



# The Vertus Voice

## Winter 2020

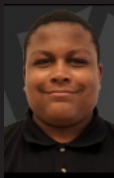
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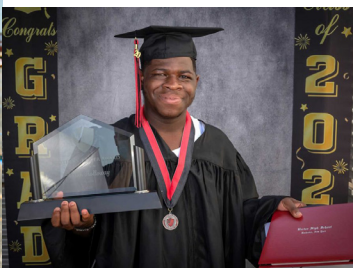
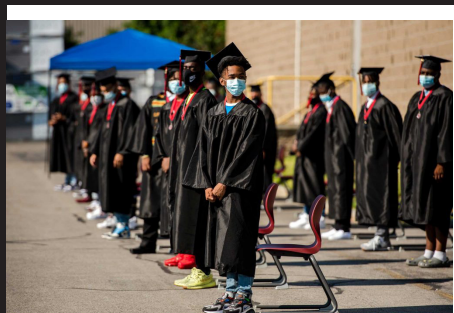
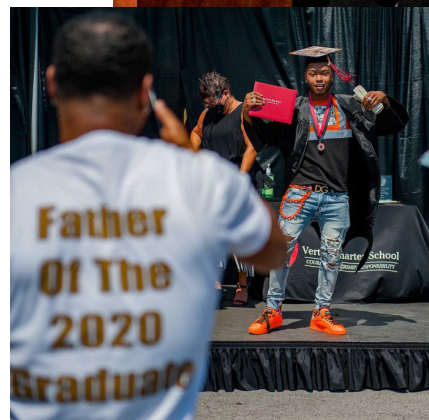


Community  
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### Graduation

The Class of 2020 did not graduate in a ceremony that any of us had envisioned at the start of the school year, but the ceremony was amazing nonetheless. We live in a city where the graduation rate for brown and black males is one of the lowest in the state, yet were able to honor our family's sons, grandsons, nephews, and friends as they walked across the stage to receive their high school diplomas. These Vertus men worked hard to get to that point. They faced adversity and had to finish their year from home while missing many of the events associated with their final year of high school, but they persevered.

The Vertus High School model is different, so much so that we call it the #VertusDifference. Our blended academic program is innovative, but it is our focus on building strong relationships with students and their families that have a lasting impact. We teach our young men to be their "Brothers Keeper," a phrase that the adults in the building model and that the Preceptors spend four years defining with their students. The Vertus Class of 2020 embodied this phrase. It is evident in their support of each other, in the words of encouragement they share, the way they celebrate each other's victories, and even in their drilling. We wanted so badly for them all to graduate together, but COVID-19 would not allow it. We take comfort in the fact that while they started this journey together and ended it apart, they will forever be Vertus Brothers at heart.



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School choice is YOUR choice! Apply online at [vertusschool.org](https://vertusschool.org) 1

# a message from the PRINCIPAL

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School is back in session and it is so wonderful to have our young men back in the building. Our children and staff's safety is our first priority and we have worked diligently to ensure that there are processes and procedures in place to make sure that is the case. Our reopening plan outlines, in detail, the steps we take daily to limit exposure and sanitize the building. Our academic focus for the 2020-2021 school year will be to address any learning loss because of COVID-19, while accelerating new learning. With our on-line platform, Edgenuity, our students were able to continue their core courses and their teacher led classes without pause. Even with this continuity, we acknowledge that many of our students engage more actively and have improved comprehension with the aid of teacher support.

Our students' social-emotional health and well-being are just as important as their academic progress. We believe that the strong relationships we develop with our students and families help us to meet the needs of every student. While we still maintain these relationships remotely, we believe strongly that in-person contact and instruction are vital to helping our students achieve character and academic growth.

As such, we have re-opened with a hybrid model that allows for continued remote instruction while still having small groups of students in the building on designated days in a safe way. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your son's Preceptor if you have any questions as we get back into the swing of things.

Whether students are in the building, or learning remotely, we are dedicated to working with them and their families to ensure academic and character growth. The 2020-21 school year may look different than years past, but our mission to "Prepare Leaders of Character," remains the same.

