

# Research Brief

## Vertus Charter School

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



Edgenuity students demonstrate **two years of growth** in reading **in just one year**.

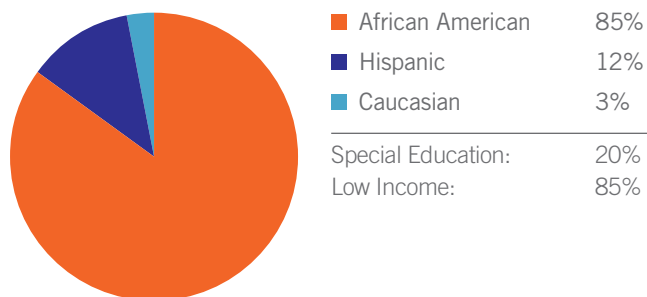
### Evaluation Overview

**Grade:** 9

**Model:** Rotational Model

**Measure:** Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA® MAP® Growth™) Reading and Mathematics Tests

### Sample Demographics



### School Overview

Founded in the fall of 2014, Vertus Charter School (VCS) is a year-round high school serving inner-city boys in Rochester, New York, who are at risk of dropping out, violence, unemployment, and prison. The school is overwhelmingly populated by low-income, minority, and struggling students. Of the 98 9th graders who were enrolled during the 2014–2015 school year, 97 percent were African American and Hispanic. Approximately 85 percent were economically disadvantaged.

VCS aims to prepare students for high school, college, community, and careers by offering longer school hours, stronger student-staff relationships, unprecedented social and emotional support, in-depth career development opportunities, and more targeted instruction for students. VCS uses a blended learning model in which students learn in part through online instruction and in part through face-to-face instruction. The school began researching online learning programs and selected Edgenuity because of its research-based approach to instruction and due to the availability of MyPath, which could offer individualized learning paths tailored to each student's unique needs.

### Implementation

VCS students attend school five days a week, 204 days a year. The school day runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Students attend school for half a day on Fridays. Students spend about half of their time working on core courses and MyPath in a computer lab, and the other half receiving whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one instruction with teachers.

All students are organized into small teams of 12 to 16 students who go through the school day together under the supervision of a full-time staff member called a preceptor. Students work in Edgenuity online courses for 200 minutes a day in a computer lab. While in the computer lab, certified teachers provide targeted support for students who need remediation or practice. Preceptors work with their teams to create and monitor academic and character goals each week. Using data and reports from the Web Administrator, Edgenuity's learning management system, preceptors and teachers track student engagement, progress, and achievement in Edgenuity courses.

Outside of the computer lab, students attend 45-minute English, mathematics, science, and social studies classes led by teachers. In addition, students participate in daily character development and career preparation seminars, as well as hands-on learning activities such as 3D printing, game design, and art.

## Study Sample

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This report summarizes the academic outcomes (grade point average and NWEA MAP reading and mathematics assessment data) of VCS 9th graders who used Edgenuity core courses and MyPath during the 2014–2015 school year. Grade point average data were gathered for 98 students. NWEA MAP Reading test data were gathered for 69 students who took the fall 2014 and spring 2015 assessments. NWEA MAP Mathematics test data were collected for 70 students who took the fall 2014 and spring 2015 assessments.

## Measures

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### Grade Point Average (GPA)

VCS provided GPA data from the 2013–2014 (year prior to enrollment) and 2014–2015 school years.

### NWEA MAP

The NWEA MAP Reading and Mathematics tests are Common Core–aligned, computer-adaptive assessments administered to students in grades 3 to 12. If a student answers correctly, the next question is more difficult; if a student answers incorrectly, the next item is easier. Each NWEA MAP assessment uses the Rasch (RIT) unit, an equal interval scale score, to measure student growth and determine student mastery of various defined skills within disciplines. NWEA MAP Reading and Math test data were collected and analyzed for students who used Edgenuity courses during the 2014–2015 school year.

