



VERITAS

CLASSICAL ACADEMY

CAMPAIGN READINESS STUDY

PRESENTED BY CRESCENDO FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS, LLC

CHIPPEWA VALLEY, WISCONSIN

JUNE 2023

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Executive Summary

Veritas Classical Academy (VCA) is a proposed in-person, free, non-religious public charter school offering for the Chippewa Valley. VCA's goal is to support children and families educating the whole student — mind, body, and spirit — through a content-rich, classical curriculum that emphasizes the principles of moral character, civic responsibility, and individual wellness.

Conclusion

VCA's proposed \$6M capital campaign has a high probability of success.

Study

A group of community members identified a need for this type of charter school option to address the challenges facing students and families in the Chippewa Valley. The group formed a Board of Directors, a Founding Committee, and a Design Committee to investigate and plan the project and retained Crescendo Fundraising Advisors LLC (Crescendo).

In March 2023, Crescendo advisors began a Campaign Readiness Study to determine if private individuals, donors, area foundations, and Chippewa Valley businesses/corporations would support a \$6M school-opening campaign. Working closely with the members of the VCA Board and VCA Study Committee, Crescendo advisors conducted independent research, personal interviews, focus groups, and surveys to gather input on project benefits, questions, and concerns; the area's economic conditions, fundraising environment, and other capital campaigns; the potential for lead gifts and indications to give; and volunteer leadership potential. The findings and Crescendo's analysis are summarized in this report and lay the foundation and strategy for the pre-campaign and campaign phases.

Findings and Analysis

One hundred percent of those interviewed believe bringing a public, lottery-based, non-religious charter school to the Chippewa Valley is important. After completing nearly 60 studies over 25 years, Crescendo advisors have rarely, if ever, witnessed this level of overall positivity for a start-up organization's philanthropic study.

When asked about benefits of the project, study participants cited the value of increased education options, a strong curriculum (stressing core values and educating the whole child), and an attractive model (small, tuition-free, and lottery-based). They had questions on funding, curriculum particulars, and school operations. Their concerns revolved around the fundraising effort, community impact, and school operations. Questions and concerns at this stage are common and will be addressed when engaging community support and building on the groundswell of interest already present from those who are most closely involved and excited about the vision.

The Chippewa Valley is a successful and philanthropic region. Despite some economic headwinds and other current or planned fundraising projects, the study findings strongly indicate that the

\$6M capital campaign will reach its goal. The financial support identified during this study rates potential giving close to or at the topmost potential giving ever uncovered by Crescendo advisors.

In addition to generous individuals and businesses, the Chippewa Valley has unprecedented leadership potential. Crescendo has no concerns whatsoever regarding the ability to recruit additional leaders and volunteers to serve on the campaign's committees.

Conclusion

Based on the study findings and analysis, Crescendo recommends that the VCA Board approve this report and begin executing pre-campaign and campaign phases.

Introduction to the Capital Campaign Readiness Study

The VCA Board of Directors contracted with Crescendo to conduct a Campaign Readiness Study to determine if businesses, individuals, and grant-making organizations were willing and able to support a \$6M campaign for the first phase of beginning VCA.

Crescendo specializes in fundraising initiatives for campaigns in the tri-state area of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Its advisors have individually and collectively successfully managed 45 capital campaigns over the last 23 years, primarily raising funds for capital construction projects for municipalities, nonprofits, and schools. The company abides by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) code of conduct which does not fundraise on a percentage basis but is paid on a time-for-fee service.

This report summarizes respondents' remarks without identification of sources. The questionnaire, surveys, and results are included throughout the report and in the appendix.

Crescendo advisors found the respondents provided an excellent basis upon which to establish the recommendations and conclusions of the findings. The interviewees were capable of making or influencing decisions regarding philanthropic contributions; knowledgeable regarding issues surrounding the potential campaigns; able to indicate personal, corporate, foundation or organizational financial support; and able to evaluate leadership qualities. Not all the key informants responded to all of the survey questions, and some answered questions (as a couple) with one response.

Project Detail

Challenges Facing Chippewa Valley Students

In January 2020, a diverse group of Chippewa Valley community members (Founding Committee) met to discuss the challenges facing local students.

Founding Committee

Jamey Denning, Co-Chair

Kim Senn, Co-Chair

Chris Albertson,
Secretary

Sara Denning
Ashley Albertson
Rima DeFatta

Robert DeFatta
(retired)
Amber Leibrandt

Natasha Plank-Ottum

The committee's desire to start a new charter school developed in response to concerns regarding statistics including the following:

- *Poverty*: Thirty-nine percent of Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls' children aged 5-17 live in households that are at or below the ALICE threshold ("households that earn above the federal poverty level, but not enough to afford basic household needs").¹ Thirty-eight percent of students are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch.
- *Mental health*: In July 2022, the National Center for Education Statistics reported² on a survey³ of public schools and parents on the response to COVID-19. More than 80% of responding public schools reported negative impacts on student behavioral and socio-emotional development and nearly 50% reported that inadequate funding bars students from getting needed mental health services. Further, more than 35% of responding parents worried about their children's whole person status.⁴
- *Reading and math proficiency*: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction reports⁵ math and reading proficiency in area schools, specifically the 20-mile radius that VCA intends to serve, which can be improved upon. In the 2021-22 school year, nine area districts served 23,212 students. Of those students, 13,748 scored Basic or Below Basic in English language arts and 13,643 scored Basic or Below Basic knowledge in math.
- *Enrollment trends*: The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District has experienced a steady decline in enrollment year after year despite a 5% increase in population over the last five years. In total, the nine districts that VCA will serve had a combined loss of nearly 800 students from the public school system in 2021, with an additional 1,073 opting for homeschooling.⁶
- *Lack of education options*: Although tuition-based, religious education options for students are widely available, area students, particularly underserved students, lack access to public options. The VCA Founding Committee investigated the availability of current options and found that 24 private tuition-based schools serve the local area and several of them having waiting lists exceeding 100 students. Free non-religious options are few and far between and many also have waiting lists.

History of VCA

The VCA Founding Committee identified a need in the community for additional education choices that foster success for a greater number of students in the Chippewa Valley.

¹ Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed ("ALICE"), Children in Financial Hardship 2021 Covid Report from United Way

²

³ <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/>

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/08/10/just-over-half-of-u-s-public-schools-offer-mental-health-assessments-for-students-fewer-offer-treatment/>

⁵ Underly, Dr. Jill. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2021, dpi.wi.gov/

⁶ "Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin Population 2023." Worldpopulationreview.com, Worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/chippewa-falls-wi-population. Jan. 2023

By fall of 2021, the community members had elected a Board of Directors and applied for nonprofit status.

Board of Directors

Kim Senn, Interim President
Chris Albertson, Secretary
Adam Kern, Treasurer

Jamey Denning
Natasha Plank-Ottum

The Board began planning the necessary steps to bring a charter school to life to give parents and students another option. A charter school is an independently run public school that has more flexibility in day-to-day operations and higher standards of accountability for performance.⁷ They are “public schools of choice,” meaning that families specifically chose a school for a student rather than being assigned by a district.

Funding

Board members, a Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) grant, in-kind services, and private donors provided initial funding totaling \$250,000. These funds enabled and helped support the first organized year to receive the school authorizer⁸ which was critical to the planning timeline.

Community survey

The VCA Founding and Design committees conducted a survey to determine community interest.

Design Committee

Dave Raihle	Chris Albertson	Audrey Kalthoff
Karah Gonstead, LCSW	Mary Denning, MS, BS	Amber Leibrandt
Kim Senn	Jamey Denning	Sara Denning
Dr. Tammy Tillitson, DM, EDS, MS, BA	Paivi Valli	Rima DeFatta
	Natasha Plank-Ottum	Ashley Albertson

A resounding response from more than 600 community members encouraged the group to develop an education model not adequately demonstrated in current options, i.e., one that would:

- Support character development.
- Help develop analytical skills.
- Include challenging yet attainable goals.

⁷ <https://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/what-charter-school>

⁸ The role of the charter school authorizer is critical to ensuring success and accountability for charter schools. Authorizers may be public school districts or one of the statutorily identified independent authorizers.

Education model

With survey results in mind, the Design Committee created an education model based on three core pillars: a classical curriculum; an integrated, whole-person wellness approach; and targeted aspects of the Finnish education model.

The result of this planning is VCA — an in-person, free, non-religious public school offering for the Chippewa Valley.

