

# MINI CASE SUMMARY

## VERITAS CLASSICAL ACADEMY

APRIL 2023 | CHIPPEWA VALLEY, WISCONSIN



### A NEW BEGINNING

Veritas Classical Academy (VCA) began in January 2020 when a group of community members with diverse backgrounds identified a need in the community for additional education choices that foster success for a greater number of students. By fall of 2021, the Board of Directors began planning the necessary steps to bring this vision to life.

Initial funding of \$250,000 was secured in 2022 from Board members, a Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) grant, in-kind services and private donors. These funds enabled and helped support the first organized year to receive the school authorizer which was critical to the planning timeline.

The goal of VCA is to educate the minds and inspire the hearts of young people through a content-rich, classical curriculum that emphasizes the principles of moral character and civic responsibility. By intentionally fostering a culture of intrinsic wellness, Veritas Classical Academy prepares students to become the healthy, virtuous and authentic foundation of future American generations.

The school will employ a unique approach to education by emphasizing individual wellness and challenging students to both excel in the classroom and build character. The teachers and staff devoted to VCA students will know the significance of diving deeper to identify and address challenges that may be a barrier to learning.

### INVESTMENTS

The first phase to begin the Veritas Classical Academy will require investments into a \$6M campaign to cover the first two years of start up costs:

- \$2.1M for Salaries, Taxes, Benefits, Insurance
- \$1.5M for Building and Maintenance
- \$650,000 for Contracted Services
- \$200,000 for Transportation
- \$550,000 for Supplies and Furniture
- \$1M for Technology, Training, Operations

### FUNDING

How is Veritas Classical Academy funded?

- Charter schools are taxpayer funded through CAM (Charter Asset Management) and through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) per student aid.
- Currently, charter schools receive approximately two-thirds of the state-allotted amount per student. The student's home district retains the other one-third.
- VCA will not utilize funds from local districts but will receive taxpayer and grant funding.\*

*\*Additional private and public grant, transportation, special education service, and food service funding will support Veritas Classical Academy as well as private donations.*

VCA is a tuition-free, public charter school that will seek to initially serve kindergarten through 5th-grade students in the fall of 2024, with a goal of expanding to serve grades K-12 within six years of opening. VCA will select students through a lottery system, which will guarantee equal opportunity to anyone wanting to attend.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

VCA offers parents an opportunity to have a voice and active role in the implementation of a model which will address the needs expressed by parents in a local survey conducted by the Founding and Design committees, a group of dedicated community leaders involved in the initial planning. More than 600 community members responded to a survey which identified three desirable attributes of curricula not adequately demonstrated in current options. Respondents wanted curricula to provide the following benefits to area students:

1. Support character development
2. Help develop analytical skills
3. Include challenging yet attainable goals

With survey results in mind, the VCA Design Team created an education model focused on three core pillars: A classical curriculum, an integrated, whole- person wellness approach and targeted aspects of the Finnish Education Model.

## A CLASSICAL EDUCATION

VCA is a licensed user of and will follow the Hillsdale K-12 Charter School Initiative's curriculum an outreach program of Hillsdale College that provides a classical education that is content-rich across math, science, English language arts and history — with significant attention to music, art and foreign language. The Hillsdale K-12 Charter School Initiative curriculum seeks to educate not just for the sake of learning but creating a lifelong learner. The model encourages training the person, instead of training the brain to just memorize information. Mind, body and soul/spirit are of extreme value in the Hillsdale K-12 Charter School Initiative curriculum. Teachers focus on modeling and guiding these areas each day.

## STUDENTS SERVED

Initially, VCA will begin operations from an interim location, and then, after five or six years, will transition to a permanent location. Neither location is yet determined but ideally both will be centrally located in the Chippewa Valley. **VCA intends to serve students living within a 20-mile radius of the initial location, which includes portions of nine school districts (Altoona, Eau Claire, Fall Creek, Augusta, Elk Mound, Colfax, Chippewa Falls, Cadott and Bloomer) and three counties, all of which have similar community needs.**

VCA'S MISSION IS TO BE THE BEST CHOICE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WANTING TO EDUCATE THE WHOLE STUDENT — MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT.

Crescendo Fundraising Professionals, LLC, and its team of four advisors, has been hired to complete the Study Summit to determine and assess the interest in and capacity for reaching a \$6 million goal. During this two-day summit May 11-12, focus groups, confidential interviews in person and virtually, and online surveys will be conducted to secure needed input.

Recommendations will be presented to the Board of Directors regarding the potential success of the proposed private fundraising goal and the strategy recommended to achieve the fundraising goal. No solicitation will take place during the Summit. The capital campaign is proposed to begin summer/fall 2023 through fall 2024.

## BOARD MEMBERS

Kim Senn                      Jamey Denning  
Christ Albertson          Natasha Plank-Ottum  
Adam Kern

Please contact Natasha Plank-Ottum  
for questions at [nottum@plankenterprises.com](mailto:nottum@plankenterprises.com).