



Vertus HIGH SCHOOL

Vertus High School

Monthly Board Meeting

Published on November 10, 2023 at 6:46 PM EST

Amended on November 13, 2023 at 4:16 PM EST

Date and Time

Tuesday November 14, 2023 at 4:00 PM EST

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			4:00 PM
A. Record Attendance		Evan Gallina	1 m
B. Call the Meeting to Order			1 m
C. Approve Minutes	Approve Minutes		2 m
D. Action Item Review Prior Month	Discuss		10 m
II. Consent Agenda Items			4:14 PM
A. Month At A Glance	FYI	Levi Bennett	10 m
B. Board Statistics	FYI	Tim Hill	10 m
III. Finance			4:34 PM
A. Budget vs Actual & Cash Flow	Discuss	Amy Brisson	10 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
B. Board Vote	Vote	Jack O'Connell	10 m

The Board votes to approve the alignment of the signatories with the documented financial policies and procedures. Based on our Financial Policies and Procedures document, our banking signatories will be designated as the CEO, Julie Locey; Board Chair, Victoria Van Voorhis; and Treasurer, Jack O'Connell.

C. Board Vote	Vote	Jack O'Connell	10 m
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The Board votes to approve the addition of a signatory to the School Store account to accommodate a second card, not to be attached to the main operating account, to meet the needs of the school in the instance that the CEO is out of the building.

IV. Discussion Items 5:04 PM

A. Recruitment Update	Discuss	Levi Bennett	5 m
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B. Transgender Policy Draft		Julie Locey	15 m
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C. Complaint Resolution Vote	Vote	Victoria VanVoorhis	15 m
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The Board votes to accept the recommended steps to mitigate complaints about this situation and any other possible issues moving forward.

D. Enrollment Policy Preferences	Vote	Tim Hill	5 m
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The Board votes to approve adding an enrollment preference for dependents of current employees, after siblings, ELL students, and residents of the city of Rochester, and before out-of-district students.

V. Committee Reporting 5:44 PM

A. Board Resolution	Vote		5 m
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The Vertus Charter School Board of Trustees, having conducted a thorough criminal history record check via fingerprinting which is deemed acceptable by NYSED, and having discovered no State or federal criminal history, or having provided information regarding such history to NYSED, if found, and having verified that any academic and/or professional credential or qualification presented by the proposed member is genuine, and having reviewed the application in its entirety, has voted to select Sylvia David-West as a member to its Board of Trustees, with a term expiring on January 31, 2027 pending approval by NYSED. The resolution approving Sylvia David-West is adopted upon NYSED's approval.

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
VI. Closing Items			5:49 PM
A. New Action Item Review & Report Out	Discuss		5 m
B. Adjourn Meeting	Vote		

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Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: C. Approve Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2023_10_17_board_meeting_minutes (1).pdf

DRAFT



Vertus High School

Minutes

Monthly Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday October 17, 2023 at 4:30 PM

Directors Present

C. Gantt (remote), D. Johnson, E. Gallina, J. O'Connell (remote), M. Mandina, S. Ash, V. VanVoorhis

Directors Absent

None

Ex Officio Members Present

J. Locey

Non Voting Members Present

J. Locey

Guests Present

A. Brisson, L. Bennett, Norris Woods, T. Hill

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

V. VanVoorhis called a meeting of the board of directors of Vertus High School to order on Tuesday Oct 17, 2023 at 4:32 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

J. O'Connell made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Board Meeting on 09-19-23.

D. Johnson seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Action Item Review Prior Month

E. Program Updates: Career Preparation

Mr. Woods updated the Board on the college and career prep programs that the school is currently offering. The quantity of programs offered has continued to grow and student engagement is at an all time high.

II. Finance

A. Budget vs Actual & Cash Flow

Reviewed budget vs. actual and cash flow for the month.

III. Committee Reporting

A. Board Committee Structure & Monthly Reporting

B. Renewal Reminders

The NYSED site visit will be in November and the goal remains to receive a 5-year renewal of the charter.

IV. Closing Items

A. New Action Item Review & Report Out

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

E. Gallina

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Coversheet

Action Item Review Prior Month

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: D. Action Item Review Prior Month
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: 10.23Board_Action_Items_Running_List.docx

Board Action Items Running List Updated 8.1.23

Outstanding Items

1. The Finance committee will review financial policies and procedures and bring them to the September Board Meeting for approval. -Waiting for legal review
2. Transgender policy in place- Julie to discuss with Kirsten Barclay.- Contacted Kirsten waiting to hear back from her on her findings. **(By October Meeting)Complete**
3. Tory and Jack want to give a gift to Jael Duran. (Julie to check with Mr. Strowe-what type of computer can he use?)
4. Tory to generate Board candidate spreadsheet and upload to Board on Track.-Complete

July Action Items:

1. Julie to email Mid-Term Report to Board- Uploaded to Board on Track under Board Documents-Charter Renewal – Complete
2. Julie to add Enrollment & Admissions Policy to Board Agenda for August.- Complete

August Action Items:

1. Tory to follow up with Deke and Emma regarding the Board breakfast with LaTricia to confirm it took place and also convening a breakfast with Clayton.
2. Calvin to find contact to connect us to the refugee organizations.- Complete
3. Finance Committee to research and make other recommendations for banking.
4. Evan to get a contact for a Financial Planner. He will connect with Jack on this as well.
5. Julie add “ revised 2023” to the bottom of the Admissions Policy- Complete
6. Julie to update Board Meeting topics draft to include Finance Committee each month. Complete

September Action Items

1. Levi will send a Doodle poll to the fundraising committee (Evan, Mike, Stephanie) to set up an initial Gala meeting. -Complete

2. Levi and Tim to send Calvin several dates to set up an Adrian Hale visit. Dates sent-waiting for Calvin's response.

October Action Items

1. Julie to set up Renewal training dates with Maria. Sent Doodle poll to Board members. Complete
2. Board to read and comment on Transgender policy and return to Julie. Document uploaded to Board on Track for members to access.
3. Governance Training: Kirsten to send Julie the training to upload to Board on Track.
4. Deke & Tory to review candidate lists.



Coversheet

Month At A Glance

Section: II. Consent Agenda Items
Item: A. Month At A Glance
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: November- Month at a glance.pdf



MONTH AT A GLANCE

November

Optifab 2023 Student Conference 10/19

- Our students were visibly excited as they explored the various exhibits and interacted with professionals and experts in optics. This field trip served as a chance for our students to attend keynote sessions delivered by industry leaders. These sessions not only inspired our students but also provided valuable insights into the potential career paths and opportunities within the optics and photonics industry.



- **Judge Vacca Mock Trial**
 - Once again, our students have completed an internship with Judge Vacca. Students showcased everything they learned throughout their time with her and her team. It was a pleasure seeing them in action



- **Eastman School of Music field trip-**
 - Our students were welcomed into the world-renowned Eastman School of Music, and from the moment they stepped onto the campus, the atmosphere was charged with creativity and passion for the musical arts. The students had the privilege of exploring state-of-the-art facilities, attending performances, and engaging with faculty and students who shared their expertise and experiences.