VCA's Mission, Values, and Goals

Mission and Goals

VCA's mission is to support children and families educating the whole student — mind, body, and spirit — through a content-rich, classical curriculum that emphasizes the principles of moral character, civic responsibility, and individual wellness.

The school will combine the vigor of the classical curriculum with the Finnish emphasis on age-appropriate activities, frequent breaks, and brain development. The goal is to challenge students academically and build character, preparing them to serve as a healthy, virtuous, and responsible foundation of future American generations. VCA will strive to close the achievement gap, increase graduation rates, improve college/career readiness, support English language learners, supply challenge for advanced students, and meet the needs of special education students.

Three Core Pillars of VCA

Hillsdale Classical Curriculum

VCA is a licensed user of and will follow the Hillsdale K-12 Charter School Initiative's Curriculum, an outreach program of Hillsdale College. Hillsdale College was founded with the purpose of providing "sound learning," and the curriculum it offers lays a strong foundation in key subjects, creating intellectually, morally, and civically well-prepared graduates. The curriculum is designed to provide a classical education that is content-rich across math, science, English language arts, and history — with significant attention to music, art, and foreign language.

Integrated, Whole-Person Wellness Approach

In addition to the classical Hillsdale curriculum, VCA will stress mental wellness and socio-emotional intelligence focusing on how a child's brain works and what helps promote learning and retention. VCA will accomplish this goal by integrating aspects of the eight Pillars of Wellness (Physical, Occupational, Spiritual, Social, Intellectual, Financial, Environmental, and Emotional). For example, teachers will incorporate breaks, outdoor play, physical activities; minimal yet intentional homework; and interventions to support students. Students will wear uniforms to promote unity, belonging, and equality.

Targeted Aspects of the Finnish Education Model

The Finnish National Agency for Education's goal is, "To support pupils' growth toward humanity and ethically responsible membership of society and to provide them with the knowledge and skills needed in life." This goal aligns closely with VCA's mission, which incorporates several aspects of Finnish education principles:

- Providing students with a high-quality education, combining both teacher-led and student-centered learning.
- Encouraging students to excel in the classroom and in character development.
- Appropriate grade/age level time spent on homework.
- Compensating staff competitively.
- Brain breaks every 45 minutes.

Funding and School Operation

The proposed \$6M capital campaign is intended to fund VCA for the first two years of operation and instruction. After the first year of instruction, three additional funding sources will start (some of which will reimburse for expenses incurred during the first two years):

1. Private contributions
2. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (for food, busing/transportation, and special education expense)
3. Public and private grants

Initially, VCA intends to serve K-5 students in the fall of 2024, with a goal of expanding to serve grades K-12 within six years of opening. 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, Wisconsin, which includes portions of nine school districts⁹ and three counties, all of which have similar community needs.

A Board of Directors, Executive Leadership Team, standing committees and a Parent Advisory Council will guide VCA and will welcome and encourage parents to be involved in their child's educational journey.

Study

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the Campaign Readiness Study was to determine if private individuals, donors, area foundations, and the Chippewa Valley businesses/corporations would support a \$6M school-opening campaign.

⁹ Altoona, Eau Claire, Fall Creek, Augusta, Elk Mound, Colfax, Chippewa Falls, Cadott and Bloomer Districts

Specifically, the study results help VCA:

1. Plan the most effective fundraising strategy for meeting the proposed goal or goal range.
2. Identify favorable conditions for the fundraising campaign.
3. Highlight potential conflicts with the fundraising campaign.
4. Outline any challenges that could inhibit or slow the fundraising process.
5. Assess the level of financial support available.
6. Cultivate prospective contributors.
7. Identify and recruit potential campaign leaders.
8. Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to voice their opinions.
9. Educate philanthropic leaders about the campaign status.

Study Detail

Who conducted the study?

The VCA Board of Directors engaged Crescendo to lead the study in the spring of 2023. Crescendo has a wealth of experience in fundraising and capital campaign management, having completed 45 municipal and nonprofit campaigns over its 23 years of operation in the tri-state region, including four in the Chippewa Valley in the past 10 years.

Crescendo worked closely with the members of the VCA Campaign Readiness Study Committee.

Campaign Readiness Study Committee Members

Scott Biederman
Heidi Boxx
Mike McHorney

Sheri Baemmert
JR Menard

Jennifer Rooney

The committee helped Crescendo plan and carry out the study, including identifying participants to interview regarding the capital campaign. The committee's dedication and assistance in identifying and contacting individuals was extremely helpful. Crescendo greatly appreciates and thanks the Campaign Readiness Study Committee members for their time and informative feedback.

Thank you also to Natasha Plank-Ottum, Kim Senn, Adam Kern, Chris Albertson, and Rima DeFatta. Their dedication to helping create a well-organized and well-executed Campaign Readiness Study Summit was vital in the effort to secure meaningful responses from the community.

Thank you also for the beautiful and comfortable accommodations for the interviewees that were provided at Seven at River Prairie offices and Xavier Cafe.

Process

Crescendo advisors employed several methodologies to gather information and make recommendations:

- Reviewed history of the organization and its fundraising/development efforts to date

- Conducted fact-finding with the VCA Board of Directors and key stakeholders.
- Organized a one-and-a-half-day Summit on May 11-12, 2023, at Seven at River Prairie in Altoona, Wisconsin.
- Collaborated with the VCA Study Committee on the Mini Case Summary, which was distributed to Summit participants at the outset/ahead of time.
- Interviewed 46 people and recorded their responses.
- Conducted two four-person focus groups at the Summit and recorded responses.
- Prepared an online survey that was circulated to VCA's distribution list and posted on VCA's website and Facebook page, and subsequently posted on the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce website.
- Held many general discussions with the VCA Board and volunteers.
- Completed two additional telephone interviews with local philanthropists and corporate owners after the Summit.

During the Summit, participants representing stakeholders, donors, and volunteers shared feedback, questions, comments, concerns, and potential interest or support for the proposed project through 45-minute confidential personal interviews and 45-minute focus groups. The focus group participants were also invited to complete an online survey to allow them to add information they were not comfortable sharing in a group setting.

All study participants were asked to review the following Mini Case Summary as background for the project prior to their interview or participation in focus group discussions.

Mini Case Summary

A NEW BEGINNING

VCA (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 mission 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, VCA 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.

The first phase to begin the VCA will require investments into a \$6M* campaign to cover the first two years of startup 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

Total campaign goal is \$6M.

** The \$6M supports the first two years of expenses. Reimbursements per pupil will not occur until Fall-Winter 2025.*

VCA is a tuition-free, non-religious 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 enroll students through a lottery system, which will guarantee equal opportunity to anyone wanting to attend.

FUNDING

VCA's mission is to be the best choice to support children and families wanting to educate the whole student — mind, body, and spirit. 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.

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.

How is VCA 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 resident district will receive one-third.
- VCA will not utilize funds from local districts. VCA is an independent school district that receives taxpayer and grant funding.

* *Additional private and public grant, transportation, special education service, and food service funding will support VCA as well as private donations.

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 and critical thinking 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 for creating a lifelong learner. The Hillsdale College's K-12 Charter School initiative is apolitical. 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.

Mind, Body, Soul/Spirit Focus

Mind: "Learning to be a Learner" will bring students joy and purpose, no matter what they choose to do. Body: Focused physical education training of the whole body is emphasized by incorporating activity breaks and exercise throughout the day. Soul/Spirit: Becoming confident and connected to oneself through the study, understanding and demonstration of virtues, character, and proper behavior.

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 is not affiliated with a local school district. It is operated independently and is a charter school authorized by the state of Wisconsin. VCA will operate as an independent public school district, not affiliated with a local district.

VCA'S GOAL IS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THEIR JOURNEY TO DISCOVER THE TRUE, THE GOOD, AND THE BEAUTIFUL THROUGH CONTENT RICH EDUCATION.

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. VCA is not affiliated with a local school district.

BOARD MEMBERS

Kim Senn

Chris Albertson

Jamey Denning

Adam Kern

Natasha Plank-Ottum

END

The questions and each participant's responses to the interviews, focus groups, and online surveys are attached as Appendices A-C.

