New York State Education Department

Remote Renewal Site Visit Report for BoR-Authorized Charter Schools under the 2019 Charter School Performance Framework
2020-2021

Vertus Charter School

Remote Renewal Site Visit Dates: December 15-16, 2020
Date of Report: March 15, 2021

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School	Vertus Charter School
Board Chair	• Bryan Hickman (until December 31, 2020) • Victoria Van Voorhis (as of January 1, 2021)
District of location	Rochester City School District
Opening Date	Fall 2014
Charter Terms	• Initial Charter Term: September 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019 • First Renewal Term: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	Grades 9-12 / 340 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	Grades 9-12 / 340 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	21 Humboldt Street, Rochester New York 14609 - Private Space
Mission Statement	*To develop leaders of character for the community and the workplace.*
Key Design Elements	• Strong relationships • Personalized year-round academics • Character development • Career preparation
Requested Revisions	None

Noteworthy:

Vertus Charter School (Vertus), located in Rochester New York, is a high school for males focused on four pillars: establishing strong relationships, personalized year-round academics, character education and career preparation. It serves 263 students in a blended learning environment that combines online learning with teacher led classes that are personalized to meet the needs of each student. Every student is assigned a preceptor who functions like a guide and mentor to a small group of students and is the primary liaison to students and their families.

Renewal Outcomes

Pursuant to the Board of Regents Renewal Policy, the following are possible renewal outcomes:

- **Full-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For a school to be eligible for a full-term renewal, during the current charter term the school must

[1] The information in this section was provided by the NYS Education Department Charter School Office.

have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or exceeding Benchmark 1, and at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Short-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for a shorter term, typically of three years. As discussed above, the Regents will place an even greater emphasis on student performance for schools applying for their second or subsequent renewal**,** which is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and the corresponding increase in the quantity and quality of student achievement data that the school has generated. In order for a school to be eligible for short-term renewal, a school must either:

  (a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of meeting Benchmark 1, but at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework which will likely result in the school's being able to meet Benchmark 1 with the additional time that short-term renewal permits, **or**

  (b) have compiled an overall record of meeting Benchmark 1 but falls far below meeting one or more of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Non-Renewal:** A school's charter will not be renewed if the school does not apply for renewal or the school fails to meet the criteria for either full-term or short-term renewal. In the case of non-renewal, a school's charter will be terminated upon its expiration and the school will be required to comply with the Charter School Office's Closing Procedures to ensure an orderly closure by the end of the school year.

Please Note: The Regents may include additional terms, conditions, and/or requirements in a school's Full-Term or Short-Term Renewal charter to address specific situations or areas of concern. For example, a school may meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal with regard to its educational success but may be required to address organizational deficiencies that need to be corrected but do not prevent the Regents from making the required legal findings for renewal. A school may also meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal of only a portion of its educational program (e.g., for the elementary school program, but not the middle school program). Such additional terms and/or requirements may include, but are not limited to, restrictions on the number of students and grades to be served by the school, additional student performance metrics, heightened reporting requirements, or specific corrective action.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC NOTE: As of the publication of this report, New York State is in the midst of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. NYSED understands that these are not normal times and state assessments for grades 3-8 as well as high school students were canceled for the 2019-2020 school year (see the applicable memos at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/aboutcharterschools/lawsandregs/law.html). The NYSED Charter School Performance Framework is a robust document that allows NYSED to continue to use it as an evaluative tool even during the current statewide crisis. With state assessments cancelled for the 2019-2020 school year, Benchmark 1 allows for the use of longitudinal data and NYSED has been continuing to monitor and evaluate schools through the lens of the Performance Framework during the current crisis as Board of Regents-authorized charter schools have been implementing robust continuity of learning plans and adhering to NYSED's Remote Monitoring and Oversight Plan. Therefore, NYSED will

continue to use the Performance Framework and Board of Regents renewal policies to evaluate, in a summative manner, applicable charter schools for renewal recommendation determinations.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2019 to 2020	**Year 2 2020 to 2021**
Grade Configuration	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12
Total Approved Enrollment	340	340

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Projected Enrollment Requested by the School[2]

	Year 1 2021 to 2022	**Year 2 2022 to 2023**	**Year 3 2023 to 2024**	**Year 4 2024 to 2025**	**Year 5 2025 to 2026**
Grade Configuration	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12
Total Proposed Enrollment	340	340	340	340	340

METHODOLOGY

A two-day remote renewal site visit was conducted at Vertus Charter School on December 15-16, 2020. The New York State Education Department's Charter School Office (CSO) team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, school support team, the social emotional support team and students. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered anonymous online surveys to parents.

The team conducted 11 remote classroom observations in Grade 9-12. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the director of specialized services and the director of academics. NYSED utilizes the CSO's remote Classroom Observation Worksheet as a lens for remote classroom observations. It is shared with the school prior to the site visit, and can be found in the Renewal SV Protocol.

[2] This proposed chart was submitted by Vertus in its renewal application. It is subject to change pending the final renewal recommendation and approval by the Board of Regents. This chart should not be used to determine the final approved grade levels or enrollment of the school in the subsequent renewal term.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the site visit included the following:

- **Current 2020-2021 organizational chart;**
- **A 2020-2021 master school schedule;**
- **Board materials (roster, minutes, and strategic plan, if applicable) and a narrative describing the board's self-evaluation process;**
- **Narrative describing the process used to evaluate school leadership;**
- **Narrative describing the process school leadership uses to evaluate teachers;**
- **School administered teacher, parent/student survey results;**
- **Current school policies, including the discipline policy, complaint policy, enrollment and admissions policy, and by-laws;**
- **NYSED Attachment 1: Academic and Enrollment Data;**
- **NYSED Attachment 2: Fiscal Dashboard Data;**
- **Narrative describing the school's progress and efforts made toward reaching its enrollment and retention targets;**
- **Admissions and Waitlist information;**
- **Faculty/Staff Roster;**
- **Fingerprint Clearance Certificates for all instructional and non-instructional staff;**
- **School-submitted Annual Reports during current charter term;**
- **School's Self-Evaluation Tool;**
- **Prior CSO monitoring reports (check-in, midterm, renewals);**
- **Spring 2020 Continuity of Learning Plan;**
- **School's 2020 renewal application;**
- **School's 2019 Notices of Deficiency**
- **Any supplementary evidence or data submitted to NYSED by the school;**
- **School's Four Pillars tracking system; and**
- **Parent, student and staff surveys from 2019-2020**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The 2019 Performance Framework, which is part of the Oversight Plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines 10 Performance Framework benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

- Educational Success
- Organizational Soundness
- Faithfulness to Charter and Law

Observational findings from the review of the renewal application, supporting data, and the site visit will be presented in alignment with the 2019 Performance Framework benchmarks and Indicators according to the rating scale below. A brief summary of the school's strengths will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; and the report narrative will provide evidence-based information relative to each indicator.

Level	**Description**
Meets	The school generally meets or exceeds the performance benchmark; few concerns are noted. May be a potential exemplar, if noted.
Approaches	The school does not meet the performance benchmark; a number of concerns are noted.
Falls Far Below	The school falls far below the performance benchmark; significant concerns are noted.

For the site visit conducted from December 15, 2020 to December 16, 2020 at Vertus Charter School, see the following Performance Framework benchmark ratings and narrative.

New York State Education Department
2019 Charter School Performance Framework Ratings[3]

	2019 Performance Benchmark	Level
Educational Success	**Benchmark 1: Student Performance:** The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic proficiency, trends toward proficiency, similar schools, college and career readiness, and high school graduation, if applicable. Proficiency at the elementary/middle school level shall be defined as achieving a performance level of 3 or higher on Grade 3-8 state assessments in ELA, math, and science. At the high school level, passing shall be defined as obtaining a Regents exam score of 65 or higher.	**Approaches**
	Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning: School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school implements research-based practices and has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to New York State Learning Standards for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.	**Meets**
	Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a positive, safe, and respectful learning environment that prepares all students for college and career. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.	**Meets**
Organizational Soundness	**Benchmark 4: Financial Condition:** The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	**Meets**
	Benchmark 5: Financial Management: The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.	**Approaches**
	Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance: The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	**Approaches**
	Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity: The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.	**Meets**
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	**Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements:** The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	**Meets**
	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention: The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students. . High schools are meeting persistence rates commensurate with the NYSED target.	**Approaches**
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	**Approaches**

[3] Charter schools authorized or renewed beginning in the 2019-2020 school year and thereafter use the 2019 Charter School Performance Framework, and all other charter schools use the 2015 Charter School Performance Framework until renewal. Refer to the appropriate framework for the applicable benchmark standards.

Summary of Findings

- Vertus Charter School is in year seven of operation and serves students in Grades 9-12. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting five benchmarks and approaching five benchmarks. A summary of those ratings is provided below.

- **Summary of Areas of Strengths**:

  The school's renewal documents, focus group conversations and classroom observations provided evidence of a strong focus on student engagement and relationships, particularly with the preceptors, but also with teachers and other staff. The school provided many examples of deep and varied services it provides to students and families, on-site and remotely, that result from a high degree of collaboration among the staff – an "all hands-on deck" approach. The board of trustees instituted a number of changes since the last site visit, including the addition of several members having specific skills and expertise, although other areas of expertise continue to be lacking. The collective board membership demonstrates a connectedness to the community at large and a strong commitment to the school and students. The school's key design elements serve as the organizing framework for the school, and all constituents discussed their work as it relates to one or more of the key design elements.