## from Counseling

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Greetings from the school counseling office. Our staff has been busy gearing up for another great school year. Students are adapting well with many of our new virtual experiences. Many colleges and universities are offering online campus tours and information sessions. Be sure to check in with Miss. Flanagan for more information. We have posted a link for our school counseling presentation on the Vertus webpage. There is a lot of helpful information regarding the college and financial aid process for both students and parents to view. Please be sure to add the Vertus counseling Facebook page ([facebook.com/vertuscounselors.flanagan.1](https://facebook.com/vertuscounselors.flanagan.1)) for updates on the college application process along with new programs and opportunities for students to get involved.



We're excited to announce to families, Starting in October, Vertus is offering a drivers education course. Students have the opportunity to sit for the permit test at school, and can apply for driving lessons through Eaton Driving School. The lesson package includes five driving lessons, the five hour course and the road test. If your son is not old enough to take the driver's Ed course, think about enrolling him in one of our many other programs. The Future Ready Program helps to prepare students in grades 7-11 for success in school, college and future careers. This afterschool program offers workshops on employment and life skills along with academic support. Please be sure to check in with the school counselors to discover new opportunities for a new school year.





# upcoming EVENTS

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## **Willow Fundraiser. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.**

This is the 3rd year that we here at Vertus have supported Willow Domestic Violence Outreach through fundraising. Sadly, due to Covid19 restrictions this year, we are unable to hold our annual Community Open House event. Our other fundraising plans include a virtual run/walk. We have a virtual team #TheVertusdifference that you can follow, donate to and if inclined, you can sign up and get more information at [www.willowcenterNY.org](http://www.willowcenterNY.org) The in-house fundraising will run from October 5th through October 29th 2020 Purple ribbons are available in the main office for a \$1 donation.

### **Willow Wish List**

- |                           |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Shampoo                 | Feminine Hygiene Products | • Disposable Razors            |
| • Body Wash               | • Body Lotion             | • Diapers/Pull Ups (all sizes) |
| • Toothpaste/Toothbrushes | • Q-tips                  | • Children's Pajamas           |



You can make a monetary donation to support Willow through our website [www.vertusschool.org](http://www.vertusschool.org). Please add \*Willow\* on your donation.

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## **Blazer Ceremony - December 15th in the Vertus gym**

Vertus High School proudly states that no matter where you come from, when you walk through our doors, you can make it. Whether you are striving to obtain a high school diploma or if you are planning to go on to college, trade school, or the Armed Forces, Vertus High School will be there to support you with consistent guidance. The only thing we ask in exchange is that you trust us. The Vertus red blazer symbolizes the first step in a transition. It is the first step in accepting the Vertus Way and committing to the process needed to make our young men leaders of character and academically ready for the real world. This is not an easy process and it can be difficult for some of our students due to their experiences with the educational system.

As our young men put on their red blazers for the first time in the presence of family and friends, with the guidance of their Preceptor, it sends a message that they are now part of a new community; the Vertus Community where a vanguard of men pour into the next generation. This community believes in integrity, spirit, academic mastery, and self-control. We believe in attendance and that progress is a process. Our young men come from many different parts of the city, social, economic, and academic backgrounds and what our community believes may be drastically different than that of the communities they come from. Nevertheless, with trust, time and hard work, and grit we can achieve great things. This ceremony is the first step whereby the new students of Vertus High School become part of our community, our newest brothers. In essence, it is a rite of passage to become a Vertus Man.

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## **Virtual Family Conferences**

One of the four pillars upon which Vertus was founded is Strong Relationships. As such, we make a promise to meet with each of our families at least three times a year. In year's past, we would host Family Conference Nights at our building, encouraging our families to come in and meet their student's Preceptor, teachers, and support staff. This gave us an excellent opportunity to review our student's academic status and answer any questions families may have had. Unfortunately, due to the current situation, we are not able to host these events in person this year, so we have set up a Virtual Family Conferences page on our website: <http://www.vertusschool.org/family-conference/>.

Here, parents can take a virtual tour of our school, learn a little bit about their son's Preceptor, and schedule appointments to meet with their son's Preceptor and teachers in person, through Zoom, or over the phone. The site also allows us to collect necessary paperwork and provides important information about transportation. We look forward to the time when we can again host our families in-person; until then, we will continue to build strong relationships in any way we can.

