



New York State Education Department

2023-2024 Renewal Site Visit Report for Board of Regents-Authorized Charter Schools under the 2019 Charter School Performance Framework

Vertus Charter School

Renewal Site Visit Dates: November 14-15, 2023
Date of Final Draft Site Visit Report: April 18, 2024
Date of Final Site Visit Report: April 26, 2024

[Charter School Office](#)
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234
CharterSchools@nysed.gov
518-474-1762

is an integral component of charter school decision making at all levels. During the renewal visit, the CSO will look for evidence of community voice across the school from governance to the educational program,



Summary of Findings

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

x Summary of Areas of Growth and Progress (2017-18) (2018-19) (2019-20) (2020-21) (2021-22) (2022-23) (2023-24) (2024-25) (2025-26) (2026-27) (2027-28) (2028-29) (2029-30)

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 (I)-2.21 of I

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application cites eight days over the summer and four half-days and 14 full days for professional development during the year. Each week, a one hour "collaboration" meeting provides opportunities for academic support staff to meet with classroom teachers to review student progress and identify action steps needed to improve student success.

3. Element: ***Assessment and Program Evaluation:***

- x **Indicator a:** According to the renewal application, Vertus administers diagnostic assessments and uses formative and summative measures to gauge student strengths and monitor academic progress. The application notes that first- and second-year students take the NWEA-MAP assessments to provide a measure of growth over time on core academic concepts and skills. In the focus group interviews, school leaders confirmed that teachers are expected to use exit tickets with each lesson as a formative measure of student understanding of the lesson's learning objectives. School leaders reiterated that the online courseware regularly tracks student completion and assesses student understanding. Preceptors, teachers, and academic support

and ongoing review and revision of the curriculum maps is aimed at individualizing the pace,

Element

Indicators

2. Behavior Management and Safety

a. The 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 sy8 (e (m)120JJETQBT-0.06 (ti)13.6 (o)b)2f0f.3 (1yh)16.1 cain e (.6 (p)1a brw b2 370.92 3 (s)-1 (t)-3 i mh17.48 reW Qq191.2.36 (u.04 7 y)- 32.88e.36 (Tq18)1oQq191.

- x **Indicator b:** According to the renewal application and focus group interviews with student support staff and school leaders, Vertus engages with families through regular preceptor contact as well as family nights throughout the year. Vertus distributes progress reports five times each year and preceptors hand deliver the reports to families unable to attend the smrelreomecehm se

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: Meets

Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained as a Meets.

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>.

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

Financial Condition

Vertus Charter School appears to be in good 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 1.50 and 3.00 is generally considered to be in good financial health. Vertus Charter School's 2022-2023 composite score is 3.00.

Composite Scores 2018-2019 to 2022-2023

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2018-2019	(0.92)
2019-2020	

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: Meets

Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained as a Meets.

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 2022-2023 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

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: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Board Oversight and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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:

Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained as a Meets.

1. Element: *Board Oversight and Governance*:

Members of the governance committee review the responses and recommend actions to address any gaps or areas of concern. The board also stated that they use the Board on Track tool to evaluate the performance of the CEO. The board confers with school leaders to develop school performance goals as well as board strategic goals.

- x **Indicator b:** In the focus group, board members confirmed that they are actively recruiting new board members with diverse skills and expertise to complement the existing board roster. According to the renewal application, the board hopes to build out to 11 or 12 members by the end of 2024. Board members reported they have two candidates awaiting approval.

indicated that the finance

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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. School Leadership	<p>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.</p> <p>b. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place to ensure effective communication across the school.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>d. School leadership is familiar with NYSED Charter School Performance Framework standards and has a plan to ensure that the school meets these standards.</p>
2. Professional Climate	<p>a. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and the board of trustees are clearly defined and adhered to.</p> <p>b. The school ensures that staff has the requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet all students’ needs, including students in subgroups.</p> <p>c. The school is fully staffed with personnel who are able to meet all operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communications.</p> <p>d. The school has established procedures for effective collaboration among teachers.</p> <p>e. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality through a formal evaluation process for teacher and other staff.</p> <p>f. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher and staff feedback and to gauge their satisfaction.</p>
	<p>a. Changes in the school’s charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.</p>