- **Youth Halloween Party and Trunk or Treat**

- The excitement was palpable as families and students gathered at Vertus for an evening of festive fun. What truly made this event exceptional was the overwhelming turnout of families. We were thrilled to see a sea of smiling faces, both familiar and new, as families from near and far joined in the Halloween festivities. The sense of community and camaraderie was heartwarming, and it reaffirmed the strong bonds that unite us at Vertus.



Coversheet

Board Statistics

Section: II. Consent Agenda Items
Item: B. Board Statistics
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Statistics Report_2023.11.pdf



BOARD STATISTICS

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Start of Year	September	October	2023-24 Target
<i>School Year data: September through August</i>													
Enrollment	103 ⁽¹⁾	137 ⁽¹⁾	256 ⁽¹⁾	279 ⁽¹⁾	288 ⁽¹⁾	283 ⁽¹⁾	258 ⁽¹⁾	264 ⁽¹⁾	313 ⁽¹⁾	339	336	330	340
African American	83%	79%	85%	78%	71%	81%	76%	68%	70%	64%	64%	65%	
Hispanic	15%	17%	13%	17%	22%	12%	22%	28%	28%	33%	33%	33%	
White	3%	4%	2%	5%	6%	6%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	
Asian	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	<1%	
Native American or Alaskan	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Special Education ⁽⁹⁾	23%	26%	23%	22%	19%	28%	33%	30%	31%	NA	NA	34%	20%
ELL	0%	0%	3%	6%	5%	9%	4%	10%	8%	NA	NA	9%	
Attendance - September to June	82.4%	83.3%	86.8%	85.3%	78.8%	80.1%	76.9%	70.0%	77.0%	NA	80.7%	79.3%	85.0%
Suspensions (Students)	NA ⁽²⁾	87	113	177	207	137	19	129	129	NA	9	19	
Expulsions	NA ⁽²⁾	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	
Students Enrolled				31	26	43	29	54	70	NA	15	9	
Graduation Rate (Total Cohort - 4 Year Outcome)	NA	NA	NA	65%	66%	82%	75%	68%	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Credits Earned by Entire Student Body in Edgenuity	153.50	223.50	321.25	773.75	747.75	730.25	1443.5	1005.25	854.25	NA	51.75	90.25	
Total Number of Courses Completed	743	1782	3075	5321	4838	4546	5517	2998	1856	NA	98	184	
Credits Earned by Entire Student Body per Student in Edgenuity	1.5	1.6	1.3	2.8	2.6	2.6	5.6	3.8	2.7	NA	0.2	0.3	
Total Number of Courses Completed per Student	7.2	13.0	12.0	19.1	16.8	16.1	21.4	11.4	5.9	NA	0.3	0.6	

<i>Assessment Results</i>													
NWEA Growth - Reading	450%	196%	261%	261%	156%	152% ⁽¹⁰⁾	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	150%
NWEA Growth - Mathematics	300%	213%	221%	250%	213%	21% ⁽¹⁰⁾	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	150%
NWEA % Projected Growth Met - Reading	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	69%	66%	NA	NA	NA	
NWEA % Projected Growth Met - Mathematics	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	45%	49%	NA	NA	NA	
Regents - Annual Pass Rate - All Exams	NA	100% ⁽³⁾	71% ⁽⁴⁾	67% ⁽⁵⁾	69% ⁽⁶⁾	66% ⁽⁷⁾	NA	58% ⁽¹¹⁾	39% ⁽¹²⁾	NA	NA	NA	State Average

<i>Fiscal Year Data: July through June</i>													
Fundraising	\$577,984	\$331,056	\$242,559	\$229,100	\$196,000	\$89,735							\$175,000

(1) As of BEDS Day (October)
 (2) Discipline data for 2014-15 is not accurate
 (3) 37 Exams Administered
 (4) 164 Exams Administered
 (5) 493 Exams Administered
 (6) 519 Exams Administered
 (7) 259 Exams Administered (June and August Regents were Cancelled)

Coversheet

Budget vs Actual & Cash Flow

Section: III. Finance
Item: A. Budget vs Actual & Cash Flow
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: Budget vs. Actual October 2023 Board (2).pdf
CashflowOct23.pdf

Fiscal Year 2023-24 - Budget vs. Actual Report - October 2023 - Accrual Basis						Notes
	Approved	YTD	Projected	Projected		
	Budget	Total - 10/31/2023		Total	Variance	
Revenue						
4100 State Grants						
4101 Per Pupil General Education	4,581,120.00	1,527,040.00	3,054,080.00	4,581,120.00	0.00	
4102 Per Pupil Special Education	1,942,500.00	647,500.00	1,295,000.00	1,942,500.00	0.00	
Total 4100 State Grants	\$ 6,523,620.00	\$ 2,174,540.00	\$ 4,349,080.00	\$ 6,523,620.00	\$ 0.00	
4200 Federal Grants						
4201 IDEA Special Needs	108,689.00	36,229.67	93,503.33	129,733.00	21,044.00	Higher than anticipated when budgeted
4202 Title I	149,339.00	49,779.67	166,807.33	216,587.00	67,248.00	Higher than anticipated when budgeted
4203 Title IIA	21,699.00	7,233.00	14,466.00	21,699.00	0.00	
4204 Title IV	17,248.00	5,749.33	11,498.67	17,248.00	0.00	
4206 E-Rate	13,500.00	4,500.00	9,000.00	13,500.00	0.00	
4209 CRRSA (ESSERII)/ARP (ESSER)/CSP	571,247.00	190,415.67	380,831.33	571,247.00	0.00	
Total 4200 Federal Grants	\$ 881,722.00	\$ 293,907.33	\$ 676,106.67	\$ 970,014.00	\$ 88,292.00	
4300 Contributions & Donations						
4301 Restricted Contributions	0.00	94,500.00	0.00	94,500.00	94,500.00	Current month food pantry \$5k, robotics \$500
4302 Unrestricted Contributions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
4303 NGLC Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
4304 Farash Foundation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
4304a GRHF Grant	61,167.00	20,389.00	40,778.00	61,167.00	0.00	
4305 Fundraising	150,000.00	4,850.00	112,500.00	117,350.00	-32,650.00	Current month - \$1k individual donor, currently behind target
4306 In-kind Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total 4300 Contributions & Donations	\$ 211,167.00	\$ 119,739.00	\$ 153,278.00	\$ 273,017.00	\$ 61,850.00	
4400 Fundraising						
4401 Fundraising Events	0.00	5,000.00	-5,000.00	0.00	0.00	
Total 4400 Fundraising	\$ 0.00	\$ 5,000.00	-\$ 5,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
4500 Interest Income						
4501 Interest Income	53,400.00	41,469.25	11,930.75	53,400.00	0.00	
Total 4500 Interest Income	53,400.00	41,469.25	11,930.75	53,400.00	0.00	
4600 Other Revenue						
4606 School Store Revenue	42,000.00	13,597.88	28,402.12	42,000.00	0.00	
Total 4600 Other Revenue	42,000.00	13,597.88	28,402.12	42,000.00	0.00	
Total Revenue	\$ 7,711,909.00	\$ 2,648,253.46	\$ 5,213,797.54	\$ 7,862,051.00	\$ 150,142.00	
Expenditures						
2200 Misc. Payables						
2201 Loan Payable	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total 2200 Misc. Payables	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
5000 Compensation						
Total 5100 Administrative Staff	\$ 619,282.00	\$ 191,976.54	\$ 484,190.46	\$ 676,167.00	\$ 56,885.00	Day Porter contract will be higher than budgeted (~\$9,885), Security Guard hired (~\$47k)
Total 5200 Instructional Staff	\$ 3,427,104.00	\$ 970,216.99	\$ 2,414,887.01	\$ 3,385,104.00	\$ (42,000.00)	Will not hire 1 preceptor (\$42k), as an offset to Security Guard
Total 5000 Compensation	\$ 4,046,386.00	\$ 1,162,193.53	\$ 2,899,077.47	\$ 4,061,271.00	\$ 14,885.00	