Summit Participants and Online Survey Respondents

Private Interviewees

Ed Accola

Mel Accola

Chris Albertson

Ben Anderson

Wade Asher

Kim Ayres

Dan Baemmert

Shari Baemmert

Corrine Berg

Bill Bertrand

Scott Biederman

Erin Borofka

Heidi Boxx

Ken Custer

Rima DeFatta

MC Fries

Sue Haas

Bruce Hayhoe

Wendy Heffernan

Jill Herriges

Craig Hinden

Jerry Jacobson

Luncinda Kemmet

Adam Kern

Janice Lemminger

Danica Lowry

Lucretia Mattson

Michael McHorney

JR Menard

Andy Neborak

Natasha Plank-Ottum

Tabitha Patrow

Shannon Plank

Leon Plank

Elizabeth Potee

Eliza Porter

Jennifer Rooney

Karen Rooney

Amy Ruh

Paul Ruh

Drita Sabani

Kim Senn

Robin Shih

Focus Group Participants

Jeff Bowe

Jackson Detrick

Natalie Detrick

Natalie Frie

Mike Conner

Pete Marsnik

Amy Heikkinen

Amanda Anderson

Online Survey Respondents

Jennifer Baker

Amy Heikkinen

Tammy Tillotson

Campaign Readiness Study Findings and Analysis

Crescendo advisors reviewed and analyzed the information gathered from independent research, personal interviews, focus groups, and online surveys to determine benefits, questions, and concerns related to the project. They also assessed the community interest in VCA, the financial capacity of the surrounding area, and the leadership and volunteer potential.

Benefits

Personal Interviews

Those interviewed cited a number of benefits for opening VCA in the Chippewa Valley.

Several mentioned the importance of giving parents another educational option to choose for their children. In the words of one interviewee, VCA would provide “*another option for families that are in between a public school and Christian-based school.*” Another pointed out that the benefit is beyond merely offering more choice but may result in improvement in all schools: “*Having more schooling options in the area creates healthy competition and raises the bar for all schools.*”

Interviewees are also excited that VCA is tuition-free and lottery-based. Lottery-based is defined as a random selection process for determining which students will attend. The lottery system aims to give all applicants an equal chance of being admitted. By drawing from a wider geographic area, versus one defined area, and attracting students who could not afford a tuition-based school, they felt VCA would allow for a more diverse student body, benefitting the students and the wider community.

Respondents were confident that VCA would provide an excellent alternative to current public schools, challenging students, stressing core values, and prioritizing mental wellness. They welcomed VCA’s high expectations of its students, focus on the whole child, and emphasis on educating lifelong learners. One observed, “[VCA] *minimizes the gap in what parents want for their kids to learn and what they are learning in school systems currently.*” They perceived that VCA would command better discipline and respect, teaching kids to be “*better humans.*”

VCA's small school setting is also seen as a benefit because it would allow more focus on the individual child and accommodate increased *"hands-on"* learning. Interviewees also felt that parents would be more involved and engaged and that, in turn, the school would be more engaged with parents.

Focus Groups

Those who participated in the two focus groups echoed many of the benefits cited in the personal interviews. Most frequently mentioned was the benefit of having a new choice.

Some like VCA because of the curriculum, which they thought would build children's character, something they felt was lacking in current school options but sorely needed in today's world.

Others welcome an additional choice because of the broader reach of VCA, while another appreciated not being assigned to a school: "[I] *Don't like the automatic placement and as a parent, would like the opportunity to choose the best school for my kids.*"

Participants thought the small setting, small class size, and disciplinary follow-through boded well for students and teachers. They also opined that parents would be more committed and involved than they are elsewhere.

The passion and planning that has gone into VCA to date was recognized and welcomed by focus group participants because *"it has all come together in a beautiful package and is well displayed."* One participant noted that the timing is good and the location ideal.

In short, interviewees thought VCA will fill a need in the community because it is, *"An education option that provides a whole-person curriculum, a tuition-free & equal-opportunity program for families."*

Online Survey

Those completing the online survey felt that VCA would benefit both individual students and the community.

One respondent summed up the benefit to individual students as *"an opportunity for children in the area to learn character development and development of critical thinking and analytical skills through a classical curriculum. It's important for our youth to be virtuous, well-rounded, and thoughtfully educated."*

Two respondents felt increased choice was advantageous to the community, especially a *"unique, high-quality, tuition-free schooling option."*

Conclusions

Overall, the benefits of VCA are many from the respondent's perspective. From the lottery-based system expanding fairness and access to providing another educational option for parents,

respondents resoundingly supported all facets of VCA. Clearly both the Founding and Design Committees focused on learning about the area's needs first, and then worked to create a school that directly and specifically meets those needs.

It is undoubtedly a benefit when responses to questions of competitiveness and whether the region needs another education choice were met with, *"A rising tide lifts all boats,"* referencing that the addition of another educational choice in the Chippewa Valley may bring improvement in all schools.

Beyond the direct benefits identified by respondents, those who live and work in the Chippewa Valley also understand that strong communities work to address citizens' needs.

Many individuals working on this project believe it defines the values and goals necessary to build a stronger region. Strong education options attract residents and businesses. Expanded development in commercial and industrial areas means a greater tax base for the community, schools, and counties. An expanded tax base allows for improving services such as education because a larger base can share the cost.

When choosing locations in which to operate businesses, entrepreneurs not only consider the availability of land and buildings, access to transportation and technology, opportunity for a strong work force, and the availability of excellent schools, but they also think about whether they will be able to attract excellent workers and managers to the community.

Creating VCA will support the area's growth by attracting residents to the Chippewa Valley.

Questions

Personal Interviews

Interviewees were asked what questions they had regarding the creation of VCA. Their questions centered around the fundraising campaign, the VCA curriculum, and school operations. (The more commonly asked questions are listed in this section. The complete list of questions is included in the Appendix.)

Funding

People questioned if taxes would increase. One person asked, *"Is this \$6M just to get started? What about after the first years are up, where does funding come from then? Will there be a continuous need for more fundraising? Is the needed \$6M above and beyond what the taxpayers are giving?"* Another wondered if donations were tax deductible and whether donors would be recognized for their gifts.

Curriculum

Many had questions on VCA's curriculum, wanting more information about both Hillsdale's curriculum and the Finnish model. They wondered how the combination would differ from the traditional system.

- *Will VCA undergo an accreditation process?*
- *Will students still prepare for and take state tests?*

Some of the questions arose from confusing terminology regarding the suggested benefits of classical education in the introductory mini case study. Specifically:

- *What does "personal wellness" mean?*
- *What does Veritas mean?*
- *What does "Doing Good in the World" mean to VCA?*
- *What do you mean by "Leveling the Playing Field"?*

School operations

Some questions concerned school operations, including how VCA will handle sports, snow days, and transportation as well as the following:

⇒ *Uniforms:*

- *Do the students wear uniforms?*
- *Does the school assist in purchasing/providing uniforms or do parents pay for that?*

⇒ *Lottery:*

- *Is there more freedom to which students are welcome without specific criteria?*
- *Are you targeting a certain group of people or just people in line with this curriculum?*

⇒ *Teachers:*

- *Where do you find/hire teachers that would fit this school best?*
- *How will these teachers be set apart?*
- *Would like to know more specifics on the pay structure for the teachers.*
- *How are we handling teacher performance?*

More broadly, interviewees asked how VCA would both appeal to students but also keep student boundaries in check. This push-pull was apparent in these comments:

- *How do we reign back in our boundaries for our kids? We put the world in their hands with their smartphones.*
- *Ownership for young people is a big deal. Young people are most influenced and follow trends. How do we make this trendy?*

Communication

The final set of questions concerned transparency and communication with parents and with the wider community.

- *How broad have they reached out to parents in all the cities that will serve the students?*
- *Have they spoken directly or indirectly to those who are not in favor of this? Have they taken the opportunity to glean the opposition?*

Interviewees felt transparency and good communication are essential given the importance of getting people involved, competition with other charter schools in the area, and a potentially politically charged atmosphere.

Focus Groups

Those participating in focus groups also had questions on VCA's organization and fundraising. One person wanted to know if VCA was a nonprofit and how the VCA board would operate differently than a public-school board.

Fundraising questions included:

- *What is [the process] now?*
- *Where is it headed?*
- *What does it look like in the long term?*

They also wanted more information on the classical curriculum and Hillsdale's reputation. One person questioned whether VCA would not be religiously affiliated.

Another asked how VCA would serve students with special needs and students performing above grade level.

