial License, English 5-8, English 8-12, MA Initial License and Adolescence and Young Adulthood/ELA, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Ms. Martin earned a BA in English from Birmingham-Southern College, MA in English from The University of Alabama, and MA in Secondary English Education from Wake Forest University.

Aaron Mendelson has been a Financial Advisor with Northwestern Mutual Financial Network in Springfield for over twenty years. Prior to joining Northwestern Mutual, Mr. Mendelson was the President of a national chain of 13 retail stores. He then went on to start up his own chain of retail stores with locations in multiple states. Mr. Mendelson is deeply committed to serving his community and contributes his entrepreneurial and financial skills to the community in a variety of ways. He served on the Board of Directors for the Children's Study Home in Springfield, as well as on the Board of Directors and the Loan Review Committee for the Community Savings Bank in Springfield. Mr. Mendelson was a member of the Audit Committee for Baystate Medical Center and is currently a member of the Springfield Business Leaders for Education group. Mr. Mendelson holds a BA from Brown University.

Rachel Romano is the proposed school leader. Based on the qualifications the Board seeks in an Executive Director (ED), the Board expects that Rachel Romano will fill this role well. Ms. Romano is currently a Fellow with Proven Provider Building Excellent Schools (BES), a highly respected national nonprofit located in Boston, MA. BES offers

a year-long Fellowship<sup>1</sup> dedicated to developing charter school leaders fully prepared to found and lead a gap-closing urban charter school. Ms. Romano has studied and visited 25 of the highest performing urban charter schools to inform the design of Veritas Prep and in doing so, learned from the nation's best school leaders. This deep study and analysis of gap-closing urban charter schools is a critical part of Ms. Romano's preparation to execute on the mission of Veritas Prep. Prior to accepting the BES Fellowship, Ms. Romano was the Principal and Executive Director of the Christa McAuliffe Regional Charter School in Framingham, MA where she led the school to achieve consistent gains in student achievement and increasing enrollment by 62%, leaving the school financially strong and able to invest more into the academic program. A certified Principal and English Teacher in Massachusetts, Ms. Romano spent six years working in the Springfield Public Schools as a teacher and school leader. This experience, combined with her training from BES, makes her credentials uniquely suited to the role of Executive Director for Veritas Prep. Should the charter be granted, the Board plans to hire Rachel Romano as the school's Executive Director.

Chris Seeley is Founder/CEO of Seeley Capital Management in Springfield. He established the company in 2004 to provide flexible services to individual clients. Mr. Seeley brought innovative financial products to the marketplace with the creation of a national system of high yield investments matching structured settlement recipients and lottery winners with private lenders. Mr. Seeley grew his business by developing strategic partnerships with finance experts throughout the U.S. and Canada and manages financial portfolios for 300 clients. Prior to starting his company, Mr. Seeley worked as Financial Advisor for Smith Barney and USB. Mr. Seeley holds a BA from George Washington University.

Michael Sweet is an attorney with Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury and Murphy in Springfield, where he has been a member since 1996. Prior to joining the local firm, Mr. Sweet practiced law with the Wall Street-based firm Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam & Roberts. His general business law practice includes corporate transactions, debt and equity financings, business organizations and commercial real estate. Mr. Sweet's clients include manufacturing and service businesses with operations in a variety of industries, including energy, professional sports, finance, and information technology. Mr. Sweet is passionate about contributing to the community. He is a member of the Board of Directors of a neighborhood-based charitable organization in the North End of Springfield where he recently completed a term as Chairman. He represents multiple land conservation organizations and is involved in pro-bono economic development activities; he has volunteered as a college lacrosse coach and is active in youth sports. Mr. Sweet is a graduate of Brown University and has a JD from BU School of Law.

Carl Wistreich has a broad professional background, including serving as a corporate lawyer for an international law firm, senior executive in business development, mergers and acquisitions, legal affairs, operations and human resources for a \$20 billion privately-held company, and entrepreneur/CEO of his own business. Mr. Wistreich is owner and

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<sup>1</sup> Fellowship Director Sue Walsh is former Principal of Boston Collegiate Charter School where she successfully led the academic program for all grades 5-12 and former Curriculum Coordinator at Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, where she led the school to earn the Edgerly Award for the highest academic gains in the state.

chief executive of L&B Truck Services, a distributor and maintenance and repair services company for heavy duty trucks and replacement parts in the northeast. Prior to purchasing the company, Mr. Wistreich was Senior Vice President at C&S Wholesale, the largest distributor of food and related products to grocery stores in the U.S. with approximately \$20 billion in sales. Mr. Wistreich held P&L and oversight responsibility for divisions generating over \$3 billion in revenue with 2,500 employees, coordinated the integration of acquired companies, managed the start-up of new distribution facilities, implemented, oversaw and lead the design of health and benefit plans and key vendor supply agreements. Prior to C&S, Mr. Wistreich was a corporate attorney with Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, a major New York City-based law firm, where he represented various corporate clients in a variety of transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, asset purchases and sales, stock transactions, tender offers, spin-offs, corporate refinancing and restructurings, equity and debt offerings, SEC disclosure, and the implementation of employee stock ownership plans. Mr. Wistreich also worked for the U.S. government in Washington D.C for a US Senator, and served as a law clerk for a federal judge following law school. Mr. Wistreich holds a JD from New York Law School, graduating magna cum laude, and a BA from Colgate University.

Victor Woolridge is Vice President of Special Servicing for Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers, LLC. Mr. Woolridge is a member of Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers' (CREA) Real Estate Finance Group (REFG) where he is responsible for special servicing activities related to managing troubled assets in REFG's debt portfolio and formerly had responsibility for mezzanine debt financing and the acquisition and financing of real estate portfolios. In previous roles with REFG, Mr. Woolridge was responsible for the origination, structuring and distribution of commercial mortgage investments for external clients. Mr. Woolridge joined MassMutual in 1982, later transitioning to Babson Capital Management LLC in 2000 as part of its acquisition by MassMutual and then to CREA in 2010. A member of the Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA), he served on a Bankruptcy Working Group established by the MBA to formulate and implement the industry's bankruptcy relief policy during the late 1980's and early 1990's. He was a member of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP), was formerly on the MassMutual Leadership Effectiveness Board, and serves on several community boards. Mr. Woolridge is the immediate past Chairman of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, a current member of the Baystate Health Systems Board of Trustees, the University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees, Chairman of the Dunbar Community Center, a Trustee of the Museum Association as well as being an active leader in his church. Mr. Woolridge is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and holds the Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designation.