- **Summary of Areas in Need of Improvement**:

  While the school's main academic focus is helping students master high school content despite most students' entering with skills well below grade level expectations, this goal has not yet been reached at the four-year graduation level. Although the Regents passing rate and graduation rate continue to improve year over year, the margin by which students are passing Regents exams remains minimal. The school continues to fall below the state average for the four-year cohort graduation rate, though the school's fifth- and sixth-year graduation rates exceed the state average. The school's fulfillment of the goal of attaining maximum enrollment has not been met this school year, which has impacted the school's financial resources. The school must remedy deficiencies in the school's fingerprinting process prior to hiring new staff members.

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic proficiency, trends toward proficiency, similar schools, college and career readiness, and high school graduation, if applicable. Proficiency at the elementary/middle school level shall be defined as achieving a performance level of 3 or higher on Grade 3-8 state assessments in ELA, math, and science. At the high school level, passing shall be defined as obtaining a Regents exam score of 65 or higher.

Finding: Approaches

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

See Attachment 1 for data tables and additional academic information.

Note: State assessments were not administered in the 2019-2020 school year. As such, NYSED is not able to include results from that academic year in the analysis of this benchmark.

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school implements research-based practices and has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. Curriculum	a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to current New York State learning standards. b. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades. c. The curriculum and corresponding materials are differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts, including students with disabilities, English language learners/multi-lingual learners, economically disadvantaged students, and other subgroups. d. The curriculum is systematically reviewed and revised.
2. Instruction	a. The school staff has a shared understanding of high-quality instruction that supports all learners and observed instructional practices align to this understanding. b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students. c. The school differentiates instruction to ensure equity and access for all students. d. The school provides staff with professional development opportunities that promote best practices and improves all students' success, including sub-groups.
3. Assessment and Program Evaluation	a. The school uses a system of formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments. b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes. c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program and modifies the program accordingly for both individual students as well as subgroups. d. The school uses multiple measures to assess student progress toward State learning standards.
4. Supports for Diverse Learners	a. The school follows the NYSED approved identification process for students with disabilities and English language learners/multi-lingual learners. b. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students including, but not limited to: students with disabilities; English language

Element	*Indicators*
	learners/multi-lingual learners; and economically disadvantaged students. c. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students and to facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.

Academic Program for High School:

- HS:
  - Vertus employs a blended model of instruction, combining online courses with teacher- led courses. The students progress through a series of online classes, demonstrating mastery of content areas and skills in preparation for their Regents exams.
  - The school provides wrap-around support services to students through its preceptors, staff members who focus on student engagement and support and are liaisons among the school, the community and students' families.
  - The school provides career planning and a number of opportunities for students to prepare for their post-secondary experiences through college advisement, career explorations, internships and dual enrollment in certification programs.

Academic Program for Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs):

- SWDs:
  - Students who receive special education services benefit from additional support provided by special education teachers who assist them in the school's learning lab as well as provide additional one-to-one or small group support.
  - The director of specialized services monitors the progress of students with individual education plans (IEPs) by meeting with their teachers weekly and tracking student progress toward meeting the academic goals articulated in their IEPs
- ELLs:
  - The school supports its English language learners (ELLs) through its individualized support for all students as well through the services of an English as a New language (ENL) teacher who provides support to ELL students during learning lab in addition to providing a teacher-led class designed to support their English language acquisition.
  - The school's online learning platform provides content in Spanish and other languages to support students content area acquisition while they are learning English. The school has also provided opportunities for ELLs to form a peer support network.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

1. Element: ***Curriculum***:
   - **Indicator a:** According to the school's renewal application, Vertus uses a blended learning model which consists of an on-line component as well as teacher-led classes. The school uses Edgenuity, an online education platform that offers courses in ELA, social studies, math, science and general electives, and is aligned to the New York State Learning Standards. A weakness in the Edgenuity

program, according to the academic support team, is writing; the school has met this challenge through use of old Regents exam questions and additional New Visions curricula. School leaders reported that Edgenuity releases new and/or updated courses each year, which Vertus accesses to expand upon its on-line curriculum. Courses are offered in translation as well, with the most often language accessed being Spanish. Teacher-led classes are proficiency-based and intended to prepare students for NYS Regents exams. Teacher-created curriculum is designed to support students' understanding of content and draws on curricular resources from New Visions, which are also aligned to the NYS Learning standards. Teachers customize courses to meet the interests and needs of their particular students. School leaders reported that during the spring of 2021 semester, life skills, music, and sociology courses will be added. Twelve students are currently enrolled in dual credit courses through the Monroe County College; teachers must meet community college requirements as well as those for charter schools. In their focus group, board members affirmed the close partnership the school maintains with the community college. Additional career-focused program offerings are being planned, including barbering, construction trades, and optics.

- **Indicator b:** In the renewal application, the school describes its non-graded and mastery-based instructional program which allows students, many of whom are overage and under-credited, to work at their own pace. The school's courses are mapped across academic skills so that as students advance, they demonstrate their mastery of one skill or content area before moving on to the next. As students advance through the school, content and skills increase in complexity and spiral toward high school graduation standards. During the student support focus group, the participants discussed the way they examine updated coursework on Edgenuity to ensure alignment with Regents exams. During the school leaders' focus group, academic leaders discussed how they align Edgenuity course work with teacher-led courses to support content mastery. Teachers continually discuss alignment as they work to prepare students for Regents exams.
- **Indicator c:** In the school's renewal application, the school asserts that its combination of Edgenuity coursework in addition to its teacher-led classes are differentiated. The school's focus on mastery allows teachers to personalize instruction for every student, beginning with where they are and helping them progress toward meeting grade level and Regents level mastery. The school utilizes Edgenuity's online intervention program, My Path, which provides targeted instruction aimed at addressing each student's learning gaps. This module also has a learning management system that articulates with students' IEPs to ensure that students are receiving instruction aligned to their learning goals as well as articulating any modifications and accommodations to which students are entitled. The school employs an integrated co-teaching model to provide additional content support and learning strategies for students who may need them**.** School leaders indicated that the remote setting provides a stronger special education program, as it focuses more on individual services which are provided by telephone or Zoom calls. The school's ENL teacher supports students who are ELL through push-in or pull-out services. Edgenuity also has resources in Spanish to support content acquisition.
- **Indicator d:** According to the school's renewal application and the school leaders, Vertus reviews its curriculum through the monitoring of student progress, as well as during summer professional development. Teachers, working closely with students, look at student work, test scores and surveys in addition to observing students to determine if additional learning opportunities are needed. The school's leadership team reviews the curriculum each spring to ensure its alignment with New York State Learning Standards as well as for its cultural relevancy. The school uses the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a framework for evaluating and updating its curriculum.

2. Element: ***Instruction***:
    - **Indicator a:** In the school's renewal application, instructional strategies that define the school's approach are described, including blended learning, project-based instruction, co-teaching, culturally responsive instruction and techniques from *Teach Like a Champion*, by Doug Lemov. These strategies support the school's mission to make the content and curriculum accessible and meaningful, ensure academic rigor and high-quality instruction. The application describes the elements of face-to-face learning which includes whole class direct instruction, small group lessons, formative and summative assessments, peer collaboration, exhibitions and performances. The renewal application describes the school's approach to remote learning during the pandemic as expanding the use of Edgenuity through the creation of teacher-led classes that provide a platform for pre-recorded video instruction, PowerPoint presentations and additional online materials that have been uploaded to provide students with access. During the site visit, the CSO SV team observed teacher-led classes that were conducted through Zoom as well as prerecorded mini- lessons that students can view on demand. The components of the approach to online learning listed here were observed in the remote classes viewed by the team.
    - **Indicator b:** The school's renewal application describes student engagement as one of the primary goals of its instructional approach. The pillars of the school's design include strong relationships, personalized year-round academics, character education and career readiness. All of these elements are tools to ensure that every student is engaged. This is particularly important given the school's target population, males, has been mostly unsuccessful in their previous schooling. Every student is assigned a learning team that consists of a preceptor who serves as a mentor, core content teachers and co-teachers to deliver classroom instruction. This intensive support, combined with blended learning, is designed to engage every student. During the focus groups with school leaders and academic and social emotional support staff conducted during the remote site visit, school staff described the many ways they work with students and their families to maintain student engagement. School leaders described remote daily seminar meetings which serve to replace on-site motivational morning meetings. These seminars provide a positive start to the day. Students maintain communication with their preceptors daily, preceptors visit classrooms to support students and serve as the main liaison in connecting students and their families with services that the school provides which include transportation and support for medical and other needs in addition to maintaining its own food pantry. School leaders discussed their outreach to students who do not live in a consistent residence as well as students involved in the justice system, ensuring students have access to the internet and technology to maintain their studies despite their circumstances. Preceptors discussed making visits to students' homes, especially those whose attendance and work production has fallen off. Student productivity is monitored through their engagement with Edgenuity and well as their attendance in remote classes and work submission.
    - **Indicator c**: The school's primary approach to student learning is tailored to meet each student at his level. The school's renewal application describes how Edgenuity provides instruction based on students' current skill and content knowledge levels and moves them toward graduation standards. Edgenuity provides many different modalities for instruction, from videos and podcasts to digital assignments, group discussions and digital assessments so that students can choose which modality engages them best. The director of blending learning assists the instructional staff by providing data on course completion, work submission and time engaged in online courses on a daily, weekly and periodic basis. School leaders monitor Regents completion rates and career explorations in addition to online learning.
    - **Indicator d:** In the school's renewal application, Doug Lemov's book, *Teach Like a Champion* is identified as a primary training tool for teachers. The techniques outlined in the book stem from

a framework that provides common structure across classes that support learning and preparation for college. The techniques shape student behavior by emphasizing high expectations for students through rigorous teaching practices designed to increase learning and prepare students for the academic demands of college coursework. During the school leadership focus group, school leaders discussed their use of these techniques and the way they have supported teachers in using classroom strategies to keep all students engaged by the way they call on students as well as having teachers check students' understanding of concepts during class discussions. The school submitted an "Educator Staff Meeting" schedule, organized by staff sub-groups, to demonstrate how regularly scheduled time is purposed for staff learning. The school holds monthly professional development sessions as well.