Participants also wondered how VCA would get and keep the right teachers to carry out the curriculum and "*give the students a different education experience?*"

Some questioned the size and makeup of the student body:

- *Once you're in, are you in? Are students required to complete the lottery process year after year?*
- *How are you selective in the students you allow to attend?*
- *What age do kids start?*
- *Can kids get kicked out?*

And finally, some had questions about the location of the school and whether transportation would be available.

Online Survey

One online survey respondent wanted to know when they would know with certainty whether VCA would be open in 2024. Another wanted to know the class size.

Conclusions

Dozens of questions were identified in the study research. This is not uncommon and is not a concern to Crescendo regarding the potential for a successful capital campaign. Clearly questions from the community must be addressed before funds are solicited to engage community support and build on the groundswell of interest already present from those most closely involved and excited about the vision.

The campaign leaders and committee members will use participants' questions as a guide for preparing a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document. Consultants, working with volunteer committees, will strive to answer these questions through a compelling case statement and campaign materials that are well-written, visually appealing, and clear. See Appendix D: Importance of a Strong Case Statement.

As fundraising moves forward, the comprehensive case statement, FAQ document, and brochure (including operating, ongoing maintenance, and design plans) will show why potential donors should support the campaign.

Concerns

Personal Interviews

Despite recognizing the benefits of launching another education option in the Chippewa Valley, those participants had some concerns, most relating to the fundraising effort and the impact on the wider community.

Another school is slated to open in the area, and one interviewee wondered whether the community could support two new schools. Because VCA would draw from a large area, the concern was magnified by their sense that many people would favor keeping their contributions in a smaller, specific community.

Even if the initial fundraising is successful, another expressed that VCA *"can't keep coming back to the public continuing to ask for money"* so would need *"a strong sustainability plan."*

In addition to financial concerns, several persons questioned the school's potential political bent, wondering how VCA might incorporate the affiliation with Hillsdale. One person was concerned that *"misinformation was spreading already."* Even if VCA starts strong, one person wondered whether, over time, the school would lose its strength, *"either by teachers not holding to standards [or] people donating large money having a say in morals, etc."*

The future state concern was echoed by another, who complimented the amount of work done to date but was concerned about fatigue: *"[The] Founding, Design, and Board groups, are they confident all individuals are on board for the long haul? Is the team strong enough? Can they make it through fundraising and getting it off the ground? And then reaching their goals to serve all the students they want to in their plan?"*

The last set of personal interviewee concerns related to the school itself, especially with an exact location and the identity of headmaster/mistress unknown at the time of the study. In addition to wanting a safe location, a few echoed one interviewee's concern: *How are we going to get the caliber of teachers we need for this school? How do we attract good quality instructors?* In addition, one person felt that charter school students are less prepared for state testing. Finally, one thought the cost of uniforms might be a barrier for some parents.

Focus Groups

The two biggest concerns expressed by the focus groups were the stigma associated with charter schools and the funding. Participants saw these as interrelated, especially given the current political and economic situation in the area.

Others expressed concern about the project's fundraising timeline and competition with Venture Academy, a new faith-based school opening in the area.

Although the focus groups were excited about VCA's vision, some wondered about the reality. *"Will the lottery really be random? Will class sizes stay small?"* As one woman summed up: *"We want to see the benefits, not the properties. We want proof that it works. It sounds great! We want to see it in action."*

Like the personal interview participants, those in focus groups worried about recruiting and retaining good teachers with competitive pay. And finally, they wondered about transportation logistics, the number of classes per grade, and student extracurriculars.

Online Survey

The only concern mentioned by online survey respondents was the number of student spots that would be available given the small number of proposed students, the 20-mile radius, and staff priority for the lottery.

Conclusions

Research identified a number of concerns, which are also not uncommon during the early phase of fundraising campaigns. While general concerns were voiced about the proposed campaign, it is worth noting that no major issues were identified.

Some of the concerns are valid, however, and should be appropriately addressed by the campaign leadership as the campaign is developed, specifically to cultivate the organization's potential to reach the desired goal. Concerns will be addressed through careful public education and the rollout of an eventual fundraising strategy that can lead to a high level of success.

The overwhelming enthusiasm of the majority of the donors could help transform those concerns about funding into support, benefiting the area's educational choices in a lottery-based and tuition-free school.

The concerns voiced by the community demonstrate that time and care must go into a campaign effort. Before solicitation begins, the fine-tuned case statement must outline project details, respond to concerns, and answer pertinent questions. The case statement must point to the benefits, any necessary changes in the plan, and the solution to improve educational outcomes through opening VCA.

Community Interest in VCA

Personal Interview Responses

One hundred percent of those interviewed believe bringing a public, lottery-based, non-religious charter school to the Chippewa Valley is important.

This is a key finding. After completing nearly 60 studies over 25 years, Crescendo advisors have rarely if ever witnessed this level of overall positivity for a start-up organization's philanthropic study.

Some felt that more choice was beneficial, especially one that was tuition-free. *"Eau Claire is going to be the third largest city in the state and the most important component are schools... Schools as a whole are so important, and it gives another option for families that is not currently being served."* Another agreed, noting that, *"Choice is important, it shouldn't just be public or private/religious."* The tuition-free aspect was attractive to respondents. *"For people that can't afford the private school, we need other free options."* In addition, a couple of interviewees felt that another option would bring competition and innovation to public schools thus raising the bar for all.

Others commented favorably on the aspects of the classical curriculum:

- *"Classical curriculum brings education back to the basics and fundamentals."*
- *"It is important to teach history and not leave it out."*

Many also appreciated VCA's emphasis on values:

- *"It is nice that there is a school that teaches values."*
- *"You can be book smart but not have the human element of decency."*
- *"A school that teaches character building is so important."*

A couple of interviewees felt that VCA would bring much needed diversity into the classrooms because *"a charter school helps support differences in kids"* and would be a place where *"different cultures are accepted, and friendliness is encouraged."* One commented that the lottery would *"bring in diversity in a fair manner."*

Several expressed general disappointment about public schools, stating that the *"current system is really broken"* and has *"lost touch with what public education is supposed to be."* Some complaints suggested that public schools need to *"eliminate gaps in learning so children are better educated."*

One business owner responded that young adults entering the workforce were unprepared and unmotivated. *"It's hurting businesses because they [businesses] are employing people they have to teach we're being parents and teachers instead of bosses and leaders."*

Other specific complaints were that the public schools were too big, couldn't focus adequately on the individual, were *"too federalized,"* lacked discipline, and passed kids too easily to the next grade.

Finally, some expressed concern about the politicization of the public-school curriculum. *"[The] school system is not in sync with a lot of people's [opinions on] what education should be. We need to get back to basics."*

Focus Group

Participants in both focus groups thought another schooling option in the Chippewa Valley was a good idea. A focus group respondent in the post-Summit survey agreed, commenting, *"it provides equal opportunity to quality education."*

One participant felt that current school options did a poor job of building character, which she felt was important. Another expressed that the lottery process was not easily understood.

Online Survey

All online survey respondents agreed that bringing a public, lottery-based, non-religious charter school to the Chippewa Valley was important. They thought VCA would be perceived to be *"fair and impartial"* and would offer *"a high-quality schooling option."* Also, they pointed out that a tuition-free classical education is not now available but would be welcome to teach children to learn and *"build character."*

Conclusion

Nonprofits, schools, and groups in their early developmental stages typically have a host of initial hurdles, one of which is the lack of awareness regarding the extent and impact of its mission.

Developing awareness takes time and effort, some of which is unfolding for VCA at this time. The full understanding of the goals of the mission are most clear to those who are closely connected.

Exactly how VCA will convey its overall mission to the Chippewa Valley at the time of the study was not fully evident. It is noted that the lack of understanding regarding the classical education model will require a strong awareness and marketing program within the capital campaign.

Crescendo advisors are confident the awareness process will be met with improved understanding prior to the solicitation phase.

The benefits and community interest conclusions pointed to three main themes:

- VCA's creation will fuel and support the economic and population growth of the region.

- The need for VCA will support public education which is experiencing decreasing enrollment across the Chippewa Valley.
- VCA will focus on closing the achievement gap.

Chippewa County's population grew 6.7% from 62,626 in 2010 to 66,865 in 2021. Between 2010 and 2021, the county's population grew by an average of 0.6% per year. This supports interviewees' responses about the area's exciting growth.

