

VERTUS CHARTER SCHOOL

YEAR-ROUND CAREER PREP HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

“Our name invokes virtue, tradition, and manhood. Our school's theme is courage, leadership, responsibility: the virtues that the young men who attend our school aspire to.”

LEIGH MCGUIGAN, FOUNDING CEO, VERTUS CHARTER SCHOOL

KEY FEATURES:

- ✓ New School
- ✓ Lab Rotation Blended Model
- ✓ Competency-Based Learning
- ✓ Next Generation Staffing Model
- ✓ Social-Emotional Development
- ✓ Career Readiness

AT A GLANCE:

Start Date: Fall 2014
Grades Served: 9-12
Location: Rochester, NY
Operator: Vertus Charter School
Operator Type: Charter
Setting: Urban
Students at Start: 96
Students at Capacity: 384

MODEL TOOLBOX:

Learning Management System: Edgenuity
Student Information System: School Tool
Gradebook: Edgenuity
Assessment Tools and Approaches: NWEA MAP, Edgenuity
Digital Content Providers: Edgenuity
Hardware: Dell desktops and laptops, Samsung tablets, Edgenuity media, client servers

The Vision: Invoking the culture of elite private schools for boys, Vertus Charter School prepares leaders of character for the community and the workplace.

Vertus is an innovative year-round career prep high school serving boys of Rochester, New York who otherwise would face high odds of dropping out, violence, unemployment, and prison.

Boys are in crisis: Less than 9% of African American boys and less than 10% of Latinos in Rochester graduate from high school. Only 5% of graduates are college ready. Homicide is the leading cause of death among Rochester's adolescents. And 32% of the city's African American men will spend time in prison. Vertus is designed—from the ground up—to meet the needs of these young men.

The Academic Model: The academic culture of Vertus is a combination of traditional values and high-tech tools where students are expected to earn a New York State Regents diploma and a technical certificate or job credential. The school design has four pillars.

1. Strong Relationships: Students at Vertus are surrounded by adults who inspire them to see new possibilities, help navigate personal challenges, and guide their development into successful adults. The 96 students

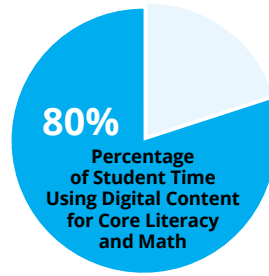
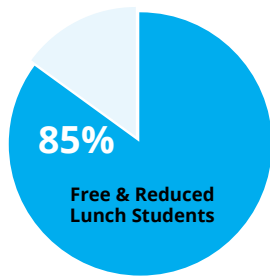
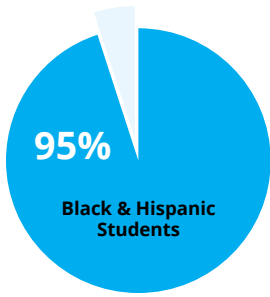
per grade are divided into two houses with four learning teams each. The 12-14 boys in a learning team are led by a preceptor—an educator, guide, role model, and mentor—who stays with the team throughout the school day.

2. Personalized Year-Round Academics: With a year-round calendar, students spend more time in school and less time on the street. A personalized learning plan builds on each student's current level of readiness. Students take online core courses provided by Edgenuity working individually in a learning lab. Online learning is supplemented with in-person learning and support. Each student is pulled out at least once a day for small group work in Skillshops facilitated by a teacher.

3. Character Education: A preceptor leads a daily seminar focusing on character development, habits of work, and habits of mind. The literacy-driven curriculum stresses reading, writing, and presentation. With individual life plans, students set their own short and long-term goals for academics, character, and career.

4. Career Preparation: Vertus' founders believe that students in deep poverty need to be able to support themselves. Vertus expects the majority of its graduates to go on to and graduate from college. Every

“Students at Vertus are surrounded by adults who inspire them to see new possibilities, help navigate personal challenges, and guide their development into successful adults.”



BLENDED SUBJECTS:
All

BY THE NUMBERS:

Year 1 public revenue per pupil: \$15,812

Year 1 expenses per pupil: \$22,900

Year 4 revenue per pupil: \$15,812

Year 4 expenses per pupil: \$14,600

Years to sustainability: 4

graduate is expected to leave Vertus with a credential that will pave their way into a skilled job. The goal is that they will always have a way to support themselves and contribute to their family.

The Organizational Model:

The schools' leadership structure involves an instructional core where teachers are "learning engineers" whose job is to understand where every student is and make sure they have the right lessons, tools, and supports; to create and guide group projects; and to provide one-on-one instruction. The academic dean and preceptors are responsible for

student motivation, looking after the young men, and making sure they get what they need. The reconceived roles are more doable by a deeper talent pool of talented and highly motivated "ordinary" professionals than relying on highly-effective "superhero" teachers. Vertus has also restructured its workforce with full-day/full-year employees.

The Operator: Vertus is a new charter organization that opened its first school in Rochester. Its founders have a collective history of effectively serving urban boys in both Cleveland and New York City, running schools and charter systems and promoting

educator quality.

Through its internal leadership pipeline and training program, Vertus anticipates it can open additional new schools that are led by experienced preceptors trained at current Vertus schools. Each school establishes a new pipeline. The founders are also looking to build the structures, systems, and processes of centralized organizations where great technology, learning management strategies, hiring processes, etc., can be scaled in turnkey fashion beyond Vertus' direct control.

A CAREER PREP LADDER



YEAR 1
Explore careers and interests



YEAR 2
Build career skills and understanding of world of work



YEARS 2-3
Internships



YEAR 4
Credentials and college credits



GRADUATION
College and/or skilled job

Career education is designed with local employers, based on their employment needs, and includes workplace visits, internships, career and technical certification, and courses at local colleges and universities. Every student will graduate with a career certification that prepares him for a good job. <http://www.vertusschool.org/our-approach/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

School URL: <http://www.vertusschool.org/>
Contact: Perry White, pwhite@vertusschool.org