3. Element: ***Assessment and Program Evaluation***:
   - **Indicator a:** The school's assessment system is outlined in the school's renewal application. The school uses exit tickets, student work, Edgenuity quizzes and tests for formative and summative assessment of student learning and growth. NWEA academic progress assessments are implemented two to three times a year and Regents and ACT exams are administered during established testing windows. During the spring of 2020, since the Regents exams were cancelled, the school used Edgenuity assessments and correlated the data along with course completion data to ascertain how students would have done were the Regents exams given. During the focus group, school leaders discussed the ways teachers developed their own assessments, which are aligned to Regents exam questions, in order to track student preparedness to sit for the exams.
   - **Indicator b**: In the school's renewal application, it is reported that teachers and preceptors use student work, observations and discussions to identify students in need of additional support. Student progress toward graduation is monitored through this data and additional support is provided to students who are not making adequate progress. This data also supports the configuration of student groupings for targeted instruction and provides feedback to students which validates their gains and serves to hold them accountable for their progress. During the school leader and support services focus groups, school staff discussed their focus on student engagement which they define, in part, as completion of work and passing online courses. Students who are struggling can receive help during learning lab or as needed from their preceptors and from support teachers. Students who are recommended for academic intervention are triaged through a response to intervention protocol that provides support in tiers and monitors the effectiveness of the interventions.
   - **Indicator c:** In the renewal application, the school describes how it uses assessment data to improve student outcomes. The school cites its improvement on lab completions as well as its improvement in academic interventions as two areas that were identified through the use of formative and summative assessment analysis. The school also uses Edgenuity's Lesson Master report, which charts class and individual student progress throughout each course. This data is used by teachers to identify content areas in need of reteaching. During the school leadership focus group, school leaders discussed how using the data of course completion led to making changes in their teacher-led classes; students had higher course completion rates in Edgenuity when the online class was paired with a teacher-led class designed to reinforce and review concepts.
   - **Indicator d:** In the Vertus's renewal application, the school discusses the ways it measures the progress of students toward graduation. The school uses all of its assessments, in addition to course completion and course grades, to monitor student progress. Family nights are held three times a year, so that staff can meet with students and their families to discuss and review each student's academic progress, character growth and progress towards graduation. During the

school leaders focus group, participants explained how students and parents are kept informed of students' progress toward graduation, which includes credit accumulation, mastery of subject matter, character development and Regents exams passed. During the student support team focus group, school leaders discussed meeting with teacher teams weekly to monitor IEP students' progress toward meeting their IEP goals in addition to discussing all students who are in need of support.

4. Element: ***Supports for Diverse Learners***:
   - **Indicator a:** In the Vertus renewal application, the school notes that 28 percent of its students are identified as SWDs, nine percent of students are ELLs and 86 percent of students are economically disadvantaged (ED.) The school's department of specialized services oversees SWD, and ELL students as well as those with 504 accommodations. The department of special services employs a case management team approach to support and monitor progress of SWD, communicating with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) and ensuring the provision of all mandated services as well as supporting and tracking student progress. During the student support focus group, school leaders discussed the way students are supported in the school's learning lab. Special education teachers as well as general educational teachers and preceptors all lend support to students, while they are in the lab on a rotating basis. In addition, the preceptor plays a liaison role for students, connecting them with additional supports which include academic intervention services as well as counseling and other supports provided by the school. In the school leaders and student support team focus groups participants discussed the way they continue to provide individualized support during remote learning by creating smaller teacher-led classes, and increasing their one-on-one work with students to assist them with their school work. Additionally, preceptors work with students to develop productive habits while working at home, in order to maintain students' motivation and engagement.
   - **Indicator b:** In its renewal application, the school explains that **it** serves SWD through their ICT teacher-led classrooms in addition to providing small group and push in support. The school also uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) protocol to identify students in need of additional support. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, Vertus implemented a formal academic intervention program with scaffolded targets and interventions provided by academic intervention specialists. Student identified, in part by NWEA assessments, now attend a daily academic intervention class which supports their individualized needs. Student who fail Regents exams are also provided with this additional support. Edgenuity addresses the needs of SWD through its toolkit which includes very explicit instructions, models learning strategies, and provides feedback. The platform also adapts content materials to make them accessible, adapting to student need. During the student support focus group, school leaders described their targeted efforts for ELLs. The school employs an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher as well as Spanish speaking staff to support ELLs. The school has implemented a learning-lab approach to its support of ELLs and differentiates their support according to students NYSESLAT scores. The school also reports its system of support for ED students via its personalized approach, small class environments, and establishment of strong relationships between students and teachers. School leaders and trustees, during their focus groups described addressing students' (and their families') economic needs by establishing a food pantry and clothing closet.
   - **Indicator c:** According to Vertus' renewal application, the school monitors the progress of individual students weekly through their RTI team meetings. They discuss individual students and monitor their progress. Students who are receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions are regularly monitored to ensure they are meeting the goals of the intervention strategy. Students who are receiving special education services are monitored by their case manager on a regular basis.

During the student support focus group, school leaders discussed the way students are supported during their learning lab time. Preceptors, intervention teachers and special education teachers rotate through the learning labs in order to provide support to students as needed. During remote learning, this support continues to be provided through smaller teacher-led classes and one on one support sessions with support providers and teachers. The director of specialized services works with the CSE of Rochester City School District or other districts of residence to ensure that services that are provided by the district are coordinated with the school's planning.

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student and Family Engagement

The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a positive, safe and respectful learning environment that prepares all students for college and career. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. *Measures of Culture, Climate, and Student Engagement*	a. The school has processes and procedures in place to address chronic absenteeism for all students and sub-groups such that all students are fully engaged within the school community and have access to the educational program. Given the increased autonomy to engage students, chronic absenteeism rates are expected to be equal to or less than those of the district of location. In New York City, the district of location is the community school district. Charter schools that have a mission or key design element to serve students in a particular school district will also be compared to that school district. In addition, charter schools with more than 40% of enrolled students residing in districts other than the district of location, or the school district they are mandated to serve, will also be compared to the next highest district where students reside. [4] b. The school has processes and procedures in place to address out of school suspension rates for all students and sub-groups such that all students are fully engaged within the school community and have access to the educational program. Given the increased autonomy to engage students, out of school suspension rates are expected to be equal to or less than those of the district of location. In New York City, the district of location is the community school district. Charter schools that have a mission or key design element to serve students in a particular school district will also be compared to that school district. In addition, charter schools with more than 40% of enrolled students residing in districts other than the district of location, or the school district they are mandated to serve, will also be compared to the next highest district where students reside. [5] c. The school has an NYSED approved process in place to measure and evaluate school climate and culture.
2. *Behavior Management and Safety*	a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy that is applicable to all students, includes a policy that addresses

[4] See https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20New%20York%20State%20Safe%20Schools%20Task%20Force%20Recommendations%20Status%20Update%20.pdf.

[5] Student Suspension rate is determined by dividing the number of students who were suspended from school (not including in-school suspensions) for one full day or longer anytime during the school year by the Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) day enrollments for that school year. A student is counted only once, regardless of whether the student was suspended one or more times during the school year. Data Source: L2RPT Report SIRS-351: Student Attendance Summary Report - http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/level2reports/documents/SIRS_351-360-361-370AttdnceAbsenceandDayCalRprtGuiderev3.6.18.pdf.