The five-year enrollment trends reported by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in the Chippewa Valley area show evidence of the need for in-person, free, non-religious public schooling. The Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District has been experiencing a steady decline in enrollment year after year despite a 5% increase in population over the last five years. In total, the nine districts that VCA will serve had a combined loss of nearly 800 students from the public school system in 2021, with an additional 1,073 opting for homeschooling. These statistics show that open enrollment is not the reason students are leaving the public schools.

VCA's goal is to intentionally support each child with a personalized academic plan that will be carefully monitored to help each child excel. Support will also include tutoring and instruction tailored to a student's learning style, including hands-on applications. Homework will be focused and time appropriate. Physical activity will be supported. Behavioral management will be proactive – listening to students' needs and choosing staff who create an atmosphere of equality, safety, respect, and connection to the school environment, with teachers, and between students.

The support from a wide range of respondents from teachers, parents, and retired educators to CEOs and corporate managers was strong across the board. What is clear is that respondents understand the challenges facing schools in general across the United States and in the Chippewa Valley. They undoubtedly support the efforts of VCA Board members to improve educational outcomes for area students by providing a public-school choice in the Chippewa Valley, one with a curriculum that addresses critical thinking skills, mental wellness, and physical wellness. The Board is committed to support this initiative with their voices and pocketbooks to provide an alternative charter school option to strengthen the region.

Economic Conditions, Fundraising Environment, and Area Capital Campaigns

The Chippewa Valley is an undeniably economically strong and giving region. The area has a can-do attitude and strives to care for its own by improving the quality of life of its residents. The area's general economic condition and other fundraising campaigns are important factors when assessing whether the area has the potential to support a \$6M capital campaign for VCA.

General Financial Capacity of the Surrounding Area

Eau Claire is the third fastest growing city in Wisconsin, indicating a thriving economy in which to initiate a capital campaign. Chippewa County Census information reveals that as of July 2022, the population for Chippewa County is 66,807. The most recent United States census data indicates a growth rate of 0.58% in the past year.

The Chippewa Valley in general has experienced economic advantages over the years. The Chippewa Valley's economy is diverse and consists of several sectors. Manufacturing plays a significant role in the region's economy, with various industries such as food processing, metal fabrication, machinery, printing, tourism, and agriculture.

While economic conditions in the Chippewa Valley seem sound, inflation exists nationally and, in the Chippewa Valley, and is undoubtedly affecting individuals' bottom line in relation to food, fuel, and housing costs.

Fundraising History

According to Giving USA's annual reports, individual giving topped \$490B in 2021 and decreased to \$484.85B in 2022, the first year in decades when giving decreased. Although major gift giving decreased by 4% in 2021, corporate and foundation giving increased, as well as individual giving, which increased from 4.9% to 6.7%.

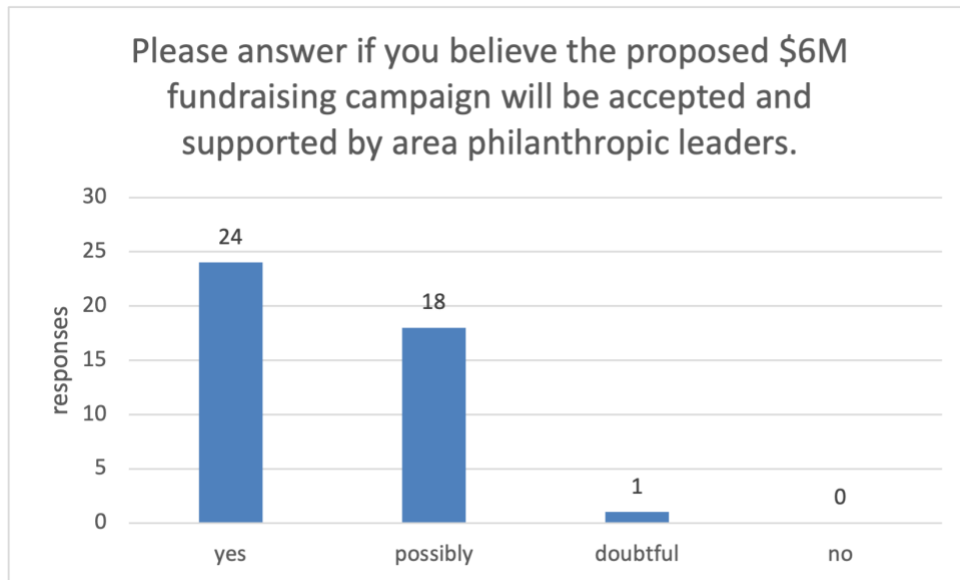
Personal Interview Findings

Crescendo asked interviewees to rate the area's general economic condition for the proposed campaign, beginning tentatively summer/fall 2023 through spring 2025. Respondents rated on a 1-5 scale with "1" being poor and "5" being excellent. The average rating was 3.6.

Those responding on the low end of the scale were concerned about a "tough economy" and "bad markets" plus the lingering effect of the pandemic, which has or could result in layoffs, tighter budgets, and a decrease in wealth. Others were concerned about competing asks in the area – both fundraising campaigns for community projects and for political candidates running in the upcoming elections.

Others were more positive, opining that where there is interest and passion, the money will follow. They felt the Chippewa Valley was growing, investments were on the uptick, and business was "booming." Still others pointed out that there is "money in the area," people and corporations have "done well" and that, in general, local individuals are generous and "in a giving spirit."

Personal interviewees were asked if they thought the VCA fundraising campaign would be supported by area philanthropic leaders. Over half said "yes," while all but one of the remaining respondents answered "possibly."



Those responding “yes” felt that \$6M was a relatively small capital campaign goal in relation to some other fundraising campaigns and is not that hard to raise given the area and the number of big donors. They also felt that VCA’s mission and vision are important, leadership is strong, and the area is craving this kind of choice and would be motivated to give.

The other half of respondents answered “possibly” noting that the campaign would need to engage people across every school district. They feared religious donors may find the non-religious aspect of VCA a turnoff and were also concerned about competing school campaigns. However, one person stated, *“There are going to be other fundraisers—probably for the same clientele. Raising money may not be as easy as it would’ve been five years ago, but probably doable.”* Another did not think business would support this project.

Area Capital Campaigns

Summit participants and online survey respondents were asked if they were aware of other major fundraising campaigns currently underway or being planned in the area. Crescendo checked on those mentioned and compiled a list of area capital campaigns:

- Private education initiatives
 - Venture Academy (Jacob’s Well Church)
 - Generations Academy
- Hope Gospel Mission \$1.8M
- Humane Society
- Bob’s House for Dogs
- Agnes’ Table - \$6M
- YMCA
- Boys and Girls Club
- Sonnentag Complex

Conclusion

The Chippewa Valley is a successful and philanthropic region. The area is clearly capable of fundraising significant dollars for important causes and missions. When residents see a need, its leaders respond with visionary solutions-oriented programs and facilities, leadership, and financial support to see the project to fruition.

The number of successful Chippewa Valley campaigns over the last 10 plus years shows the love and commitment of Chippewa Valley donors to continue improving residents' quality of life.

Giving decreased nationally last year, and from all indications in the literature, nonprofits are experiencing some fundraising challenges. The country is also experiencing the highest rate of inflation in more than 50 years and a fluctuating stock market.

However, indicators from the study were still strong that the \$6M capital campaign will reach its goal due to the significant, early suggested contributions noted by major donors.

Potential for Lead Gifts and Indications to Give

Findings

All successful capital campaigns of any goal amount typically require 12-16 major gift pledges to provide 60-70% of the total campaign goal. In addition, the lead gift, typically averaging 15-20% of the goal amount, is required, along with two top-level gifts. See Appendix E: Gift Table.

Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, and the area's smaller adjacent communities are successful communities with legacies of philanthropic commitment to many entities such as universities, health care institutions, nonprofit organizations, churches, and other groups. Summit responses indicate that local individuals, businesses, foundations, and organizations have the potential financial capacity to support the top-level major gifts required (typically paid over a three to five-year pledge period).