Fiscal Year 2023-24 - Budget vs. Actual Report - October 2023 - Accrual Basis						
	Approved	YTD	Projected	Projected		
	Budget	Total - 10/31/2023		Total	Variance	Notes
Total 5300 Other	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 13,775.00	\$ 81,225.00	\$ 95,000.00	\$ -	
Total 5500 Payroll Taxes and Benefits	\$ 375,587.00	\$ 101,143.91	\$ 274,443.09	\$ 375,587.00	\$ -	
Total 5600 Employee Benefits	\$ 462,945.00	\$ 121,916.93	\$ 341,028.07	\$ 462,945.00	\$ -	
Total 5700 Retirement & Pension	\$ 101,036.00	\$ 24,945.23	\$ 76,090.77	\$ 101,036.00	\$ -	
TOTAL Comp, Taxes, Benefits, Bonus, Retirement	\$ 5,080,954.00	\$ 1,423,974.60	\$ 3,671,864.40	\$ 5,095,839.00	\$ 14,885.00	
Total 6100 General Administrative	\$ 132,440.00	\$ 40,101.93	\$ 92,338.07	\$ 132,440.00	\$ -	
Total 6200 Insurance	\$ 84,000.00	\$ 23,777.47	\$ 60,222.53	\$ 84,000.00	\$ -	
Total 6300 Professional Services	\$ 257,092.00	\$ 98,646.62	\$ 158,445.38	\$ 257,092.00	\$ -	
Total 6400 Professional Development	\$ 63,715.00	\$ 37,319.68	\$ 26,395.32	\$ 63,715.00	\$ -	
Total 6500 Recruitment	\$ 121,500.00	\$ 46,479.96	\$ 75,020.04	\$ 121,500.00	\$ -	
Total 6600 Fundraising Expenses/External Relations	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,119.49	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,119.49	\$ 1,119.49	Portico Consulting, other Summer Bussing higher than budgeted (\$6,400), additional purchases using restriced grant money (\$17k)
Total 7100 Curriculum and Classroom	\$ 561,686.00	\$ 233,967.19	\$ 351,118.81	\$ 585,086.00	\$ 23,400.00	
Total 7200 Enrichment Programs	\$ 42,300.00	\$ 5,066.57	\$ 37,233.43	\$ 42,300.00	\$ -	
Total 8100 Facility Operations & Maintenance	\$ 736,051.00	\$ 244,174.98	\$ 491,876.02	\$ 736,051.00	\$ -	
Total 8200 Technology/Telecommunication Expense	\$ 176,848.00	\$ 55,492.58	\$ 121,355.42	\$ 176,848.00	\$ -	
Total 8800 Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 6,100.00	\$ 15,563.83	-\$ 9,463.83	\$ 6,100.00	\$ -	
Total 8900 Depreciation Expense & Amortization	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 47,615.64	\$ 82,384.36	\$ 130,000.00	\$ -	
Total Operating Expenditures	\$ 7,392,686.00	\$ 2,273,300.54	\$ 5,158,789.95	\$ 7,432,090.49	\$ 39,404.49	
Total 1500 Fixed Assets	\$ 287,051.00	\$ 319,712.27	\$ 0.00	\$ 319,712.27	\$ 32,661.27	Additional purchases using restricted grant money
Total revenues	\$ 7,711,909.00	\$ 2,648,253.46	\$ 5,213,797.54	\$ 7,862,051.00	\$ 150,142.00	
Operating expenses	\$ 7,392,686.00	\$ 2,273,300.54	\$ 5,158,789.95	\$ 7,432,090.49	\$ 39,404.49	
Depreciation	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 47,615.64	\$ 82,384.36	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 0.00	
Fixed assets	\$ 287,051.00	\$ 319,712.27	\$ 0.00	\$ 319,712.27	\$ 32,661.27	
Subtotal	\$ 162,172.00	\$ 102,856.29	\$ 137,391.95	\$ 240,248.24	\$ 78,076.24	

Fiscal Year 2023-24 - Cash Flow Projection
As of October 2023

	July 2023 - Actual	August 2023 - Actual	September 2023 - Actual	October 2023 - Actual	November 2023 - Projected	December 2023 - Projected	January 2024 - Projected	February 2024 - Projected
East Irondequoit	\$11,290.83	\$0.00	\$9,320.66	\$0.00	\$4,660.00	\$0.00	\$4,660.00	\$0.00
East Rochester	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Brighton	\$0.00	\$2,767.63	\$4,956.00	\$17,100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,767.63	\$0.00
Gates-Chili	\$0.00	\$4,337.00	\$0.00	\$8,504.86	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,337.00	\$0.00
Brockport	\$2,082.17	\$17,115.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,321.51	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Churchville-Chili	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,920.66	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Greece	\$14,538.47	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$29,897.00	\$12,813.00	\$0.00	\$12,813.00	\$0.00
West Irondequoit	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,339.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Rush Henrietta	\$0.00	\$2,519.79	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pittsford	\$2,523.00	\$0.00	\$2,522.83	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
RCS D	\$648,992.00	\$0.00	\$863,732.00	\$0.00	\$756,362.00	\$0.00	\$500,000.00	\$0.00
RCS D Sped	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$853,998.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Federal Grants - 22 - 23	\$9,428.00	\$61,850.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$26,491.82	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Federal Grants - 23 - 24	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$26,900.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
IDEA Grant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Summers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
E3 Rochester	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Emil Muller Foundation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ESSER Grant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ESSER II Grant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ESSER III Grant	\$0.00	\$115,625.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Farash Foundation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fundraising**	\$350.00	\$7,000.00	\$10,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dick's Sporting Goods	\$0.00	\$75,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
McGowan	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Chaparral Glass	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ESL Federal Credit Union	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bill Belichick	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
USAC Treasury	\$0.00	\$51,519.63	\$15,775.64	\$8,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CSP Grant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Willmott Foundation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Wegman (Rochester Area Community)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Greater Rochester Health Grant	\$0.00	\$60,750.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
STEM Grant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Insurance Refund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Gala Income	\$5,100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
M&T Interest Income	\$11,376.00	\$10,332.30	\$10,578.35	\$9,182.60	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
School Store Revenue	\$40.00	\$1,184.00	\$5,513.88	\$6,900.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00