Element	*Indicators*
	a school's stance toward in and out of school suspensions, and is implemented throughout the school by all school staff with fidelity. b. The school uses a tiered approach to behavioral interventions that support student social-emotional development. c. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment. d. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination in accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). The school has a DASA Coordinator that staff can identify. e. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.
3. Family Engagement and Communication	a. The school communicates with families in their preferred language to discuss students' strengths, progress, and needs and engages them as part of the school community. b. The school uses multiple methods of family engagement for all communication with all parents, in their preferred language, regardless of the disability status or language ability of their children. c. The school assesses family satisfaction using strategies such as surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or participation logs, and considers results when making schoolwide decisions. d. The school has a systematic and transparent process for responding to family or community concerns. e. The school shares NYSED school report card data with parents and the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability. f. The school shares its New York State exam participation rate compared to the district of location.
4. Social-Emotional and Mental Health Supports	a. The school has systems, programs, and curriculum in place to support the social-emotional and mental health needs of all students. b. School leaders collect and use data to track the social-emotional needs of all students, including students in subgroups. c. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support the social and emotional health of all students. d. The school provides staff with professional development opportunities to support the social-emotional and mental health of students in a culturally responsive manner. e. The school has processes and procedures in place to address the learning and social-emotional needs of McKinney-Vento eligible students such that all students are fully engaged within the school community and have access to the

Element	*Indicators*
	educational program. The school has a McKinney-Vento Coordinator that staff can identify.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

1. Element: ***Measures of Culture, Climate, and Student Engagement:***
   - **Indicator a:** According to the Vertus renewal application, the school's leadership team regularly tracks attendance and uses a variety of strategies to meet or exceed its attendance goal of 85 percent. The school fosters a culture of accountability by establishing relationships among and with students and instituting the Brothers Keepers program, which trains students to mentor their peers and supports students' attendance. The school has surveyed students to better understand student absenteeism and address issues causing students to be absent. The school provides transportation, clean uniforms and laundry machines in addition to offering programming that students have identified as motivational. The school analyzes attendance data based on a tiered system differentiating students whose absence is sporadic as opposed to chronic. The school has created a targeted system of interventions corresponding to the different levels of absenteeism among its students. During the school leaders focus group, school leaders described how they work with students and their families to provide mental health and social service referrals and assistance for gang related issues when needed. During remote learning, school staff monitors student participation in its online learning platform through its regular data analysis processes.
   - **Indicator b:** As discussed in the school's renewal application, Vertus recognizes that African American boys are dramatically over-represented in school suspensions. Removing students from school does not further their educational goals. The school's leadership team reported that it has continued to work to reduce school suspensions by hiring a head dean in the 2018-2019 school year and by instituting an alternative to suspension room where students with repeated infractions can go. The room is staffed by school personnel trained to address non-academic barriers to success and who are directly supported by the head dean and lead preceptor as well as the director of student culture. While in this room, students are given the opportunity to continue their learning as well as behavioral support. The school has arrived at this approach through careful data analysis of suspension data and will continue to collect and analyze data on students in the alternative to suspension classroom. In addition, staff will be trained in preventing student disruption, de-escalation techniques, and repairing the relationship between student and teacher.
   - **Indicator c:** In the school's renewal application, the school describes its approach to monitoring school climate and culture. The school examines data collected from surveys given to students, staff, and parents which are designed to assess school safety, student problem solving abilities, respect, and long term success. The school also analyzes data from disciplinary logs and referrals. Further, the school surveys students using character-based strength assessments developed by Dr. Martin Seligman, the Director of University of Pennsylvania's' Positive Psychology Center. Students self-asses and are assessed by school staff in order to understand how students are developing the character traits that will lead to their success. Preceptors, during the social emotional support focus group, described the way they monitor student character growth and how they see year over year growth in their students. School leaders, during their focus group, discussed that they generally conduct surveys four times a year, but that during remote learning

have found that one-to-one calls with families have yielded a better response rate. The school has created shared call logs in order to disseminate information to all staff members.

2. Element: ***Behavior Management and Safety:***
   - **Indicator a:** In the school's renewal application, the school describes its approach to behavior management which is rooted in the first pillar of the school model, strong relationships. The school seeks to nurture positive relationships with students by creating a culture of empathy and fairness in disciplinary procedures. The school's character education includes empathetic listening and restorative practices as part of the school's culture which seeks to develop a feeling of deep belonging and mutual respect among its students. This is aligned to the school's discipline policy and the institution of the alternative to suspension process outlined above. During the social emotional support focus group, participants described their creation of an alternative to suspension process and how it was implemented during the first part of this school year, before the school transitioned to remote learning. The goal of this program is to reduce the school's suspension rate and keep students in school, while they work on their behavior.
   - **Indicator b:** According to the school's renewal application, the school's discipline policy is aligned to its mission and key design elements. The school's commitment to strong relationships between staff and students as well as the use of restorative practices, and the focus on character development create an environment of support for behavioral changes rather than punishment. Consequences to violating the code of conduct are carried out at the discretion of school leadership. During the social emotional support focus group, school leaders described the way they work with students to follow the school's creed, maintain student engagement, and help students manage their own behavior and make good choices. Preceptors play an instrumental role in providing behavioral support to students throughout their tenure in the school. Additionally, students' character development is monitored through a reflective process which provides feedback to students at regular intervals in addition to maintaining their awareness of behavioral expectations.
   - **Indicator c:** The school engages parents in a satisfaction survey each year. In the parent survey implemented in the spring of 2020, 100 percent of the 19 parents who responded said they would recommend the school to other families. The survey also included questions regarding student growth in character; 84 percent of parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that their student has grown in character, and 94 percent of parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that their student had improved academically. During the student focus group and during observations of remote classes during the site visit, students seemed at ease with one another and observers noted the ways in which they supported each other in their growth.
   - **Indicator d:** The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination in accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). In an anonymous school developed survey that was conducted in the fall of 2019, 89 percent of the 153 students who responded reported that they had not experienced bullying in the school and 95 percent of students indicated they felt safe in the school. During the social and emotional support team focus group, school leaders described the preceptor's role in creating a safe environment in the school, through the building of relationships with students and the focus on specific, articulated character traits.
   - **Indicator e:** In the student focus group, students described a supportive and productive school climate. During remote classroom observations, students were seen to be supportive of one another.

3. Element: ***Family Engagement and Communication:***
    - **Indicator a:** In the Vertus renewal application the school described the ways it communicates with families to engage them in the school community as well as to discuss the strengths and progress of their students. The school holds three family nights each year, and reports an 85 percent participation rate, owing in part to their willingness to schedule alternate times for families who request this. In addition, the school uses multiple media outlets, including YouTube and a radio program that provides a platform for the youth of Rochester. During the board focus group, trustees described their work to establish a parent engagement committee which has not achieved a critical mass of participants as yet. During remote learning, the staff maintained communication with students and families and provided links to community resources through the school's website. During the school leadership focus group, leaders discussed regular phone contact with students and parents as being the most effective way to stay connected.
    - **Indicator b:** The school's renewal application describes the process of preceptors calling students' families every two weeks with a progress update. Teachers also call families periodically to discuss academic strengths, challenges and needs. Deans reach out to parents to enlist their support in improving student behavior. Written progress reports are distributed at the end of each of the school's five grading periods and are reviewed during family night or mailed home. Parents have access to student data on the Edgenuity parent portal and receive NWEA Measures of Academic Progress reports twice a year. During the social and emotional support focus group, school leaders discussed the way staying in contact with families has changed during the pandemic. School leaders reported that school staff found that maintaining contact through students' cell phones is the most effective way to maintain student engagement. Staff reported the many ways they support students and their families such as providing a food pantry, clothes closet and transportation to appointments as needed.
    - **Indicator c:** Vertus, in its renewal application, reports administering annual student and parent surveys. School leadership analyzes the results of these surveys in addition to the feedback provided by preceptors who relay information they receive from parents and guardians during their bi-weekly calls. Families are also surveyed during family nights and the results are discussed with staff during a professional development session. During remote learning, the school conducted an electronic survey with families, which enabled the school to receive feedback on family challenges as well as confirm the effectiveness of their regular communications. In the parent survey administered in the spring of 2020, 84 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that preceptors communicated with them every two weeks and 84 percent identified the preceptor as the main source of communication from the school.
    - **Indicator d:** The school, in its renewal application, outlines the procedures in place for complaints to be made. Complaints from parents are first handled by preceptors and reported to school leadership. The board of trustees also hears complaints both informally and formally. According to the board's complaint policy which is posted on the school's website, formal complaints are addressed to the chair of the board of trustees. In addition, each board meeting agenda has a public comment opportunity for issues to be raised. These policies are articulated in the school's family handbook and posted on the school's website.
    - **Indicator e:** The school, in its renewal application, reports its distribution of a quarterly newsletter which shares academic data, NWEA performance results, and Regents exam results to promote transparency and accountability. The website is continuously updated by the school's IT staff to provide students and families with connections to services such as a school-run food pantry, according to the participants in the social emotional services team. A bulletin board in the school's entrance way is likewise kept current with pertinent academic information.

- **Indicator f:** The renewal application reports that the above communications include participation rates for NYS exams and notes that Vertus' rate exceeds comparison schools in the Rochester City School District for SWD.