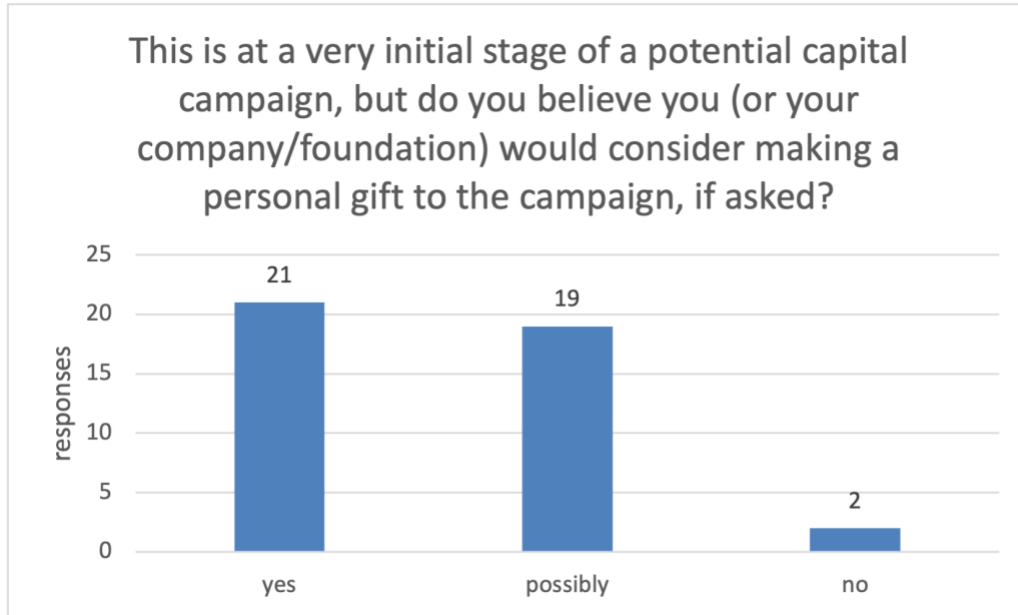
Early Indications of Financial Support

As of publishing of this study, a lead gift and several other six-figure gifts were identified:

- One potential lead gift in the \$1.2M range was mentioned.
- Two gifts of \$500,000 were mentioned.
- Two respondents indicated a gift in the \$250,000 to \$500,000 range.
- One respondent indicated a gift of \$100,000.
- Five respondents indicated they would consider giving \$10,000 to \$24,999.
- Three mentioned potential gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999
- Four said they would consider gifts in the \$1,000 to \$4,999 or less than \$1,000.
- Fifteen indicated they did not know what range they would consider giving at this time, but they most certainly would give.

These indications are very promising.

When personal interviewees and online survey respondents were asked if they believed they (or their company/foundation) would consider making a personal gift to the campaign, 40 out of 42 people said “yes” or “possibly.”



Two out of three online survey respondents responded they would “possibly,” consider a gift to the proposed campaign.

Those who were interviewed and those filling out the online survey were also asked what possible amount they could see giving over three to five years to help the VCA Board evaluate whether to move forward with the capital campaign. Their responses are shown in the following table.

Personal Confidential Interview Amount Pledge Considerations (of 19 respondents)	Number of Gifts	Approximate Pledge Ranges
\$1,000,000 to \$1,250,000	1	\$1,250,000
\$499,000 to \$999,999	2	\$1,000,000
\$250,000 to \$500,000	2	\$550,000
\$100,000 to \$249,999	1	\$100,000
\$50,000 to \$99,999	-	-
\$25,000 to \$49,999	-	-
\$10,000 to \$24,999	5	\$55,000
\$5,000 to \$9,999	3	\$15,000
\$1,000 to \$4,999	4	\$10,000
\$999 and under	3	\$2,500
In kind gift options	-	-
Total Range Survey	21	\$2,982,500

Conclusions

The financial support identified during this study rates close to or the topmost potential giving ever uncovered by Crescendo advisors in nearly 60 campaign readiness studies. Clearly a tremendous amount of passion and commitment exists for fulfillment of the VCA mission in the Chippewa Valley.

It is rare to uncover such strong investments in a philanthropic study which indicates highly motivated donors.

On an even more positive note, collective giving often increases up to three times what is indicated during the research after cultivation efforts are completed. (This factor usually does not apply to the lead or top several gift categories.)

Three components are typically required to reach a fundraising goal. This project is easily experiencing all three:

1. The financial support and credibility of the most respected individuals, corporations, foundations, organizations, and groups in the region.
2. Strong backing by a lead or major donor(s), a municipality, local foundations, corporations, and/or a school district or churches.
3. Individuals and leaders who are willing and able to both give and assist in leadership capacities with the capital campaign.

The lead gift and supporting top-level gifts are obviously pivotal to a capital campaign. The amounts mentioned during this study were extremely telling in terms of the passion and excitement people feel about bringing this school to its opening and full capacity of educational opportunity.

As mentioned previously, in every capital campaign regardless of goal amount, typically 12-16 donors will comprise 60-70% of the goal. Further, a relatively small number of donors — about 120 on average — are needed to meet any goal amount. During an actual campaign, Crescendo usually works with volunteers to complete 100-150 solicitations of individuals, corporations, or foundations.

Excitement builds when the capital campaign rationale is developed, and organizational stakeholders begin sharing the story effectively with other donors, friends, and community members who believe in the project and in improving the quality of life and education in the Chippewa Valley.

The proposed \$6M goal is considered attainable by a number of the most respected members of the philanthropic community. The project benefits typically gain traction with donors once the case for support is fully articulated and developed.

Crescendo advisors are confident the early indications of giving are true, and from experience, some are often multiplied by several times after inspiring and informative cultivation efforts are completed with the passion, dedication, and commitment of volunteer campaign leaders.

Volunteer Leadership Potential

Donors in the Chippewa Valley understand the importance of volunteerism and community involvement. This area comprises a strong pool of highly effective leaders who are actively engaged in business, social, civic, church, and community organizations. The region embraces service and giving in a continual effort to improve the quality of life of the communities in which they live.

Through a confidential process, interviewees were asked to recommend potential top leaders and other key volunteers who might be recruited to bring the campaign to fruition. They were asked to identify people who were knowledgeable about the greater community and the relationships that exist within the area.

Campaign Volunteer Leadership

Crescendo's experience in capital campaign management has shown time and time again that no single element is more determinative of ultimate campaign success than enthusiastic, committed leadership. This high level of support starts at the top and works its way through volunteers and donors. As Crescendo manages a fundraising campaign, our advisors can communicate this enthusiasm and amplify its effects. However, advisors cannot generate such excitement and passion on our own. If the campaign leaders are excited about the project, volunteers and donors will be excited as well. This enthusiasm will be translated into dollars raised for the project.

Personal interviewees and focus group respondents were asked to identify persons knowledgeable about the community and the business and social relationships that exist. They were also asked to recommend an individual or individuals who could provide top leadership for the proposed campaign. Respondents named sixty-six persons who should be actively recruited to be involved in the future campaign.

In addition, three individuals were identified as having the abilities and connections in the region to chair or co-chair the campaign or to be involved in the campaign in another leadership role. Several of those individuals were identified by numerous interviewees and respondents.

Seventeen respondents expressed a willingness to be involved in campaign leadership or committee work. Another 14 expressed interest in volunteering at events or in some smaller capacity, such as reviewing the case statement and campaign materials.

Names of those identified or who indicated a willingness to become involved are not listed in the report for confidentiality reasons; however, the list will be included in a private addendum to recruit leadership and volunteers in a future campaign.

Pre-Campaign Job Descriptions

Name	Duties	# Needed and Attributes	Time Commitment
Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs all activities of the campaign. • Provides input on the foundation for a successful capital campaign. • Helps assure the success of the campaign by overseeing all committees. • Will eventually solicit three to five potential donors with another team member. 	8-10 individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will meet over approximately 12-16 months or until the goal is met • Will tentatively begin meeting in July 2023 • Will be one-hour meetings
Leadership Development Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and recruits the general campaign co-chairs. • Identifies and recruits the topmost echelon of campaign volunteer leadership for the campaign co-chairs. 	4-6 individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a commitment to the Chippewa Valley • Are interested in the benefits of the mission and project • Are knowledgeable about the business, philanthropic and social relationships which exist within the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will meet three times. in July 2023 • Will be one-hour meetings
Case Statement Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides input for consultants to develop a strong and compelling campaign rationale and FAQ, as well as answer key questions regarding the campaign and fundraising plan. • Tests or validates the case statement. • Gives feedback on the case statement development and validates the case statement with key donors. 	12-14 individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable about the scope and mission of the campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will meet 4-5 times • Will begin in July 2023 • Will be one-hour meetings
Communications Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the effectiveness of the campaign by helping provide input for the promotional elements. • Assists in raising awareness of the project. • Provides information to the area about the project. • Provides input on coordinating a large campaign launch event. • Provides input on materials. • Provides feedback on materials. • Plans the public launch event. 	10-12 people who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable about branding, communications, marketing, and media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will meet every month for 8 to 10 months • Will be one-hour meetings • Beginning July 2023
Finance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the capital campaign process by reviewing financial materials for the project. • Provides input on fiduciary aspects of the organization or capital project. • Reviews financial materials. • Provides direction on which elements should be included in the Case for Support or other campaign documents to provide the best picture of the project and the organization itself. 	10-12 people who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically work in banking, accounting or financial management for a corporation or business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will meet approximately four times • Beginning July 2023 • Will be one-hour meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews and provides input on the business plan for the proposed project. 		
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Conclusions

Volunteer leaders are undeniably the foundation of a capital campaign. A successful campaign benefits from the relationships with others, perspective, energy, passion, and the drive of key leaders and volunteers who have influence to open doors with other top donors.