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2. Element: *Professional Climate*:
 - x Indicator a: In the renewal application, Vertus

Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements

The school is faithful to its mission and has im8.6 (o)-8 (l8.6 (o)--d()T)1 Tf6 Tw2.3 (o)6 Td2.2 (s)2 (s)-5.3k8

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- x **Indicator b:** In the renewal application and the 2022-2023 Action Plan, Vertus lists a number of strategies they employ to attract and retain ED, SWD, and ELL students including print and radio advertising, participating in community activities, and hosting community events to attract visitors to tour the school and meet the staff. According to school leaders, Vertus now offers an ENL class for Spanish speaking students and plans to recruit additional ENL teachers to accommodate a larger population of students in the region for whom English is not their first language. In the focus group, one student described how Tc 0.004.h

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

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

Finding: Meets

Element

Indicators

- 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

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Overview

Charter School Selection

BEDS Code



2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

Charter School

VERTUS CHARTER SCHOOL

3.a.i. and 3.a.ii. High School Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup Total Cohort Regents Testing Outcomes:

Aggregate and Subgroup 4-Year Cohort Regents Testing Outcomes

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard



2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 9 - Indicator 1: Enrollment and Retention

1.b.i. and 1.b.ii. Retention:

Retention - Aggregate and Subgroups

	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
2018-2019	80%	82%	2%	85%	78%	7%	74%	70%	4%	87%	82%	5%
2019-2020	78%	84%	6%	78%	84%	6%	73%	80%	7%	80%	82%	2%

*See NOTES (2) and (6) below.

1.c.i. and 1.c.ii. High School Persistence:

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

	All Students			SWD			ELL			ED		
	Initial Cohort	Persisted	4-Year Persistence	Initial Cohort	Persisted	4-Year Persistence	Initial Cohort	Persisted	4-Year Persistence	Initial Cohort	Persisted	4-Year Persistence
2015 Cohort	59	26	44%	59	26	44%	14	3	21%	.	.	.
2016 Cohort	59	28	47%	59	28	47%	14	3	21%	.	.	.
2017 Cohort	98	45	46%	99	46	46%	21	10	48%	6	5	83%
2018 Cohort	10	6	60%	10	5	50%	62	43	62%	10	5	50%
2019 Cohort	10	6	60%	10	5	50%	62	43	62%	10	5	50%
2020 Cohort	10	5	50%	8	5	63%	49	30	61%	49	30	61%
2021 Cohort	10	5	50%	8	5	63%	49	30	61%	49	30	61%
2022 Cohort	16	10	63%	.	.	.	37	26	70%	61	41	67%

*See NO%

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Notes

- (1) Data in the table above represents tested students who scored proficiently on the NYSTP ELA, math, or science assessments or on the Regents math or science exams.
- (2) For the students with disabilities and the English language learners subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.
- (3) 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.
- (4) Data in the table above represents students who passed the Annual Regents or equivalents (score of 65 or better).
- (5) The 4- and 5-year graduation rates reported are as of August. The 6-year graduation rates are as of June.
- (6) Data in the table above represents a comparison between those grades served in the charter school to only those same grades in the district.
- (7) A "." in any table indicates that the data was suppressed, no student sat for the exam, or the exam was not given.
- (8) 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).
- (9) 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.
- (10) 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 graduation (includes August graduates).
- (11) Data in the table above is a comparison of the differentials of the 3-8 assessments and the 4-year graduation rate for the school and other schools with the same grade structure and similar subgroup enrollment pattern. The notation +/- 5, indicates the highest level of similarity.
- (12) Data in the table above represents students who passed their Regents ELA exam with a score equal to or higher than 75 and also passed at least one of their Regents math exams with a score equal to or higher than 80.
- (13) Schools are considered 'similar' for the purpose of this comparison when they serve the same grade band as the school in question. The degree of similarity is determined by comparison of the percentage of each subgroup's enrollment (students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students). An assignment of +/- 5 (7.5, or 10) indicates that the schools' subgroup enrollments are within 5 (7.5, or 10) percentage points for each subgroup.