4. Element: ***Social-Emotional and Mental Health Supports***:
   - **Indicator a:** Vertus, in its renewal application, describes the social and emotional program as well as the mental health support it provides to students. Beginning with the first pillar of the school, strong relationships, each student is supported by his preceptor who monitors his attendance, supports them academically, helps students deal with family issues, and connects students to members of the department of special services when needed. The school's character education is centered on the school's Creed, which includes eight character traits. The Creed is recited every morning and its values are infused in the school throughout the day through school rituals and weekly award ceremonies in addition to discussions about each trait between preceptors and students. Part of the school's social emotional support includes post-graduation planning so that students have a clear path for their lives once they graduate. Mental health supports include individual and group counseling, crisis response services and connecting students with community organizations such as the Center for Youth or LGBTQ outreach.
   - **Indicator b**: In its renewal application, the school reports tracking data on key metrics regarding students' social emotional needs. Preceptors capture anecdotal data based on interactions with students. The school administers two anonymous surveys each year to gauge students' emotional well-being. In the student survey conducted in the fall of 2019, students were asked to articulate what motivates them to come to school, to identify barriers to school attendance as well as making suggestions for improving the school. Through the survey, the school monitors students' ability to manage their emotions, solve problems and resolve disagreements productively as well as their ability to persevere through difficult assignments.
   - **Indicator c:** In its renewal application, the school articulates the process of collecting data on student need and examining behavioral trends in order to identify student needs and appropriate responses. Preceptors gather and communicate anecdotal information from their experiences and student behavioral trends are included in this data analysis. During the social emotional support focus group, school leaders described how the school monitors students' character development through a process that has students complete a self-reflection, which is then compared to staff feedback. School staff noted that students' scores for character development increase year over year.
   - **Indicator d:** In its renewal application, the school reports it is working with the Consortium on Trauma, Illness and Grief in Schools, a group that provides professional development designed to increase staff's ability to meet the holistic needs of their students and enhances their ability to respond to crisis. During the current school year, ten staff members will attend five full days of training to support students at the school. During the social emotional support team focus group, staff members discussed the importance of this training and their plans for turnkeying the information to other staff members.
   - **Indicator e:** To support the education of students who lack a regular, consistent residence, the school, in its renewal application, reports their practice of enrolling these students and providing educational services despite a lack of documentation. The head dean and director of student culture serve as McKinney-Vento coordinators to ensure that these students are provided with a positive school environment that supports their needs. During the social emotional support team focus group, school staff discussed the increase in numbers of students who are not living in their regular homes due to a variety of reasons. Staff discussed the way the school takes an all-hands

on-deck approach to support these students and maintain their engagement with the school and their productivity while they are in transition.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.

Finding: Meets

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

See the school's fiscal dashboard attached to the end of this report (Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary). The fiscal dashboard provides detailed information regarding the school's compliance with Benchmark 4 of the Charter School Performance Framework. Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements which can be found on the NYSED website at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/csdirectory/CSLaunchPage.html.

- Financial Composite Score
- Working Capital
- Debt to Asset
- Cash Position
- Total Margin

Financial Condition

Vertus Charter School appears to be in adequate financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

Overall Financial Outlook

A financial composite score is an overall measure of financial health based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is generally considered to be in good financial health. Vertus' 2019-2020 composite score is 1.14.

Composite Scores
2015-2016 to 2019-2020

Year	***Composite Score***
2015-2016	1.39
2016-2017	1.89
2017-2018	.57
2018-2019	-.92
2019-2020	1.14

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.

Finding: Approaches

Renewal is based on evidence that the following indicators are generally present:

1. The school has financial professionals assigned to manage school finances.
2. The school has an accurate and functional accounting system that includes monthly budgets.
3. The school sets budget objectives and regularly analyzes its budget, including detailed assumptions within the budget, in relation to those objectives.
4. The school has allocated budget surpluses in a manner that is fiscally sound and directly attends to the social and academic needs of the students attending the school.
5. The school has and follows a written set of fiscal policies.
6. The school has complied with State and federal financial reporting requirements.
7. The school has and is maintaining appropriate internal controls and procedures.
8. The school has procedures in place to ensure that programmatic and independent fiscal audits occur at least once annually, with such audits being comparable in scope to those required of other public schools. Audits will be undertaken by auditing firms with experience working with New York State charter schools and are peer reviewed.
9. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with an unqualified audit opinion, a limited number of findings that are quickly corrected, and the absence of a going concern disclosure.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

NYSED CSO reviewed Vertus Charter School's 2019-2020 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor identified a deficiency in internal controls that could be considered a material weakness:

During the audit for the period ending June 30, 2019, the auditor noted that contribution revenue was overstated because a note payable was incorrectly recorded as a contribution. The auditor recommended that the school review the detail of all transactions to assure proper accounting treatment. As of June 30, 2020, the auditor noted that contributions, per-pupil and federal revenues were incorrectly recorded, resulting in a material adjustment to revenues. The auditor again recommended that the school review the detail of all transactions to assure proper accounting treatment.

In addition, going back to the period ending June 30, 2016, the auditor noted that the school was not adhering to its own formally documented policies and procedures regarding purchases and continued to have findings for each period following, including the period ending June 30, 2020:

- The principal approved her own expense reimbursements, and the reimbursements were not approved by the board of trustees;
- Certain debit card purchases were made without documented approval by the principal;
- Receipts were not maintained for certain debit card purchases; and

- The financial associate did not document review of certain bank statements.

While the auditor did not consider the findings for the period ending June 30, 2020 to be a significant deficiency or material weakness, it is concerning to the NYSED CSO that established policies and procedures continue to not be adhered to over the course of several years, particularly in light of the only adequate condition of the school's finances.

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance

The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.

Finding: Approaches

Element	*Indicators*
1. Board Oversight and Governance	a. The board utilizes an annual written performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself, and providers. b. The board recruits and selects board members with a diverse set of skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school and represent the community in which the school serves. c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school's management, comprehensive service provider(s), if applicable, fiscal operations, and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals through written evaluation processes. d. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission and charter. e. The board regularly updates school policies when needed and receives NYSED approval prior to applicable policy implementation. f. The board engages in ongoing professional development. g. The board demonstrates full awareness of its governance role, its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders, and requirements of the school's charter. h. The board is familiar with NYSED Charter School Performance Framework standards and has a plan to ensure that the school meets these standards.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

1. Element: ***Board Oversight and Governance:***
    - **Indicator a:** The school's renewal application contains documents that outline the criteria for school leader evaluation, which include student achievement metrics, attendance and enrollment goals, and metrics for career preparation and character growth. The rubric also includes assessment of operational leadership, talent leadership and community partnerships as well as strategic planning and execution. Documents submitted include the most recent board evaluation process, dated July 22, 2020. The school did not provide any description of an evaluation process for its providers.
    - **Indicator b:** According to the board of trustees' (BOT) skills matrix, submitted in the school's renewal application, the eight member board has expertise in management, operations, education, education technology, real estate, fundraising, community engagement, facilities, media and public relations, finance, and connections to colleges and businesses. Despite the addition of several new members, the board lacks legal expertise. Evidence of expertise in information technology was not available**.** During the board focus group, trustees discussed new members who they were bringing onto the board who would strengthen its committee structure. The board also discussed its intention to add members to support community and parent engagement as well as to better connect the school to potential partners that will provide career track possibilities or credentialing opportunities for students.
    - **Indicator c:** In the school's renewal application, board oversight and management of the school is described as being carried out through its committee structure; committees meet between board meetings. The BOT maintains the following standing committees: governance, accountability, fundraising, finance, and community engagement. The board provides oversight of the principal, through her monthly presentation of the Month-at-a-Glance document which includes the latest key assessment results. During the board focus group, individual members spoke in detail about specific program areas, their current status, and progress toward meeting their goals.
    - **Indicator d:** In the board's self-assessment it identified its strategic goals for the future. They plan on adding between two and five members, who can add expertise in talent, connections to the community and fundraising. The board has also added an accountability committee to support improvements to the academic program and student outcomes, and which will bolster the effectiveness of current standing committees. The BOT seeks to increase community engagement to better understand its constituents and raise the profile of the school in the community, which members hope will also increase enrollment.
    - **Indicator e:** The BOT self-evaluation documents show that school policies and by-laws were reviewed at the July 2020 meeting. Documents were reviewed by the school's attorney as well the BOT. In the BOT's strategic plan, the board reports that the governance committee annually reviews school policies and the school's legal counsel advises the board when legislative and regulatory changes require policy updates. During the board's focus group, trustees discussed the change to the bylaws to increase the board membership to accommodate adding trustees with needed expertise and connections which will also assist productivity in its standing committees.
    - **Indicator f:** The board, in the school renewal application, has submitted an annual calendar of agenda items for its monthly BOT meetings. March is identified for board training and is typically geared to understanding roles and responsibilities of trustees and school leadership, the school's mission and key design elements, the board's legal obligations and the NYSED Performance

Framework. At their focus group conversation, trustees also mentioned their process for onboarding new trustees.

- **Indicator g:** The board demonstrates awareness of its governance role and its responsibility to the school, its constituents, and the school's charter. Board members, in the focus group discussion, stated that following receipt of the mid-term site visit report, they reflected upon its contents and took a number of action steps. They regularly review contracts and tightly monitor monthly bank statements. Fundraising efforts have been increased, and the school has applied for designated donor status with the Rochester United Way. The board made changes to its monthly meeting agendas and the calendar following the mid-term site visit report in the spring of 2020. Consideration is being given to adding three more board members.
- **Indicator h:** The school submitted the BOT's strategic plan in its renewal documents. It describes the oversight it provides which is aligned to the 2019 Performance Framework and addresses each benchmark in the framework. The board commits to reviewing each benchmark at every BOT monthly meeting by looking at student academic performance through a monthly score card that contains NWEA MAP results, credit accumulation, Regents exams results and includes a deep dive into one or more student achievement measures that correlate with the time results are available. Attendance which is highly correlated with academic achievement is monitored as are discipline and school climate through the examination of discipline data and climate surveys given to parents, students and staff. During the BOT focus group, trustees reported that they monitor enrollment and recruitment and the impact that each of these has on the school's approved budget.