	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024
Total Deposits	\$705,720.47	\$410,000.35	\$931,159.02	\$85,584.46	\$1,671,146.93	\$337,400.00	\$535,077.63	\$10,500.00
Total Disbursements	\$563,118.02	\$818,333.02	\$687,211.80	\$557,461.18	\$620,000.00	\$620,000.00	\$620,000.00	\$620,000.00
Increase (Decrease) In Cash	\$142,602.45	-\$408,332.67	\$243,947.22	-\$471,876.72	\$1,051,146.93	-\$282,600.00	-\$84,922.37	-\$609,500.00
Cash, Beginning of Period	\$2,584,716.49	\$2,727,318.94	\$2,318,986.27	\$2,562,933.49	\$2,091,056.77	\$3,142,203.70	\$2,859,603.70	\$2,774,681.33
Cash, End of Period	\$2,727,318.94	\$2,318,986.27	\$2,562,933.49	\$2,091,056.77	\$3,142,203.70	\$2,859,603.70	\$2,774,681.33	\$2,165,181.33

Coversheet

Transgender Policy Draft

Section: IV. Discussion Items
Item: B. Transgender Policy Draft
Purpose:
Submitted by:
Related Material: Transgenderpolicydraft10.23.pdf

Transgender Student Policy

An essential part of sustaining schools that create joyful cultures and develop resilient, empathetic, and knowledgeable people is ensuring that all community members feel valued, affirmed, and respected. In GLSEN's 2019 *School Climate Study*, an overwhelming 84.4% of transgender students reported feeling unsafe at school due to their identity. In order for children to learn, grow, and develop in our school communities, we must first ensure that their underlying and essential need for safety is met.

Current Laws and Policies

There are several laws and policies that prohibit discrimination against and harassment of transgender students, including (but not limited to):

- [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#)
- [NY Educ L § 3201-A \(2012\)](#)
- [Dignity for All Students Act \(DASA\)](#)
- [Gender Expression Non-discrimination Act \(GENDA\)](#)
- [N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-102\(23\)](#)
- [Chancellor's Regulation A-830](#)
- [Chancellor's Regulation A-831](#)
- [Chancellor's Regulation A-832](#)

Vertus High School is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students, free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expansiveness, and gender expression, and to ensuring that every student has equal access to Vertus's educational programs and activities. Additionally, Vertus policy requires that all schools and all personnel promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among all students and staff. The guidelines provided in this policy do not anticipate every situation that might occur with respect to student gender identity and will assess and address the specific needs of each student on a case-by-case basis.

Terms and Definitions

Much of the section below has been taken directly from GLSEN's *Model Local Education Agency Policy on Transgender and Nonbinary Students*.

Transgender and nonbinary students may use different terms to describe their lives and experiences of gender. Terminology and language differ and evolve based on region, language, race or ethnicity, age, culture, and many other factors. Some examples of terms used by some youth include: trans, trans girl, trans boy, nonbinary, genderqueer, gender fluid, demi girl, demi boy, and many more. Some trans youth prefer simply to be referred to as boys or girls except when their trans status is specifically relevant. These terms often mean different things or refer to different experiences of gender. Staff and educators should reflect and use the terms that students use to describe themselves and avoid terms that make these students uncomfortable.

These definitions are provided not for the purpose of imposing labels but rather to assist in understanding this policy and the obligations of school and agency personnel. Students may or may not use these terms to describe themselves or their experiences.

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH: A designation a person is assigned at birth and which is recorded on an infant's birth certificate, if such a certificate exists.

GENDER IDENTITY: A person's deeply held knowledge of their own gender, which can include being a man, woman, another gender, or no gender. Gender identity is an innate part of a person's identity. One's gender identity may or may not align with society's expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth (male, female, or intersex).

Note: throughout this document, it is to be assumed that "gender identity" refers to the gender identity asserted by the student at school.

GENDER EXPRESSION: Expression of gender, whether through hair styles, makeup, or personal fashion, changes over the course of a person's lifetime.

TRANSGENDER/TRANS: An adjective describing a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. A trans woman is a woman whose sex was assigned male when she was born. A trans man is a man whose sex was assigned female when he was born. Some transgender people are not male or female and may use terms like nonbinary to describe their gender (see below).

GENDER NONCONFORMING: A term sometimes used to describe people whose gender expression differs from social expectations, and people who are perceived as androgynous in some way. Being gender nonconforming is distinct from being transgender, though some trans people may consider themselves to be gender nonconforming. For example, a cisgender woman who has short hair and likes sports might consider herself gender nonconforming but may not identify as transgender.

NONBINARY: A term used to refer to people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify with a different gender, a combination of genders, or no gender. Nonbinary may be considered a subset of transgender or a distinct identity. Other similar or more specific terms may include genderqueer, gender fluid, agender, or Two-Spirit. (for Native American students).

CISGENDER: An adjective describing a person whose gender identity corresponds with the gender society typically associates with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a cisgender woman was assigned female at birth and identifies as female her gender as a woman.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: A person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to other people. This includes being straight, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, or many other terms used to describe sexual orientation. **This is different and distinct from gender identity.** Transgender and nonbinary people may be straight, gay, lesbian, asexual, or any other sexual orientation.

TRANSITION: The process in which a person begins to live according to their gender identity. Transition is a process that is different for everyone, and it may or may not involve specific medical treatments or changes to official documents. There is no one step or set of steps that an individual must undergo in order to have their gender identity affirmed and respected.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Vertus Charter School abides by the New York State Dignity for All Students Act (“DASA”). This law seeks to “provide students with a safe and supportive environment from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying (including cyberbullying) on school property, a school bus, and/or at a school function.” Discrimination and harassment are prohibited by employees or students based on a person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex.

Enrollment

Due to its status as a single sex/gender learning institution, eligibility for enrollment at Vertus will be based upon a prospective student’s preferred gender identity at the time of application, rather than the student’s assigned sex at birth. Should a student’s gender identity change during the student’s tenure at Vertus, an assessment conducted by school personnel along with input from the student and the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) shall determine whether it would be in the best interest of the student to continue the student’s education at Vertus.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The [Family Education Rights Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) is a federal law which applies to all aspects of a student’s identity, including their gender identity and transgender status (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Under FERPA, only those school employees with a “legitimate educational interest,” the student, or their parent or guardian may have access to a student’s records.

Vertus recognizes that the process of determining one’s gender identity requires sensitivity and discretion and, to the greatest extent possible, students’ status as transgender or gender non-conforming will be kept confidential. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the student’s privacy interests must be balanced against the obligation of school administrators to provide a safe, effective, and nurturing learning environment and to keep staff members properly informed so they may respond effectively and appropriately to issues arising in the school.

School personnel shall not disclose a student’s gender identity status to third persons, including, but not limited to, other students, parents, and/or other school personnel, unless there is an appropriate business, educational, or health or safety reason for doing so. Except as set forth herein, all students shall be afforded the discretion to discuss and express their gender identity and gender expression and to decide when, with whom, and how much information to share with others.