## Results

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### GPA Results

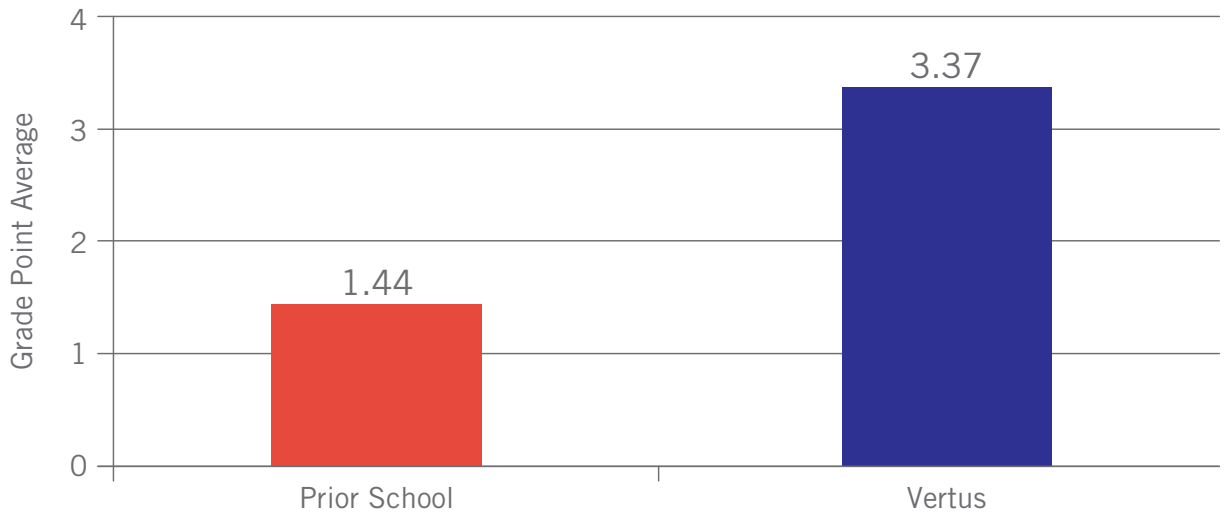
Findings show that Edgenuity had a positive impact on students' GPA. VCS students' GPA increased from a 1.4 (D+) in spring 2014 to a 3.4 (B+) in spring 2015 (see Figure 1).

### NWEA MAP Results

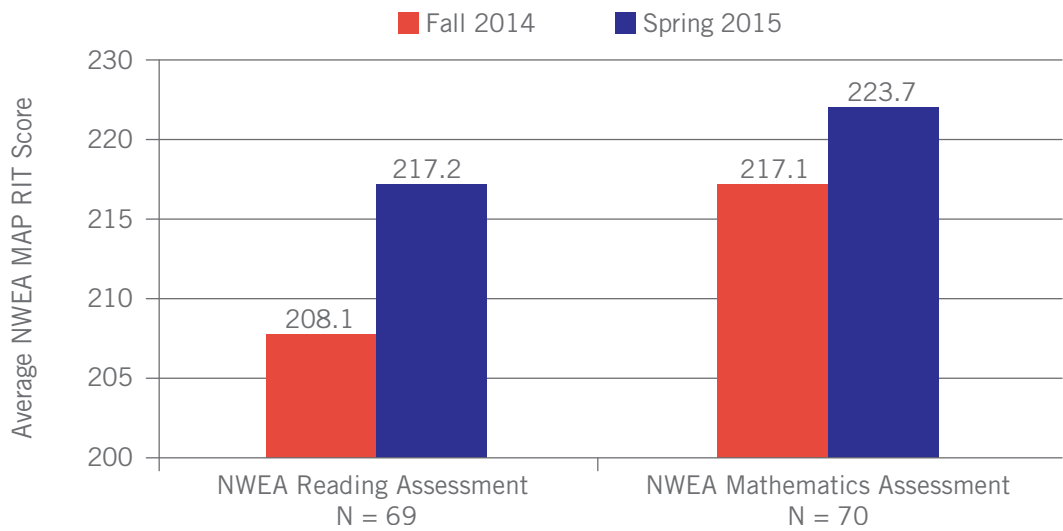
Results show that VCS students made significant gains on the NWEA MAP tests (see Figure 2). On the NWEA MAP Reading test, VCS students improved from a fall RIT score of 208.1 to a spring RIT score of 217.2. These scores indicate that students were performing at the 5th-grade reading level in fall 2014. By spring 2015, however, VCS students were performing at the 7th-grade reading level. This translates into two years of reading growth.

Similarly, on the NWEA MAP Math test VCS students demonstrated significant improvements in their math skills. On average, VCS students improved from a fall RIT score of 217.1 to a spring RIT score of 223.7. This translates to 1.5 years of math growth.

**Figure 1:** Vertus Charter School Edgenuity Students, Grade 9 (N = 98)  
Grade Point Average, 2013–2014 and 2014–2015



**Figure 2:** Vertus Charter School Edgenuity Students, Grade 9  
Performance on the NWEA MAP Reading and Mathematics Tests, Fall 2014 to Spring 2015



## Conclusion

Results from this study suggest that Edgenuity is having a positive impact on the academic achievement of VCS students. From fall 2014 to spring 2015, VCS students improved their GPA and performance on the NWEA MAP tests. Perhaps most notably, VCS students demonstrated two years of reading growth in just one year.

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