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. *School Leadership*	a. The school has an effective school leadership team that communicates a clearly defined mission and set of goals to staff and the school community. b. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place to ensure effective communication across the school. c. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel that meets the needs of all students and subgroups, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.

Element	*Indicators*
	d. School leadership is familiar with NYSED Charter School Performance Framework standards and has a plan to ensure that the school meets these standards.
2. Professional Climate	a. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and the board of trustees are clearly defined and adhered to. b. The school ensures that staff has the requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet all students' needs, including students in subgroups. c. The school is fully staffed with personnel who are able to meet all operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communications. d. The school has established procedures for effective collaboration among teachers. e. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality through a formal evaluation process for teacher and other staff. f. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher and staff feedback and to gauge their satisfaction.
3. Contractual Relationships (if applicable)	a. Changes in the school's charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures. b. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners and has established an effective working relationship.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

1. Element: ***School Leadership:***

- **Indicator a:** According to the school's renewal application and the organizational chart, the school leadership team consists of the principal, the chief operations officer, director of academics, director of school culture, director of blended learning, director of specialized services, head dean, lead preceptor and athletic director. The leadership team meets regularly to discuss on going work and periodically reviews the success of its programs and makes change to programs and procedures as needed. During the school leaders focus group, participants described the many different configurations in which they meet with each other and with their direct reports, which include one-on-one weekly meetings with direct supervisors and department meetings. During focus group conversations conducted during the site visit, leaders referenced that there is distributed leadership among the group as well as a high degree of collaboration and sharing of information. All constituent groups were tightly aligned with the four pillars of the school, its mission and articulated the way they keep each other informed.

- **Indicator b:** According to the school's renewal application, decisions are made at the school leadership team level, and once approved, communicated to the staff. Each member of the school leadership team oversees a department and is responsible for the management, supervision, and support of its members. The school's meeting calendar indicates that staff meet in teams regularly to discuss topics pertaining to their work. These meetings include monthly meetings focused on student achievement, credit accumulation, GPA standing, retention and recruitment, and schoolwide discipline. Weekly meetings are focused on student support and student progress toward intervention goals; daily meetings focused on attendance take place. Meetings that occur a few times a year are focused on interim assessment results, family nights, report cards, Regents' results and ad hoc meetings as needed. During remote learning, meetings have been conducted via Zoom and email communications to families have been sent weekly.
- **Indicator c:** In the renewal application, the school described their hiring process which includes a submission of a written application, a phone screening, presentation of a model lesson or performing a job-related task in addition to an in-person interview. Some of the school's leadership team members have been staff members prior to being promoted to leadership. The school's staff is diverse as half of the staff are people of color. During mid-year and annual staff evaluations, staff members are asked about their satisfaction as well as their aspirations so school leaders can be aware of those staff members who are interested in taking on higher levels of responsibility. Teachers with performance concerns are identified and provided instructional coaching.
- **Indicator d:** In the application cover letter, the applicant states "We are fully committed to ongoing improvement to meet 100% of our goals in the Charter School Performance Framework." Evidence of awareness of and commitment to the benchmarks was observed during the site visit. For example, differentiated instruction and individualized attention were seen through classroom observations; a wide range of academic and social emotional supports for students and their families were discussed in the focus groups; strong relationships were discussed and observed, especially between students and preceptors; the use of data for decision making was referenced; as was strong financial monitoring and the school's shared leadership model.

2. Element: ***Professional Climate:***
   - **Indicator a:** Throughout the school's renewal application, leadership roles are articulated including the ways in which staff work together. The BOT submitted a summary of the responsibilities of each leader and the school's organization chart outlines a clear reporting structure. During the focus groups conducted during the visit, school leaders articulated their roles, the work of their departments and how they work with each other. School leaders also described how the different instructional and student support teams work together to provide wrap-around services to all students.
   - **Indicator b:** According to the renewal application, Vertus provides five weeks of professional development prior to school opening, in addition to weekly sessions, regular coaching, and direct supervision. Opportunities for external professional learnings are provided to staff for both academic and social emotional learning. The school engages with New Visions for professional development on curriculum and during the current school year, 10 staff members are receiving training in helping students process trauma, illness, and grief through the Monroe County Office of Mental Health. During the student support group and social emotional support focus groups, leaders discussed the many ways they provide coaching and professional development to staff.
   - **Indicator c**: In the school leadership focus group, school leaders confirmed that they are fully staffed to meet the needs of the school community. The school is under-enrolled which did

necessitate eliminating some positions at the beginning of the year, as confirmed by the board of trustees during their focus group. One key position was unexpectedly vacated at the beginning of the school year, and school leadership has decided to distribute the responsibilities among existing positions while taking the time to reflect on the demands of the position's responsibilities before filling the vacancy.

- **Indicator d:** From the focus group conversations, in addition to the remote classroom observations, teacher collaboration was emphasized**.** School leaders discussed the way each department supports the others, with teachers joining seminars, intervention and special services teachers pushing into learning labs as examples. Leaders described the creation of individual and small group instructional opportunities to support students during remote instruction as a means to improve student engagement and monitor student mastery of content. Teachers, in collaboration, also have an opportunity to engage with Edgenuity curriculum to develop teacher-led classes to accompany the Edgenuity modules and to evaluate the coursework's alignment to state standards.
- **Indicator e:** According to the school's renewal application, all staff receive regular performance feedback which includes formal and informal evaluations. The school uses the observation and feedback techniques outlines in Paul Bambrick's *Leverage Leadership*. All staff receive a formal, written evaluation at the conclusion of each school year. Feedback is based on Vertus' four pillars as well as their anchor standards. Staff members' individual goals, which are set twice a year, are included in the evaluation process. Earlier in the charter term, prior to closure in the spring of 2020, teachers participated in the NYSED anonymous survey, which was the latest one conducted with teachers. All those responding agreed that the school has systems in place to monitor instruction and evaluate teaching. Performance feedback includes that from formal as well as informal evaluations. In addition, teachers reported they meet weekly with a teaching coach and their supervisor as well as working with their peers to share instructional strategies. As noted above, school leaders report similar activities for monitoring remote instruction.
- **Indicator f:** According to the renewal application, the school surveys its staff annual anonymously. In the 2019-2020 survey that was submitted as part of the school's renewal application, results demonstrate that 93.5 percent of staff felt supported by their supervisor almost all or most of the time, and 95.8 percent of staff feel confident in their ability to accomplish the school's mission. Ninety-four percent of 48 staff members who completed the 2020 spring survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they felt supported by their supervisor. The school survey asked for open responses so that staff can provide feedback on the most effective supports the administration can provide, in order to capitalize on what is working.

3. Element: ***Contractual Relationships***:
   - **Indicator a: N/A**
   - **Indicator b: N/A**

Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements

The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. Mission and Key Design Elements	a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter, including in public-facing materials. b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

1. Element: ***Mission and Key Design Elements:***
   - **Indicator a:** Throughout the school's renewal application the four pillars of the school, which comprise its key design elements, are described. These pillars include strong relationships, personalized year-round academics, character education, and career preparation. The pillars, and how the school defines each one, is posted on the school's website. The website articulates, in the founders' message, how the school was developed and how it uses proven methods to support the students it seeks to serve. In the staff survey, implemented in the spring of 2020, approximately ninety percent of the 48 staff members who responded agreed that the staff consistently lives the organizational values of the school. Approximately 96 percent of staff who responded to the survey had confidence in their ability to accomplish the mission of the school. The school also has a presence on YouTube, as well as participating in a local radio show. During remote site visit focus groups, all constituents demonstrated that they were well-versed in the four pillars and described the school through that lens.
   - **Indicator b:** In the school's renewal application, the school describes how it actualizes its mission and provides programming that addresses each pillar. Staff is organized to support these pillars through the school's instructional program and social emotional support system. The board of trustees evaluates itself and the school principal on metrics that align to each pillar. Mission-specific questions included in the staff survey administered in the spring of 2020 yielded the following results: approximately 96 percent of staff responded that they are developing strong relationships with students all or most of the time. Approximately 87 percent of staff believe that the school's program supports students' development in character all or most of the time.

Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students. High schools are meeting persistence rates commensurate with the NYSED target.

Finding: Approaches

Element	*Indicators*
1. *Targets are met*	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.
2. *Targets are not met*	a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets. b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include, but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations. c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

1. Element: ***Targets are not met:***
   - **Indicator a:** During the leadership focus group, school leaders verified their current enrollment of 263 students which is below the projected target enrollment of 340 at 77 percent. The school's enrollment stood at 83 percent for the 2019-2020 school year, 73 percent for the 2018-2019 school year and 72 percent for the 2017-2018 school year. This continuing under-enrollment is a concern. During the 2019-2020 school year, enrollment of students with disabilities was four percentage points above the district; the school's ELL enrollment was 11 percentage points below the district, and the school's enrollment of ED students was five percentage points below the district.
   - **Indicator b:** The school's recruitment plan identifies many activities designed to raise the profile of the school in the Rochester area and within the Hispanic and immigrant communities in particular. The school uses print and media outlets, radio shows and online videos that promote the school, its vision, and its target audience. During the board and school leader focus groups, school leaders and trustees discussed their upcoming plans for continued outreach to the community to increase the school's enrollment.