Prior to disclosing any such information about any transgender or nonbinary student, educators and staff should work with the student to discuss the manner, time, and message of this disclosure. This should include providing the student with any support services they may need to make the disclosure in a safe and supportive environment.

It should be acknowledged that many transgender students face significant challenges when sharing their gender identity with their families. Some may have chosen not to share their identity with their families due to safety concerns or a lack of acceptance. For this reason, it is paramount that school staff seek to balance the goal of supporting the student, protecting their

privacy, and ensuring that parents/guardians are kept informed about their child. **“The most important consideration in such situations is the health and safety of the child.”**

Names and Pronouns

Students are entitled to be addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to the student’s gender identity that they assert at school. Students are not required to obtain parental consent or a court-ordered name and/or gender change before being addressed by their chosen name and pronoun.

When apprised of a student's transgender or Gender non-conforming status, Vertus will endeavor to engage the student and their parents or guardians, as appropriate, in an effort to agree upon a plan that will accommodate the student's individual needs at school. Students who identify as Transgender or GNC have the right to discuss and convey their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share this confidential information. The plan may, therefore, include when and how to initiate the student's preferred name and associated pronoun use and if, when, and how this is communicated to others. Vertus staff will use the name and pronoun that corresponds to the gender identity the student consistently asserts at school.

Records

As required by law, Vertus will maintain the confidentiality of student information and records. If a student who identifies as transgender or GNC has officially changed their name, as demonstrated by court order or birth certificate, Vertus will change its official and unofficial records, as needed, to reflect the change. Vertus will maintain records with the student's assigned birth name in a separate, confidential file.

If a student who identifies as transgender or GNC has not officially changed their name, but wishes to be referred to by a different name that corresponds to their gender identity, Vertus will process the name change request in accordance with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) pertaining to the amendment of education records, upon request of the student’s parent(s), or upon request of the student if the student is an “eligible student” (i.e., if the student is emancipated from their parents or is age 18 or older or is attending a postsecondary educational institution). However, absent a request from a student's parent(s) or eligible student to amend the student’s education records, Vertus may create or change unofficial records to reflect the name and gender identity that the student consistently asserts at school.

Official State Records

On state standardized tests, certain reports to the New York State Education Department, and when necessary to ensure appropriate and coordinated access to state or federal benefits plans or programs, Vertus will use the student's birth name and biological sex. Vertus will maintain records with the student's assigned birth name and gender in a separate, confidential file.

Medical or Health Records

To the extent necessary to provide appropriate medical care to students and to coordinate care for students with other health care professionals or licensed medical professionals, student medical records should include the student’s birth name and biological sex. Medical records should be

kept separately from other student records and should only be used and/or accessed when necessary.

School Facilities

As a male single gender school all student restrooms, locker rooms, or changing facilities, are designated for male use.

Any student who is uncomfortable using a shared gender-segregated facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon the student's request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. However, such alternatives shall only be provided to a student upon that student's request. Requiring a transgender or nonbinary student to use a separate space against their wishes threatens to stigmatize the student and disclose their transgender status to others. Under no circumstances may students be required to use gender-segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity.

Participation in Physical Education Classes & Interscholastic Sports

To the fullest extent permitted by law, all students are to be provided the same opportunities to participate in Vertus's physical education program. Notwithstanding the foregoing, physical education teachers shall have the discretion to group students to accommodate specific student needs and the lesson's learning goals.

Participation in interscholastic athletic activities and contact sports are to be addressed on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the rules established by Section One of the New York State Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Vertus's athletic director will notify opposing team athletic directors or the New York State Public High School Athletic Association if a student needs any accommodations during competitions. The coach of every interscholastic athletic team shall make reasonable accommodations, consistent with this policy, for students on visiting teams who require access to bathrooms and locker room facilities at Vertus schools.

Uniform Policy

Transgender and gender non-conforming students shall be permitted to wear clothing that corresponds to their gender identity or expression, provided that their clothing is consistent with the Uniform Policy that is applied to all students.

Vertus's uniform policy applies while its athletes are traveling to and from athletic contests. Athletes will have access to uniforms that are appropriate for their sport.

Coversheet

Complaint Resolution Vote

Section: IV. Discussion Items
Item: C. Complaint Resolution Vote
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Vertus-Complaint-Policy-8.29.16.pdf
Action Steps Memo(16731274.1).pdf
Complaint Investigation Report 11.4.23(16761554.1).pdf
CBufiscomplaint9.29.pdf



Complaint Policy

Vertus is committed to resolving concerns and complaints in a manner in which all parties feel respectfully heard and understood. We encourage those with concerns to first contact the individual involved to give him/her an opportunity to respond or resolve the concern informally. If the issue is not resolved, there are two procedures outlined below. The first procedure is for informal complaints regarding the instruction, operations or administration of the school. The second procedure is for formal complaints involving a belief that the school has violated a term of its charter or the law. In all cases, the school prohibits retaliation against complainants. The school will attempt to keep information about complainants confidential, except where it is necessary or appropriate to disclose it.

Informal complaints

Informal complaints are issues that arise which do not involve the belief that Vertus Charter School has violated a term of its charter or the law. The following process will be followed to resolve informal complaints:

- If complaints are regarding treatment of students by staff or fellow students, the complainant should contact the Dean of Students.
- If complaints are regarding daily services, such as transportation, food or facilities, the complainant should contact the Chief Operating Officer.
- If complaints are about student grades or other instructional concerns, the complainant should contact the Teacher or Lead Teacher.
- If the concern is still unresolved, the complainant should contact the Chief Executive Officer.
- If after speaking to the Chief Executive Officer, the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant may issue a written appeal addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Vertus Charter School {address to come}. The complainant may also attend a Board meeting and speak during the regularly-scheduled public comment period. Board meeting times and locations are posted on the school's website at VertusSchool.org.



Formal complaints

Formal complaints are defined according to section 2855 (4) of the NYS Charter Schools Act, which explains that any individual, including parents, who believe that a charter school has violated a term of its charter or the law may complain formally to the school's Board of Trustees and seek relief. If an individual issues a formal complaint about the school, the following process will be followed:

1. All complaints must be issued in writing and addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, {address}.
2. Complaints may not be anonymous; there must be an individual or group who signs the complaint and is responsible for providing relevant information regarding the complaint.
3. The Chairman of the Board can investigate the complaint or can delegate an unbiased board member, staff person or outside person to investigate the complaint.
4. During the investigation, the investigator will gather all relevant evidence (including first person statements from staff, parents and students as necessary, copies of any documents at issue, and pursuing all other leads) to fairly assess the situation and develop an understanding of what happened.
5. At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will prepare a report for the Chairman, who will, in turn, propose action steps. The Chairman will present the recommended action steps to the Board, which will be responsible for approving or denying the Chairman's recommendations. Should the Board not approve the recommendations, members may suggest and vote on alternative action steps for resolving the complaint. All complaints will be acted upon by the Board within 30 days of receiving the formal written complaint, or by the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, whichever is longer, unless extenuating circumstances outlined in the complaint require an expedited review.
6. The Chairman will send written notification to the complainant in writing within 15 business days of the decision regarding the action steps approved by the Board of Trustees.
7. If the complainant believes that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, s/he may present the complaint to the New York State Education Department Charter School Office, either via mail at: Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234, or via email to: charterschools@mail.nysed.gov The subject line of the email should read: Complaint: [Name of School].