# in SPORTS



## Winter Sports Start November 30th

We offer the following Winter sports-

- JV Basketball for 1st and 2nd Years
- Varsity Basketball for 3rd and 4th Years
- Varsity Indoor Track for All Years

## HOME OF THE WARRIORS



### Basketball Tryouts will start Monday, November 30th.

- JV basketball tryouts schedule- Monday 11/30 3:30-5:00, Tuesday 12/01 & Wednesday 12/02 3:30-5:00 in the Vertus Gym
- Varsity basketball tryouts schedule- Monday 11/30 5:00-7:00 and Tuesday 12/01 5:00-7:00 in the Vertus Gym

### Indoor Track practice will start Monday, November 30th from 3:30-5:00 at Vertus

Student-athletes who wish to participate in any athletic programs at Vertus High School are expected to get re-qualified prior to each sports season they participate in.

### To get re-qualified students need:

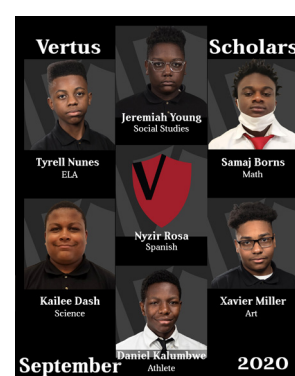
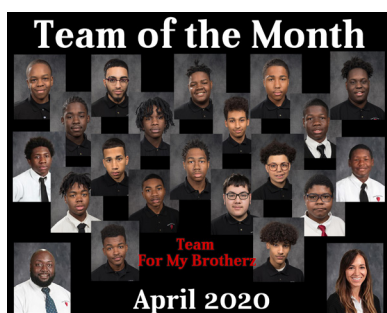
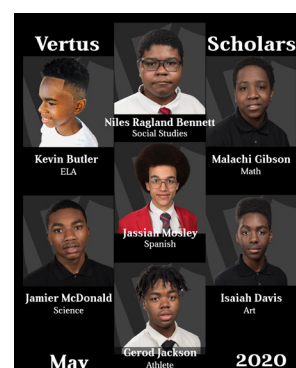
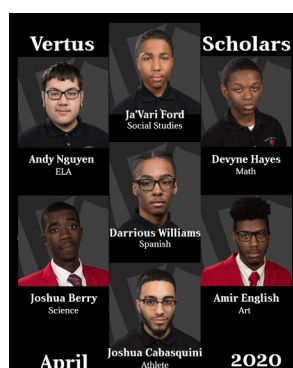
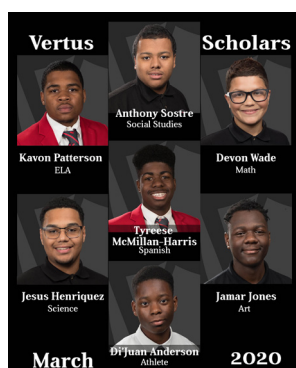
- Register for the sport at <https://www.familyid.com/organizations/vertus-high-school-rochester-ny>
- Winter sports registration starts November 1st
- An updated physical exam (within 1 year) on file
- Current immunizations on file
- Medical eligibility form signed by a parent
- Doctor orders for inhaler, epi-pen, and/or restriction clearance (if applicable)
- Glasses for vision test (if applicable)



To find out more about a particular sport or the sports qualification process, please contact our Athletic Director Rich Maez 585-397-0197 or [rmaez@vertusschool.org](mailto:rmaez@vertusschool.org)  
Please visit <https://vertus.schoolteams.com/> for up to date information on all athletic dates and times.



# monthly AWARDS



**Man of the Month**  
Exemplifies the virtues and he is nominated by his team, and the finalist is chosen by school leaders.

**The Team of the Month**  
Chosen by school leaders based on attendance, academic progress, and contributions to school culture.

**Vertus Scholars**  
One student per core subject chosen by the department; they exemplify grit in pursuit of academic excellence.