- **Indicator c:** School leadership, in its focus group, discussed the challenges they face in recruitment, citing resistance to the school's year-round scheduling as well as competition from other charter schools, as the main barriers to recruitment. The board is planning on adding members to support deeper community engagement in hopes of attracting more students.

See Attachment 1 for data tables and additional information.

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.

Finding: Approaches

Element	*Indicators*
1. Legal Compliance	a. The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with applicable State and federal laws and regulations and the provisions of its charter including, but not limited to: those related to student admissions and enrollment; FOIL and Open Meetings Law; protecting the rights of students and employees; addressing complaints; financial management and oversight; governance and reporting; and health, safety, civil rights, and student assessment requirements. b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when required, and/or as requested by the Board of Regents and/or the NYSED Charter School Office and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements. c. The school has a plan to ensure that teachers are certified in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. d. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or the NYSED Charter School Office approval for material and non-material revisions. e. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet the expectations detailed in the enrollment plan outlined in the charter and within the parameters set forth in the charter agreement. f. The school seeks guidance from its legal counsel when updating documents and handling issues that arise.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

1. Element: ***Legal Compliance:***
   - **Indicator a:** As submitted, the school's schedule does not appear to provide the 7.5 hours of daily instruction set forth in the charter. Some of the school's policies require revision to be legally compliant.
   - **Indicator b:** The school has a history of required Corrective Action Plans in response to fiscal improprieties. The school took steps to bring the budget into alignment with enrollment and reduced staff and staff recruitment expenses, among others. The CSO issued a Notice of Deficiency for low ELL enrollment. In response, the school increased its outreach and recruitment efforts to include radio and entertainment venues, especially Hispanic offerings, and saw a slight increase in enrollment of the ELL population as a result.
   - **Indicator c:** The CSO review shows that TEACH clearance certificates for many staff are dated after the start date for those staff members, and there are a number of staff members for whom no

TEACH clearance certificates were submitted. The school must adopt a multi-step, comprehensive process to ensure that all school employees have fingerprint clearance prior to their start date at the school.

- **Indicator d:** The school has sought CSO approval for requested revisions.
- **Indicator e:** The school has had a consistent history of enrollment below the 85 percent threshold in the school's charter.
- **Indicator f**: The board indicated that it consults with outside counsel as needed for policy review and revisions. All policies and handbooks undergo a legal review prior to adoption.

Attachment 1: 2020-2021 Renewal Site Visit

Vertus Charter School

Benchmark 1:

Indicator 1: All Schools

1.a.i. Accountability - ESEA Accountability Designation:

This school is designated as a school in in need of Targeted Support and Improvement under current New York State criteria as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison – Comparative Proficiency:

This school does not outperform schools with similar grades and subgroup enrollment in graduation rate.

Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

(Not applicable to this charter school.)

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

3.a.i., 3.a.ii., 3.a.iii, and 3.a.iv Regents Exam Outcomes. See Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Aggregate and Subgroup 4-, (5- and 6-Year)[1] Cohort Regents Testing Outcomes

		All Students				SWD				ED			
		Charter Total Cohort	Vertus CS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Vertus CS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Vertus CS	NYS	Differential to NYS
ELA	2014 Cohort	48	56%	84%	-28	9	11%	54%	-43	43	58%	78%	-20
	2015 Cohort	64	61%	84%	-23	13	23%	55%	-32	62	61%	79%	-18
Global History	2014 Cohort	48	60%	77%	-17	9	33%	42%	-9	43	63%	69%	-6
	2015 Cohort	64	73%	78%	-5	13	62%	43%	+19	62	74%	70%	+4
Math	2014 Cohort	48	73%	83%	-10	9	33%	49%	-16	43	77%	77%	0
	2015 Cohort	64	75%	84%	-9	13	46%	51%	-5	62	76%	78%	-2
Science	2014 Cohort	48	73%	83%	-10	9	33%	52%	-19	43	74%	76%	-2
	2015 Cohort	64	75%	83%	-8	13	62%	51%	+11	62	76%	76%	0
US History	2014 Cohort	48	42%	80%	-38	9	0%	48%	-48	43	44%	72%	-28
	2015 Cohort	64	58%	79%	-21	13	38%	48%	-10	62	58%	71%	-13

**See NOTES (1), (2), (4), and (7) below.*

Table 2: Aggregate and Subgroup College and Career Readiness

		College and Career Readiness			ELA			Math		
		Vertus CS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Vertus CS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Vertus CS	NYS	Differential to NYS
All Students	2014	4%	29%	-25	33%	71%	-38	6%	30%	-24
	2015	2%	34%	-32	19%	68%	-49	2%	36%	-34
SWD	2014	11%	4%	+7	11%	32%	-21	11%	5%	+6
	2015	0%	6%	-6	8%	29%	-21	0%	8%	-8
ED	2014	2%	18%	-16	33%	61%	-28	5%	19%	-14
	2015	2%	22%	-20	18%	58%	-40	2%	24%	-22

**See NOTES (1), (2), (4), and (8) below.*

3.b.i., 3.b.ii, 3.b.iii, and 3.b.iv. Graduation Outcomes: See Tables 3 and 4 below.

[1] 5- and 6-year cohorts to be added at a later date to conform to the 2019 Performance Framework.

Table 3: Aggregate and Subgroup Cohort Graduation Rates

		All Students				SWD				ED			
		Charter Total Cohort	Vertus CS	NYS Graduation Rate	NYS Differential	Charter Total Cohort	Vertus CS	NYS Graduation Rate	NYS Differential	Charter Total Cohort	Vertus CS	NYS Graduation Rate	NYS Differential
2014 Cohort	4 Year	48	65%	83%	**-18**	9	33%	60%	**-27**	43	65%	76%	**-11**
	5 Year	48	77%	86%	**-9**	9	56%	66%	**-10**	45	76%	81%	**-5**
2015 Cohort	4 Year	64	66%	83%	**-17**	13	62%	62%	**0**	62	66%	77%	**-11**

**See NOTES (1), (2), (4), and (9) below.*

Table 4: Aggregate and Subgroup Third Year On-Track to Graduate – Target = 75% (NYS graduation Rate)

Vertus Charter School	All Students			SWD			ELL			ED		
	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track
2014	41	11	27%	7	0	0%	.	.	.	41	11	27%
2015	63	32	51%	14	2	14%	.	.	.	56	30	54%
2016	77	42	55%	17	8	47%	5	5	100%	77	42	55%

**See NOTES (1), (2), (4), (7), and (10) below.*

Benchmark 9:

Indicator 1: All Schools

1.a.i. and 1.a.ii. Enrollment. See Tables 5 and 6 below.

Table 5: Aggregate Enrollment: Reported vs Contracted – Target = 100%

Vertus CS	Contracted Enrollment	Reported Enrollment	Percent of Contracted Enrollment
2015-2016	192	137	71%
2016-2017	288	251	87%
2017-2018	384	276	72%
2018-2019	384	281	73%
2019-2020	340	281	83%

**See NOTES (11) below.*

Table 6: Subgroup Enrollment: Students with Disabilities, ELLs, and Economically Disadvantaged

	SWD			ELL			ED		
	Vertus CS	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Vertus CS	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Vertus CS	Rochester CSD	Differential to District
2015-2016	19%	22%	-3	1%	14%	-13	99%	89%	+10
2016-2017	21%	21%	0	3%	16%	-13	100%	88%	+12
2017-2018	17%	20%	-3	7%	18%	-11	86%	87%	-1
2018-2019	22%	20%	+2	7%	19%	-12	100%	87%	+13
2019-2020	25%	21%	+4	8%	19%	-11	82%	87%	-5

**See NOTES (1) and (5) below.*

1.b.i. and 1.b.ii. Retention: See Table 7 below.

Table 7: Aggregate and Subgroup Retention

	All Students			SWD			ELL			ED		
	Vertus CS	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Vertus CS	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Vertus CS	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Vertus CS	Rochester CSD	Differential to District
2015-2016	62%	84%	-22	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
2016-2017	75%	81%	-6	62%	77%	-15	100%	77%	+23	76%	81%	-5
2017-2018	67%	83%	-16	75%	79%	-4	86%	80%	+6	67%	82%	-15
2018-2019	80%	83%	-3	85%	78%	+7	74%	79%	-5	87%	83%	+4
2019-2020	78%	84%	-6	73%	80%	-7	90%	82%	+8	78%	84%	-6

**See NOTES (1) and (5) below.*

1.c.i. and 1.c.ii. High School Persistence: See Table 8 below.