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Tory VanVoorhis, Chair, Board of Trustees

DATE: November 10, 2023

RE: Recommended Action Steps related to September 19, 2023 Formal Complaint

As you know, a formal complaint was filed by Sherisse Bufis-Scott on September 19, 2023. Pursuant to Vertus's Complaint Policy, I appointed Julie Locey to investigate the complaint and provide the Board with findings. Her Investigation Report, along with a copy of the Complaint and Vertus's Complaint Policy, are attached.

The investigation finds Vertus did not violate the law or its charter. However, I am required by our policy to recommend action steps for the Board's consideration.¹ Therefore, I recommend the following:

- The administration should propose and the Board should adopt a Community Use Policy for Vertus's school facilities. The policy should include:
 - Agreements between the users and School that the School is not responsible for supervising, monitoring or in any way assisting with attendance, equipment, or conduct.
 - Proof of liability insurance and the naming of Vertus as an additional insured on the organization's policy.
 - A liability waiver for the School.
 - Requirements related to compliance with health, fire and safety codes (e.g., maximum capacity; food handling)
 - Charges/fees for actual costs incurred by the School for, e.g., custodian attendance (a legal requirement).
- Additionally, the School should develop regulations governing the use of the facilities. These would include but may not be limited to:
 - Use of equipment, supplies, and/or certain rooms.
 - Expectations about the condition the building should be left in.
 - How any charges are calculated.
 - Cancellation guidelines.
 - Content of programs (i.e., School's right to review content as part of application process)

- Food storage and service requirements (per health department rules)
- AEDs, fire, safety, emergency rules
- The board should, via a letter to the Complainant, make suggestions related to her future presence on school grounds so that she can attend any school-related functions involving her son.

Please review these proposed steps and the board's charge, above, in preparation for discussion at the November Board meeting. Once action steps are adopted by the Board, the complainant will be notified.

ⁱ The relevant provision of the policy reads, "The Chairman will present the recommended action steps to the Board, which will be responsible for approving or denying the Chairman's recommendations. Should the Board not approve the recommendations, members may suggest and vote on alternative action steps for resolving the complaint."

TO: Vertus Charter High School Board of Trustees
FROM: Julie A. Locey, CEO
DATE: November 10, 2023
RE: Formal Complaint Investigation Report – CONFIDENTIAL

I. Introduction.

On or about September 29, 2023, Cherrise Bufis-Scott (“the Complainant”) emailed the Board of Trustees complaining that a Vertus employee (“the Employee”) violated an order of protection. Because the allegation involved a violation of a law, the email was considered a “formal complaint” pursuant to Vertus’s complaint policy, and I conducted the investigation pursuant to the relevant provisions of that policy.

By way of background, the Complainant is a both the parent of a current Vertus student and the ex-wife of the Employee. (The Employee is not the parent of the Vertus student.) The Complainant alleged that, on Saturday, September 16, 2023, the Employee violated an order of protection by attending the same event as her at Vertus High School. The event was hosted by the National Parent’s Union, which had requested and received approval to host the event at Vertus’s facility.

At some point during the event, the Complainant called the police and alleged the Employee was violating an Order of Protection she had in place against him. The police came to Vertus toward or at the end of the event and interviewed the Complainant, the Employee, and Principal Levi Bennett. The police provided a police report and left without arresting the Employee or otherwise requesting he leave the school.

II. Overview of Investigation.

The purpose of this investigation was to: (1) determine what happened between the Complainant and Employee at the *National Parents Union Summit* held at Vertus High School on September 16, 2023; (2) determine whether Vertus violated its charter or any law as a result of the alleged incident; and (3) provide a report to the Board of Trustees in accordance with Vertus’s Complaint Policy.

As part of the Investigation, I reviewed: (1) the email complaint; (2) written statements from the Employee, event childcare provider Mildrena Vega, and Vertus Principal Levi Bennett; (3) the police report created by Rochester Police Department Officer Ian Fry; and (4) an Order of Protection provided by the Employee. I also spoke with: (1) Mr. Bennet; and (2) the Employee.

III. The Investigation.

A. The Complaint

On September 29, 2023, the Complainant sent an email to the Vertus Board of Trustees detailing her complaint. She alleged that, while she was attending the National Parents Union Summit at Vertus High School on Saturday, September 16, 2023, the Employee violated an order of protection she had against him by also being present at the Summit. She additionally alleged that the Employee tried to persuade her 7-year-old daughter to go into his classroom with him alone, which caused the daughter to feel unsafe and uncomfortable. (The Employee is not a parent of the daughter.) Finally, she claimed that, after she called the police, the Employee falsely represented to the police that he was a principal at the school and that he was at the school for work purposes that day.

The Complainant requested the Board investigate the incident, create procedures to enforce the order of protection she has against the Employee, consider relocating the Employee to a different location, and properly train Vertus employees.

B. The Police Report

On September 16, 2023, Police Officer Ian Fry created a police report summarizing his investigation of the incident that day. According to Fry's report, the Complainant called 911 while at the school and alleged the Employee was violating an order of protection she had against him. The Complainant told Officer Fry she was working at the Summit when the Employee came to the school, where he is a teacher, and that she wanted him arrested for violating the order of protection. Officer Fry's report indicates a valid order of protection is in effect against the Employee until January 22, 2024. The police report indicates Officer Fry spoke with the Employee who said he was at the school because he was working that day in his capacity as a teacher, and that he was aware of the order of protection. Finally, Officer Fry spoke with Principal Bennett, who corroborated that the Employee was at the school that day to perform work in his teacher capacity.

According to Officer Fry's report, the Employee committed the offense of Criminal Contempt in the Second Degree, a misdemeanor crime under the New York Penal Law, as a result of violating the court's order of protection.

C. Employee's Statement

Upon my request for a written statement of the events as part of the investigation, in an email dated September 19, 2023, the Employee stated that he was at the Summit with his son and that the Complainant initiated the contact with him. Further, the Employee admitted to speaking with the Complainant's daughter in the gym where he briefly asked if she was ok and if he could do anything for her, but the Employee denied menacing or harassing her. The Employee provided an excerpt from an order of protection filed on August 12, 2022, which he claimed did not prevent him from speaking to the Complainant's daughter.

In an email dated September 20, 2023, the Employee indicated the order of protection against him had been dismissed during a custody hearing on September 13, 2023.

D. Mildrena Vega's Witness Statement

Mildrena Vega was a coordinator working at the Summit to provide childcare while parents attended the event. According to the statement provided by this witness, the Employee brought his and the Complainant's son to the childcare area during the event. Vega checked the Employee and his son in and asked if the Employee would be participating with his son in the event. The Employee initially said that he would not participate because the Complainant was also at the event, but the Employee later decided to participate following prompting from his son. While Vega was checking the Employee in, the Complainant approached the Employee and hugged her son.

According to Vega, the Employee was not present for the entire event, but he came in one time to check in on his son. During lunch, Vega located the Complainant so that she could sit with her son during lunch time. The Complainant shared with Vega that the Employee had spoken to her daughter and made her daughter feel uncomfortable.

When the event was over, Vega made multiple trips to the parking lot to pack up supplies. During those trips, Vega overheard the Complainant telling police officers that she was working at the Summit and that the Employee should not have been there. Vega also overheard the Complainant tell school staff she would inform the Board of the school about the incident.

E. Levi Bennett's Statement

Principal Bennett was present at the school during the Summit. Bennett opened the school so that the organizers of the event could use the school, but the event was not operated or sponsored by Vertus High School. The Employee told Bennett he would be at the school to do work during the event, but that he might also attend the event. The Employee told Bennett that he knew the Complainant was at the event, and he would spend most of the time in his classroom to avoid conflicts.

A few hours into the event, the Employee told Bennett that the Complainant had accused him of violating an order of protection. Bennett went to the event to monitor the school facilities, where he met the Complainant who told him that she called the police because the Employee was in violation of the order of protection and that the Employee had made her children uncomfortable. When the police arrived, Principal Bennett pulled the Employee out of a workshop he was attending with his son so that the police could speak to him. The police spoke with Bennett and the Employee in Bennett's office, and once Bennett told the police that the Employee worked at the school, the police left without further action. The police report notes that, "after further questioning [the Employee] became uncooperative."

III. Findings and Conclusions of the Investigation Based on the Evidence.

I find the following based on the evidence:

- On Saturday, September 16, 2023, the National Parents Union hosted a Summit at Vertus High School. This was not a school-sponsored event but Vertus allowed the organization to use its space free of charge.
- The Employee voluntarily came to the school that day and performed work in his capacity as a teacher; the Employee also attended portions of the Summit with his son.
- The Complainant was at the school to work or volunteer at the Summit. The Complainant is not listed as an employee on the National Parent Union's website.
- The Complainant has a valid order of protection against the Employee. The Complainant did not allege there was an order of protection between her daughter and the Employee.
- Though the Complainant knew the Employee worked at Vertus, the Complainant did not take any action to inform Vertus in advance of the circumstances, and Vertus did not know who would be attending the Summit or that an order of protection was applicable.
- At some point during the Summit, the Complainant confronted the Employee and accused him of violating the order of protection.
- The Complainant called the police because she believed the Employee was in violation of the order of protection. There is no mention in the police report of harassment by the Employee against the Complainant's daughter.
- Once the Employee informed Principal Bennett that the Complainant had accused him of violating the order of protection, Principal Bennett went to check on the Summit. The Complainant informed Principal Bennett that she believed the Employee had violated the order of protection and that she called the police.
- Officer Fry and other police officers arrived at the school and Principal Bennett pulled the Employee out of a workshop he was attending with his son at the Summit so that the police could talk to him.
- Police officers spoke with the Complainant, the Employee, and Principal Bennett. The Employee told the police he was aware of the order of protection.
- Officer Fry ran a check and determined that the Complainant had a valid order of protection against The Employee, which was signed by Judge Walsh on January 23, 2023, and was in effect until January 22, 2024.
- Principal Bennett and the Employee told the police that the Employee worked at the school as a teacher.
- Principal Bennett acted reasonably once he became aware of a possible violation of the order of protection, and fully cooperated with the police.
- The police left the School and the Employee was not arrested.
- In an email dated September 19, 2023, the Employee claimed that he did not violate the order of protection, but then in an email dated September 20, 2023, The Employee stated that the order of protection against him had been dismissed.

- In an email dated September 29, 2023, the Complainant reported to the Vertus Board of Trustees that the Employee had violated the order of protection and harassed her daughter during the Summit.
- Any findings relative to the Employee's actions/conduct in the employment context are not relevant to this complaint or report.

Based on the evidence discussed, I have come to the following conclusions regarding the question of whether Vertus violated the law or a provision of its charter:

- It is more likely than not that the Employee knew the event would be taking place and knew the Complainant would be attending the event, and decided to come to the school on that day.
- The Complainant had a valid order of protection in place on September 16, 2023 and, per the police report, the police found the Employee to be in violation of that order.
- Even if so, the police did not arrest the Employee, direct the Employee to leave school property, or direct the principal to take any action related to the Employee and/or Complainant.
- It is unclear why the police did not take any action against the Employee, but I conclude the police could not have believed the Complainant was in physical danger or that the Employee was dangerous.
- There is insufficient evidence to show the Employee harassed the Complainant's daughter.
- Because the Summit was not sponsored or organized by Vertus, I conclude Vertus did not have a duty to remove the Employee from school property or take any other action with respect to the Employee.
- Because the Complainant has a son that attends Vertus, it is more likely than not the Complainant knew the Employee worked at Vertus. It is not reasonable that Vertus would have known about any order of protection, and Complainant could have provided the order of protection to Vertus in advance of her attendance.
- Even if she had done so, Vertus would not have been required to bar the Employee from school property.
- Even if the *Employee* violated the law by violating the order of protection, *Vertus* did not violate the law.
- There are no provisions of Vertus's charter that apply relative to the allegations in this complaint.

IV. Conclusion.

Based on the foregoing, I conclude that the school did not violate its charter or the law.

From: Cherriese Marie <cherriesemarieb@gmail.com>

Date: September 29, 2023 at 1:12:51 PM EDT

Dear Vertus Board of Directors,

I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. I, Cherriese Bufis-Scott, a devoted parent of Cherrieke, a senior student at Vertus High School, feel an urgent necessity to bring to your attention serious concerns involving Philip Loyd Jr., a staff member and my ex-husband, who has been creating a distressing environment for my son and me, in blatant violation of a legally mandated stay-away order issued in my favor.

Summary of Concerns:

Philip Loyd Jr., has exploited his position within the school to violate legal orders, harassing and intimidating my family, and myself. His actions have been supported, and at times, concealed by certain staff members, engendering a hostile and unsafe learning atmosphere for my son and impacting his well-being and educational experience.

Specific Incidents and Misrepresentation:

On September 16th, a disturbing incident occurred during an event at Vertus hosted by the National Parents Union, where Mr. Loyd not only breached the legal orders by being present but also misrepresented his role within the school and interacted with my children. In one of the encounters Mr. Loyd tried to persuade my 7 year old daughter to go into his classroom alone with him while on her way to the bathroom, leaving her feeling unsafe and uncomfortable. Moreover, when a police report was filed, Mr. Loyd and another staff member, provided misleading statements to the officers, with this individual falsely presenting himself as the Principal in front of the Principle and inaccurately stating that Mr. Loyd was called to the school for work purposes.

I possess incontrovertible proof, including sign-in sheets and photographs, that Mr. Loyd fully attended the event, including participating in a group picture with me, in total disregard of the legal restrictions placed upon him. Such behavior, and the subsequent misrepresentation to law enforcement, is unethical and should not be tolerated by Vertus High School.

Immediate Actions Requested:

I implore the Board to urgently consider the following actions to rectify this situation:

1. **Prompt Investigation:** Conduct a meticulous investigation into the incidents and the false statements provided to the police, ensuring accountability and transparency.
2. **Strict Enforcement and Monitoring:** Rigorously enforce the stay-away order, and implement robust monitoring mechanisms to prevent any further violation and harassment.
3. **Staff Reallocation:** Consider relocating Mr. Loyd to another institution to mitigate any future conflicts and ensure a harmonious and productive senior year for my son.
4. **Review and Training:** Reassess the conduct and ethical standards expected of staff and reinforce these through targeted training to maintain an unbiased and supportive environment

within the school.

Conclusion:

The continuous inaction and concealment of unethical conduct by staff members are untenable, and I urge the Board to act decisively to uphold the integrity and safety of the educational environment at Vertus High School. I am committed to collaboratively working with all concerned parties to find a swift and fair resolution and am available for any discussions or meetings required in this regard.

I appreciate your immediate attention to this critical matter and trust that the Board will act judiciously to resolve the concerns and restore a sense of security and justice within the school community.

Thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and commitment to maintaining a safe and equitable learning environment at Vertus High School.

Warm Regards,

Cherriese Bufis-Scott

Coversheet

Enrollment Policy Preferences

Section: IV. Discussion Items
Item: D. Enrollment Policy Preferences
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Vertus_Enrollment_Policy11.23.docx

Vertus Charter School Admissions Policy

Eligibility to Enroll

All male students who reside in the state of New York are eligible to attend Vertus Charter School (Vertus). The school shall be open to any male child who is eligible under the laws of New York State for admission to a public school, and the school shall ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools. There are no financial or academic requirements for admission to Vertus.

All students must have passed the 8th grade and will be admitted to each grade based on the following criteria:

- **9th grade:** Students must be younger than 16 as of September 1 of the school year
- **10th grade:** Students must be younger than 17 as of September 1 of the school year
- **11th grade:** Students must be younger than 18 as of September 1 of the school year

Vertus will accept only 9th graders for the 2014-15 school year; 9th and 10th graders for the 2015-16 school year; 9th, 10th and 11th graders for the 2016-17 school year and thereafter, to the extent seats are available.

Recruitment

Vertus will target first time high school students as well as students who have dropped out of high school. In order to reach this population, the school will cultivate relationships with individuals and organizations that work and communicate with at-risk young men in Rochester, including middle and high school guidance counselors; social service organizations; faith-based organizations; sports leagues and after-school programs; truancy, gang and parole officers; juvenile justice and foster care agencies; and public housing councils. Public outreach and marketing materials will explain the model and clearly indicate that Vertus is a free, public charter school open to all eligible students, including those with disabilities and English language learners. In addition, Vertus will use a website and social media to disseminate information and applications. Outreach materials will be translated into Spanish and other languages if necessary. Vertus will host information sessions in locations throughout the city and meet with families to explain the opportunities. Once Vertus has secured its facility it will also conduct open houses and invite families to tour the school.

Applications

To apply to Vertus, it is only necessary that the school receive a completed application, including a home address (unless the family is homeless). Applications will require no more information than is necessary under NYSED guidelines and are not considered a pre-registration form. To be eligible for the lottery, applications must be submitted by April 1st by families of students interested in attending the school. Applications must be hand delivered, mailed or e-mailed, and received no later than the admission period deadline listed on the form. The

school will provide via e-mail and/or return postcard confirmation of applications received by the deadline.

Vertus will adapt the uniform application form within the following allowable parameters: print the application form with the school's letterhead and/or logo; brand the application form by including the school's mission statement and explanatory information about the school, and request additional information. All data elements that may be required to be submitted by the applicant will be marked with asterisk and the form will include the following notation: *"* The items marked with an asterisk (*) are the only items that may be required in order to apply to this charter school. Any items not marked by an (*) are optional."*

The following statement will also be included in the application form:

Non-Discrimination Statement: *A charter school shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school.*

Preferences

Vertus will use the following preferences to enroll new students:

- Siblings of students already enrolled in the school will have an absolute preference.
- English Language Learners will receive an absolute preference, i.e., will be drawn before students living in or outside the district.
- Students residing within the Rochester City School District will receive an absolute preference, i.e., will be drawn before students living outside the district.
- **Dependents of current employees**
- Siblings of students selected in the lottery, i.e., when a student in the lottery with sibling(s) in the lottery is drawn, that student's sibling(s) will be added next to the list.

Lottery

If the number of applicants is less than the school's number of available seats, then all applicants will be enrolled in the school. If the number of applicants by April 1 exceeds the school's available seats, a random selection lottery process will be conducted on or about April 15. At least one week's public notice will be given for the lottery, stating the number of spaces available in each grade. The lottery will be conducted by a third party that has no affiliation with the school. The lottery will be open to the public. After checking the application to ascertain the appropriate entering grade, the child's name will be entered into the lottery. The following will also be noted for each child entered into the lottery:

- If there are siblings applying, each child's entry into the lottery will indicate that there is a sibling also applying.

- The home language preference will be noted so that preference can be given to students that are English Language Learners.
- The place of residence will be noted so that preference can be given to students living in the city of Rochester.

The lottery will follow these steps for each grade:

1. Siblings of students already enrolled in the school will be drawn.
2. Students who are English Language Learners.
3. Students who reside within Rochester will be drawn
4. Students who reside outside of Rochester will be drawn

Once the number of students equal to the number of available seats has been drawn, the remaining applicants will be drawn and placed on a waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. After all the names have been chosen, the parents will be notified by letter. For those students who are accepted, the letter will include a list of forms that need to be provided, including proof of age, immunization and residence except in the case of homelessness (residential utility bill, documentation from local, state or federal government agency, lease agreement, property tax bill, or payroll documentation), high school transcript, and an appointment time to meet with school staff to turn over the forms. Students offered enrollment must accept the offer by providing required forms within 30 days of notification.

Waiting List

For children not selected, the letter will indicate their number on the waiting list, and will describe the steps that will take place if a space becomes available. The school will keep accurate records of the waitlist containing the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission. If a student withdraws, the next applicant on the waiting list in that grade will be called and will be offered the space. No new students will be accepted after the beginning of the second quarter of instruction, unless the Board passes a special resolution to extend the enrollment period later in the year due to under-enrollment. Student withdrawal will be permitted upon the written request of the parent or legal guardian and proof of enrollment in another school. Following the written request of the admitting school, student records will be transferred. If a student does not return in September, the school will telephone and send the family a certified letter to determine the child's status. When a space opens, the waiting list will then be activated to admit the next child on the same grade level. For applications received after the April 1 deadline, those students will be added to the waiting list in the order they are submitted. The waiting list will expire annually at the lottery drawing for the next school year.

Subsequent Enrollment

After the first year, students returning to the school will be considered to be enrolled in each successive year through the completion of 12th grade. Each year, school personnel will meet with the families of all parents and guardians of currently enrolled students to discuss enrollment plans for the following school year. Parents or guardians must then submit to the school a letter of intent confirming their desire to enroll their child(ren) in the school for the

following year