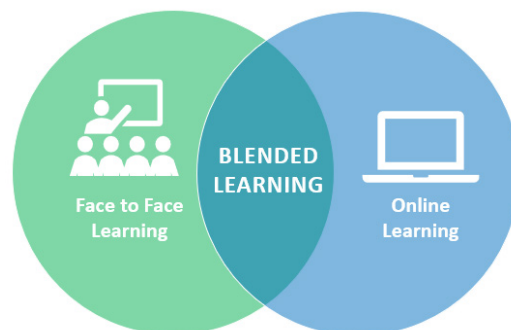


# in ACADEMICS



## Blended Learning

Vertus High School uses a Blended Learning model to provide the best education possible for our students. Blended Learning courses consist of both in-person and online learning, which allows students to work both individually and in small groups. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our students attend in-person classes twice a week and work from home virtually three days a week. Teachers use our online learning platforms, Edgenuity and eDynamic Learning, to assign content specific lessons and activities that can be completed both at school and home. In addition, teachers offer office hours multiple times a week to help students both in-person and remotely. This semester we offer Blended Learning courses in Math, ELA, and Art. Social Studies and Science courses are only offered online, but we have dedicated staff in both subject areas that have scheduled office hours each day.



## College and Career Preparation

I think that Benjamin Franklin said it best, “By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.” At Vertus, we take this to heart. We believe that all students should have the opportunity to be successful, and that success demands preparation. Preparation comes in many different forms, shapes, sizes, and paths. We know that every student is different and success is not a one size fits all endeavor. Vertus students have the opportunity to explore their dreams be it college, career, or military.

Many high school students think that they have plenty of time to decide on their college or career path and to acquire the skills needed to be successful. This is not always true. At Vertus we believe our students need to start exploring their career interests and developing their job skills now!

College and Career Preparation provides opportunities for Vertus students to participate in a learning experience that combines classroom instruction, hands on learning and support from strong community partners. We work diligently to create paths for your students to succeed, in school and after their graduation.

# Pointii





# in the COMMUNITY

## **Vertus Partnerships:**

At Vertus, in addition to getting our young men to graduate, our goal is to set them up for success after high school. Through our community partnerships, we are able to provide our students with opportunities that will best suit the trajectory of their lives.

### **RCTV & 100.9FM WXIR**

Vertus students have the opportunity to host a live FM radio show (The Vertus Way: From Boys to Men) on 100.9 FM WXIR and a talk show on RCTV. For these programs, students serve as spokespersons representing the youth of Rochester and sharing perspectives on social issues. In 2019, our radio show even won a radio production award! Through these opportunities, students are able to acquire an elective credit.

### **YVOV**

Youth Voice, One Vision: The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (YVOV) is an active council of young people working together to make Rochester a better place to live, and is coordinated by the Bureau of Recreation. Our students are able to participate in their efforts to:

- Conduct on-going community outreach and assessments to identify youth priorities
- Advise the Mayor and other City officials on a regular basis on issues of importance to Rochester youth
- Carry out youth led projects and initiative to impact community change

### **Career Pathways to Public Safety Program**

This is a partnership with the City of Rochester meant to increase minority representation and local residency in uniformed divisions. In addition, this program increases the awareness of career opportunities within the public safety field.

### **Food Donations**

In the Vertus creed recited every morning by staff and students it says that, "We are leaders in our community". What better way to demonstrate that than to not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk. In the midst of the pandemic, our school was able to meet the needs of our students as well as community members by allocating food and other resources to those who are in need. Throughout the course of the pandemic, our school consistently donated groceries and supplies to well over 100 families. We plan to continue these efforts through our new Community Cupboard initiative. In conjunction with the Perinton Food Shelf sharing their donations, we are now in the process of constructing a non-perishable food and clothing cupboard for our Vertus families that may need help during these uncertain times.

We are now accepting donations of non-perishable food from our local community. Please call Pippa Bianco @ 585 363 2689 to schedule your non-perishable food donation drop off.

#### **Food Cupboard Wish List**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Jars of Jelly (Grape or Strawberry) | • Canned Fruit (Pineapple, Mixed Fruit)                   |
| • Jars of Pasta Sauce                 | • Chef Boyardee Cans (Ravioli, Spaghetti, Beefaroni.....) |
| • Breakfast Cereal (Family Size)      | • Canned Vegetables (Peas, Green Beans, Corn)             |
| • Oatmeal (Instant)                   | • White Rice (5lb Bags)                                   |





**Spot the six differences between the two photos:**



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<https://www.facebook.com/VertusHighSchool/>



**ALUMNI**

**SPOTLIGHT**

Amir English. Graduated from Vertus in June 2020. He now attends SUNY Morrisville and studies Network Administration. Although he says the transition from high school to college has been a challenge, he tries to maintain a positive attitude. He lives on campus and is glad that his school is in a rural area with less distractions to keep him from focusing on his school work.

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