Table 8: Aggregate and Subgroup 4-, 5-, and 6-year Cohort Persistence Rates – Target = 85%

Vertus CS		All Students			SWD			ED		
		Original Cohort	Persistent	4 Year Persistance	Original Cohort	Persistent	4 Year Persistance	Original Cohort	Persistent	4 Year Persistance
2014 Cohort	4-Year	81	21	26%	.	.	.	.	.	.
	5-Year	81	23	28%	.	.	.	.	.	.
2015 Cohort	4-Year	59	26	44%	14	3	21%	59	26	44%

**See NOTES (1) and (11) below.*

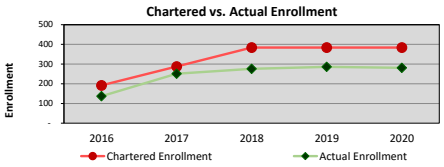
**NOTES:*

(1) *For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.*
(2) *Pursuant to NYSED business rules, the data was suppressed for subgroups containing <5 students and the subgroup category may not be included for the metric.*
(3) *Data in the table above represents tested students who either maintained a proficient score from one year to the next or students whose proficiency level increased from one year to the next (a proficient score is level 3 or 4).*
(4) *A "." in any table indicates that the data was suppressed according to standard NYSED business rules (N<5), no student sat for the exam, or the exam was not given.*
(5) *Data in the table above represents a comparison between those grades served in the charter school to only those same grades in the district and/or NYS.*
(6) *Data in the table above represents tested students who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on the NYS ELA and/or math assessment.*
(7) *Data in the table above represents students who passed the Annual Regents or equivalents (score of 65 or better).*
(8) *Data in the table above represents students who passed the ELA regents exam (or Regents approved equivalent exam) with a score of 75 or better and who also passed a Math Regents exam (or NYSED approved equivalent exam) with a score of 80 or above.*
(9) *The 4- and 5-year graduation rates reported in the table above are as of August. The 6-year graduation rates are as of June.*
(10) *Data in the table above represents students within their respective subgroups who have passed three out of the five Annual Regents and Regents Common Core Examinations (score of 65 or better) or equivalents.*
(11) *Data in the table above represents the percentage of students from the original 9th grade cohort who persisted within the same school to a 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation (includes August graduates).*

Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary

VERTUS CHARTER SCHOOL

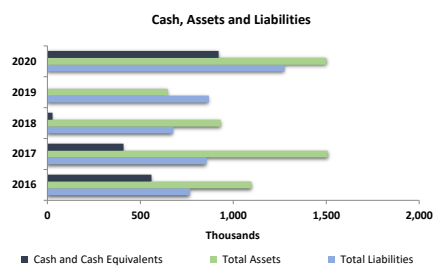
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Grades Served	9-10	9-11	9-12	9-12	9-12
Maximum Chartered Grades Served	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12
Chartered Enrollment	192	288	384	384	384
Maximum Chartered Enrollment	384	384	384	384	384
Actual Enrollment	137	251	276	286	281

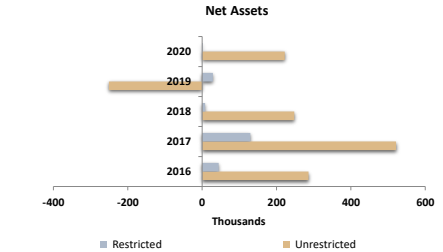


AUDITED FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

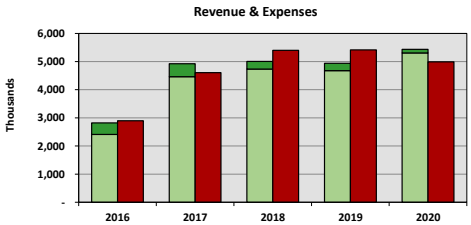
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	560,084	409,367	27,738	-	920,691
Grants and Contracts Receivable	177,270	173,577	95,461	34,727	71,238
Prepaid Expenses	15,178	85,505	85,103	256	2,135
Other Current Assets	-	75,000	-	-	-
Total Current Assets	752,532	743,449	208,302	34,983	994,064
Non-Current Assets					
Property, Building and Equipment, net	345,285	764,549	649,348	537,251	430,548
Restricted Cash	-	-	75,000	75,000	75,000
Security Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Other Non-Current Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total Non - Current Assets	345,285	764,549	724,348	612,251	505,548
Total Assets	1,097,817	1,507,998	932,650	647,234	1,499,612
LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	152,360	152,711	114,740	102,425	203,929
Accrued Payroll and Payroll Taxes	55,248	111,129	133,878	121,314	143,268
Due to Related Parties	-	-	-	125,000	-
Refundable Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Other Current Liabilities	324,319	243,531	108,037	252,086	384,682
Total Current Liabilities	531,927	507,371	356,655	600,825	731,879
Long-Term Liabilities					
Deferred Rent	-	171,720	202,640	213,560	219,897
Other Long-Term Liabilities	235,469	177,714	117,385	54,605	324,080
Total Long-Term Liabilities	235,469	349,434	320,025	268,165	543,977
Total Liabilities	767,396	856,805	676,680	868,990	1,275,856
NET ASSETS					
Unrestricted	285,898	521,673	247,887	(250,676)	222,155
Restricted	44,523	129,520	8,083	28,920	1,601
Total Net Assets	330,421	651,193	255,970	(221,756)	223,756
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,097,817	1,507,998	932,650	647,234	1,499,612

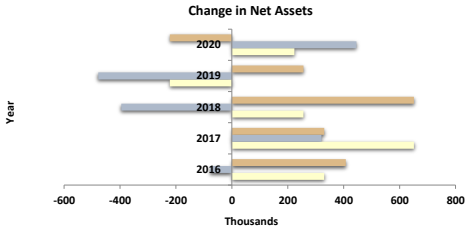




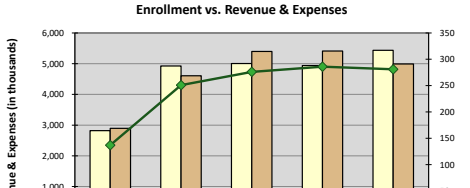
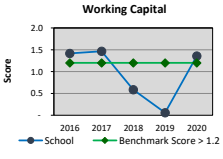
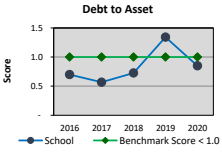
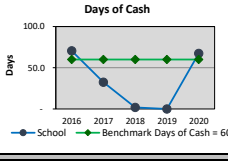
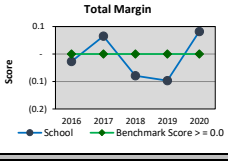
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

OPERATING REVENUE					
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - Reg. Ed	2,088,808	3,310,359	3,647,141	4,408,089	5,016,457
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - SPED	-	727,765	803,425	-	-
State and Local Per Pupil Facilities Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Grants	320,603	424,665	283,596	269,237	287,130
State and City Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Other Operating Income	-	-	-	-	4,637
Total Operating Revenue	2,409,411	4,462,789	4,734,162	4,677,326	5,308,224
EXPENSES					
Program Services					
Regular Education	1,706,474	2,863,373	3,654,624	3,518,481	3,288,582
Special Education	577,196	1,083,781	1,090,432	1,358,410	1,233,651
Other Expenses	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Services	2,283,670	3,947,154	4,745,056	4,876,891	4,522,233
Supporting Services					
Management and General	574,081	616,217	619,586	524,336	464,997
Fundraising	39,683	40,482	34,834	13,247	4,501
Total Support Services	613,764	656,699	654,420	537,583	469,498
Total Expenses	2,897,434	4,603,853	5,399,476	5,414,474	4,991,731
Surplus/Deficit from Operations	(488,023)	(141,064)	(665,314)	(737,148)	316,493
SUPPORT AND OTHER REVENUE					
Interest and Other Income	100	-	30	-	-
Contributions and Grants	375,480	453,278	253,104	240,756	78,690
Fundraising Support	-	7,483	16,957	18,666	25,829
Other Support and Revenue	35,345	1,075	-	-	24,500
Total Support and Other Revenue	410,925	461,836	270,091	259,422	129,019
Change in Net Assets	(77,098)	320,772	(395,223)	(477,726)	445,512
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	407,519	330,421	651,193	255,970	(221,756)
Net Assets - End of Year	330,421	651,193	255,970	(221,756)	223,756





FISCAL ANALYSIS

RATIOS, BENCHMARKS and FINDINGS

REVENUE & EXPENSE BREAKDOWN					
Revenue - Per Pupil					
Operating	17,587	17,780	17,153	16,354	18,890
Support and Other Revenue	2,999	1,840	979	907	459
Total Revenue	20,586	19,620	18,131	17,261	19,350
Expenses - Per Pupil					
Program Services	16,669	15,726	17,192	17,052	16,093
Mangement and General, Fundraising	4,480	2,616	2,371	1,880	1,671
Total Expenses	21,149	18,342	19,563	18,932	17,764
% of Program Services	78.8%	85.7%	87.9%	90.1%	90.6%
% of Management and Other	21.2%	14.3%	12.1%	9.9%	9.4%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses	-2.7%	7.0%	-7.3%	-8.8%	8.9%
FINANCIAL COMPOSITE SCORE					
Composite Score	1.39	1.89	0.57	(0.92)	1.14
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Strong; 1.5 - 3.0 / Adequate; 1.0 - 1.4 / Needs Monitoring; -1.0 - 0.9	Adequate	Strong	Needs Monitoring	Needs Monitoring	Adequate
WORKING CAPITAL					
Net Working Capital	220,605	236,078	(148,353)	(565,842)	262,185
Working Capital (Current) Ratio	1.4	1.5	0.6	0.1	1.4
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 1.2	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard
DEBT TO ASSET					
Debt to Asset Ratio	0.7	0.6	0.7	1.3	0.9
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or less than 1.0	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard
CASH POSITION					
Days of Cash	70.6	32.5	1.9	-	67.3
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 60 days	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	-	Meets Standard
TOTAL MARGIN					
Total Margin Ratio	(0.0)	0.1	(0.1)	(0.1)	0.1
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 0.0	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard