



Vertus

HIGH SCHOOL

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Month at a Glance September 2022

Academics/Character/Career

- School is back in session. We had five days of professional development for our staff, including sessions from outside presenters and motivational speaker Robert Jackson - speaking on his book, *"Becoming the Educator They Need: Strategies, Mindsets, and Beliefs for Supporting Male Black and Latino Students."* PathStone presented their project, "The Anti-Racist Curriculum," and SafeZone presented on creating an inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students. We also did our annual reviews of the various handbooks and employee manuals that outline our policies and procedures and how we do school. We spent a significant amount of time planning a comprehensive program for these days to address areas of need as well as provide opportunities to learn and grow as educators.
- As is our tradition, we kicked off the year with "Warrior Week." This allows us to build the relationships that are the foundation for a successful school year for our students. NWEA testing, team building activities, review of how we do school, and school-wide Tournament of Champions activities all went smoothly and laid the foundation for our first full week. You can see a recap in the attached newsletter that went home to families- <https://www.smore.com/b9fyw>
- Our summer of community events and single-minded focus of our operations and student recruitment teams paid off. Our doors opened on September 7th with the highest enrollment we have ever had. More details are outlined in the attached Recruitment and Enrollment report.
- This year is the first year that we have students representing us as varsity athletes in football, soccer, and cross country. We have 68 students currently participating in fall sports and more still joining.

Finance/Operations/Compliance

- 105 students started the school year without transportation. Our enrollment coordinator generated two bus routes, and we have been paying a driver to run those routes to get our young men to school. This is a huge lift and would not have been possible without the work of the operations staff. By September 19th, we will have only sixteen students without a bus, again due to the tenacity of our enrollment coordinator.
- Once our enrollment has been solidified, we will determine how that will positively impact the budget.
- Six staff members resigned at the end of the summer. Feedback from those leaving centered on our year-round calendar, pay scale, and lack of participation in the NYS teacher retirement system. Those same points were brought up as reasons why potential staff took other positions instead of joining the Vertus staff. The leadership

team is looking to develop different solutions to resolve some of those concerns. To date, we have considered an extended school year vs. year-round, staff opting into work the summer months, raising our pay rates across the board, hiring, and end-of-year bonuses. Further discussion is needed on all of these points and will be brought to the table when more information is available.