Several effective leaders were consistently mentioned as those who should be involved with the campaign to reach the projected goal. A number of those individuals are already involved on the VCA Board of Directors or otherwise connected to important philanthropic endeavors or educational initiatives.

The Chippewa Valley has unprecedented leadership potential, strong interest, and undeniable support for this project. A number of individuals already connected to VCA should provide the essential guidance and leadership needed to see the campaign to a successful conclusion based on the respect they have within the region. Crescendo has no concerns whatsoever about the ability to garner the additional leaders and volunteers required to serve on the campaign’s committees.

Final Analysis

After conducting the study and analyzing the results, Crescendo is confident that the \$6M capital campaign is important to the community and financially feasible. Further, the results indicate the project will be well supported by volunteers. The project is justifiable and has urgency in terms of educational choice, educational vigor, social and economic benefits, and importance to the Chippewa Valley.

Importance to the Community

A high level of energy and passion exists to see VCA realize its mission and goals. Respondents communicated the desire for a school option focused on character development, mental and physical wellness, and the fundamental attributes of our nation. The proposed campaign timeline is deemed appropriate, beginning summer 2023 through 2025 or until the goal is achieved.

Financial Feasibility

Although the country is either in or facing a near-term recession, the Chippewa Valley is still considered to have strong economic capacity for this campaign, even operating parallel to other important fundraising initiatives. The indication of a lead gift was identified. The necessary top-level gifts for the first phase of the project — a \$6M campaign — were also identified and are considered realistic and attainable. At the time of the study, Crescendo was not aware of any major overt or covert problems that could negatively impact the fundraising campaign.

Volunteer Capacity

Crescendo advisors determined that highly effective campaign leaders are available and willing to work on the campaign. Additional engaged and passionate volunteers are also interested in serving as noted by the sixty-six people identified or self-identified.

Favorable Factors

1. The indication of a potential lead gift of \$1.2M was identified for a \$6M campaign.
2. Two \$500,000 cornerstone gifts were also identified. With the cultivation of other donors and friends, consultants are confident additional major gifts will be secured over the course of the campaign.
3. The necessary additional top-level gifts for the first phase of the project – the \$6M start-up campaign – were also identified and are considered realistic and attainable.
4. Interest is high to provide a public, non-religious educational choice for the region.
5. Energy and passion exist to see VCA come to the fullness of its mission and goals as soon as possible.
6. The Chippewa Valley is considered as having a high economic capacity for this campaign, even during a time of high inflation and operating parallel to other important fundraising initiatives.
7. The project is justifiable and has urgency in terms of educational choice, educational vigor, social and economic benefits, and importance to the Chippewa Valley.
8. General interest exists for the campaign and creation of VCA to serve the region.
9. Respondents are extremely supportive about a school option that is focused on character development, educational choice, mental health, and fundamental instruction about our nation's history.
10. At the time of the study, there were no major overt or covert problems that could negatively impact the fundraising portion of the campaign.
11. Influential and respected campaign leaders are available and willing to work on the campaign.
12. Additional engaged and passionate volunteers are also interested in serving as noted by the 66 people who were identified or self-identified.
13. The proposed campaign timeline is deemed appropriate, beginning summer 2023 through 2025 or until the goal is achieved.

Challenging Factors

1. A school headmaster/mistress had not been secured at the publication of this report. However, this is considered to be temporary and not expected to negatively impact the capital campaign.
2. A suitable interim location has not been identified at this time.
3. The nation is either in or facing a near-term recession which could impact mid-level and grassroots giving.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, conclusions, and favorable and challenging factors, Crescendo recommends the following:

1. Accept this report, adopt it, and approve it as a basis for initiating the capital campaign process, as campaigns depend on urgency and momentum.
2. Direct fundraising consultants to engage in a comprehensive fundraising campaign through a variety of means and methods including online and social media platforms to invite and support involvement in new ways.
3. Fine tune the current case statement and FAQ document into updated, strong, and compelling campaign materials. The updated case statement and FAQ documents will answer the many questions addressed during the Campaign Readiness Study and current and additional questions from the philanthropic community.
4. Recruit interested volunteers from the interviews, focus group members, and community survey. Train these new leaders and solicit pledge-range amounts needed to reach the campaign goal.
5. Initiate a strong communications plan to effectively present the rationale with marketing material outlining the importance of this school to further support education choice for the Chippewa Valley and its citizens.
6. Begin a pre-campaign planning process before seeking major gifts. This phase will last approximately five months.
7. Solicit pledges as is typical of most campaigns. One-half of pledges are usually paid into the campaign during the first year, one-third is typically paid in the second year, and one-sixth in the third year.

Next Steps

During the Campaign Readiness Study presentation on June 14, 2023, Crescendo will invite the Campaign Readiness Study Committee and the VCA Board to accept the findings of this Campaign Readiness Study report. This becomes the basis to initiate the hiring process to start the pre-campaign planning beginning immediately to capitalize on the energy, excitement and interest generated from the study. Crescendo's campaign consultants are available and looking forward to assisting VCA and Chippewa Valley citizens in this exciting effort.

Appendix

Appendix A: Importance of a Strong Case Statement

Appendix B: Personal Interview Questions and Responses

Appendix C: Focus Group Facilitator Script and Participant Responses

Appendix D: Online Survey Questions and Answers

Appendix E: Gift Table

Appendix A: Importance of a Strong Case Statement

To raise capital funds, a comprehensive and compelling case statement that cites the components and rationale for the project must be prepared to inspire those able to consider a major contribution. The case statement must point to the opportunities to positively impact quality of life and the benefits of the project once completed. The case statement serves as a vehicle to convince people that their support for the project and the organization is worthwhile and needed. A strong capital campaign case statement must contain the following information:

- A summary and a clear statement of the organization's mission.
- A convincing description of the purposes to which the capital funds will be used.
- Plans about ways one can give — pledges, gifts of securities, gifts of real property, stocks, etc.
- Financial information on how the organization will be operated.
- Recognition opportunities, such as buildings, rooms, or exhibits to be named for donors.
- List of key people involved in the campaign.

Appendix B: Personal Interview Questions and Responses

Name:

Can you please tell me a bit about yourself and your involvement in the Chippewa Valley?

Do you believe the vision to bring a public, lottery-based, non-religious Charter school to the Chippewa Valley is important? VCA will enroll students through a lottery system, which will guarantee equal opportunity to anyone wanting to attend. When students receive a lottery seat, VCA will also offer a seat to their sibling(s) if openings exist. If not, siblings(s) will be placed on a waitlist with the following exceptions: -Kindergarten will hold an open lottery every year and not maintain a waiting list prior to the enrollment date. -Rather than an open lottery, VCA will populate 6th grade from the advancing 5th-grade class. Once students on the waiting list are placed, VCA will offer any available seats on a first-come, first-served lottery.

- *It provides another opportunity for parents to choose where their child could be educated. In the whole world of business and education, it's important to have options because not all students learn the same.*
- *She feels like there are a lot of gaps in the school system. Not enough attention is given to the individuals. They [her children] would have done better in a smaller, more-focus environment.*
- *She doesn't have experience with private schools — aside from her kids' friends. She believes it would be healthy for the current public schools — you only strive to get better if you have competition. Comparison can be poison, but it can also create healthy competition. Somebody might step back and say what do we need to change. She doesn't know with public systems if things are so federalized that they have no say any more. She knows a lot is tied to funding. Maybe that's the public-school problem. There is a lot of the community that is unaware.*
- *She was in a bad situation when her kids were younger in public schools. They went to private school but a lot of teacher turnover.*
- *She believes it's essential, not just important. Start looking at students as the human person that they are and not a producer. By giving students the tools to do good for one another.*
- *Yes, been involved in initial discussions when forming the board.*
- *Very important. Because there are certain organizations that are trying to destroy what society believes in. She wants American values to continue on for grandchildren - and to stand for what it did from when she was a kid. Doesn't seem schools are going that route.*
- *More opportunities for education and reduce the burden on the public school system and remove the religious component with tuition free.*
- *As a public-school teacher, I chose not to send my kid to public school. So that's saying something about my confidence in the public school system. There are people that mean the best, but the system is not able to support them. They aren't able to support the people trying to do their best. I like the idea of options for students — options are good. It gives competition for others to do well. Currently there are boxes checked that aren't really happening in public schools. (Like teachers saying yep, my kids have learned that, but they really haven't - nobody is making sure there is follow through) She does believe it's great for families and kids that*

find education important. Important to have tuition free. Her son (6th grade) is in private school.

- *Not a parent, so he doesn't have school aged kids. From a business owner perspective, — young adults entering the work force have changed. He employs entry level through white collar. Less emotionally prepared to work — low expectations, not willing to work, not socially good at working — what is happening to the foundation? The visibility is at the public education level, so it seems that education has taken a sharp turn. It's hurting businesses because they are employing people they have to teach, and these important things are already instilled. They're being parents and teachers instead of bosses and leaders.*
- *Her kids say it's hard to learn because there is no discipline. When students are misbehaving, they remove the others from the classroom to allow the misbehaving kid throwing chairs to calm down on their own and self soothe instead of removing the misbehaving kid. It's disruptive to learning. There are people trying really hard but they're being thwarted by the system itself. She experiences employees that don't show up on time, have no responsibility, they don't have motivation to work. There is a responsibility to the community, there is this "if we believe it is true, it is true" mentality and it needs to stop. Core principles are needed. Montessori was formed under Eau Claire, so they didn't have their own approach, they needed to follow certain rules set in place by Eau Claire systems and they lost their touch. Montessori kept getting eroded, independent thought was cool but not happening.*
- *A non-religious classical education option would be very important. An alternative to the public-school model and an alternative to the religious school mode.*
- *Less and less enchanted with the public school system. She grew up in this system and her husband did too. Their children are at a private school. People are more educated than ever before about the individuals who are educating their children. It used to be that public school was what everyone did, but we are seeing benefits to smaller class sizes and there is definitely room for this to succeed. Looking at the success of Montessori, she sees this is a need and can find success.*
- *Yes, but she doesn't have kids in school so it's hard for her to have input. She says yes because for the community, the more diversity the better.*
- *They are a Catholic family but attending a Catholic school was a decision they had to make but decided not to because of tuition costs, because they would have to be paying taxes for public schools. Although they are a Catholic family, she doesn't believe those thoughts should be pushed to all children.*
- *Need another education school option, to be able to choose what you want in an education system. The current options are not up to standard.*
- *People should have a choice in their education and loves what she sees with a high-quality choice.*
- *Because we, on a microscale, it's giving kids in the area an opportunity to a quality education. We're giving people options but it's more than that. There is a true and false. We've lost the right and wrong. It's not ok. You can't undermine the truth. There is a course to humans and nature. It's an option for parents in the community. Wanting to avoid being taken away by the tide. On a greater scale. It's important to offer parents an option at a free cost. Accessibility is very important to her. A school teaching character building is so important.*

- *Curriculum is changing so much. She wants her daughters to understand and learn the truth and wants them to be ready for the real world.*
- *As a parent, his oldest daughter is just finishing 1st grade. They tried public school, and it didn't work. Academically, they wanted something better. Bringing something that would allow the teachers to have control of the classroom to teach the child virtues instead of teaching to the test. Hillsdale school and classical education teaches people in a way that they are meant to learn.*
- *It's important that there is a section of society that doesn't have school choice. There aren't options. They are forced into something that doesn't align with morals, values, family goals. Children need it. They need more positive role modeling, more positive environments. She thinks the community needs it and needs a rebranding of the education menu.*
- *Based on what they have watched and read there are problems with the public-school systems so another opportunity would be great.*
- *A school like this is needed. A new outlook on how kids are taught. We have the religious options so having the non-religious option is good. Every year it gets more frightening that parents are not truly taking care of their children. There needs to be a school that shows people that there is a safe place where the children will be taught values.*
- *It is good to have choice on the surface.*
- *Competition always breeds innovation. He is a big fan of the public school system but wants there to be other options. Charter school helps support differences in kids.*
- *I like what the charter school specifically connected to Hillsdale stands for. There's a massive need in the area and probably everywhere. Public schools are going way too far into left field, and we need to get back to the basics. The students need a firm foundation. Many kids can't read a clock because they just aren't teaching that anymore and are putting digital clocks in the classrooms now. Most middle school students couldn't give change from a one-dollar bill. Not only are the teachers and schools falling short, but the parents are too. We need to get back to the basics. She's concerned about the basic education for kids.*
- *Choice is important, shouldn't just be public or private/religious.*
- *Some of these schools are religious and some are not religious. The independent curriculum is great to teach what the community and the families need — not what the government wants to be taught. Different cultures are accepted, and friendliness is encouraged.*
- *There is a big need for it — she has kids in the Chippewa school district. One almost graduating high school, one in middle school. The public schools have worked well for her older daughter because she's self-driven, self-motivated, doesn't need pushed along — She has a lot of opportunity. Her younger daughter is social, but not as driven and not motivated in school. There hasn't been as much opportunity for her because she doesn't look for it. It's quite concerning for me as a parent — is she getting a good level of education? She never has homework. It makes her wonder, surely others are feeling this way too — There may be a good market opportunity here for a classical schooling option like this. Other charter schools in the area are religious based, or private — likes that this one is public and free, available to all.*
- *Wasn't happy with the answers he has been getting from the superintendent.*

- *Honestly, the school system is not in sync with a lot of people's opinions on what education should be. Get back to basics.*
- *Doesn't agree where education is going for young people. Kids need to be raised so they can think for themselves and have patriotic values.*
- *The current system is really broken. Lost touch with what public education is supposed to be. Disconnected the parents and kids. Going back to classical education is important and given the choice to parents and another option to parents is important.*
- *It is important because it gives options. Eau Claire is going to be the third largest city in the state and the most important component is schools. Public and private entities are super cohesive in this city. Schools as a whole are so important, and it gives another option for families that is not currently being served.*
- *The public school system has lost a lot of the basics and is out of touch with the human element of a child. You can be book smart but don't have the decent human being element. It is important to teach history and not leave it out. Be able to teach historic teachings.*
- *One is Chippewa in general, there's a lot of haves and a lot of have nots. For people that can't afford private school, there is a need for other free options. Classical curriculum brings education back to the basics and fundamentals.*
- *Wants a charter school — like Montessori would offer more.*
- *Being in the public school and seeing the desire for a good, solid education. It is nice that there is a school that has values. This is missing from Eau Claire — one of the issues keeping a public school open. It is important to have funding outside of just tuition. Needs a charter school with a good curriculum.*
- *It's a complex question. Are you asking on a personal level: her kids have gone to a religious school; she is very interested in the two new high schools being built. In her dream world, if this school were religious, it would be perfect. For the community, this definitely fits a need.*
- *This is really about a culture shift using a school. This is about creating really incredible human beings, so the region and country can be safer and happier through truth. There are other ways to "do school." The true intent is to create "Yes, people," in my interpretation. Our whole system was based on people training soldiers to respond to orders, not critical thinking, but how to respond, "Yes sir or ma'am." We need critical thinkers to know how to problem solve with these huge issues facing our society. We need kindhearted people who are well and whole. We need to go to fundamental rules about what is instilled in our children. We used to follow "do unto others as you would want done unto you." There is nothing that unites us as our value system anymore. We need to go back to what unites us so we all can be open minded and could be respectful to all.*
- *Grew up going to Regis. When he was going there. It was a good mix of socioeconomic demographics and today it's not. Morphed into something else. You see more haves than have nots. Vouchers have not really helped it. He really likes the lottery to bring in diversity in a fair manner. He thinks the approach seems very intentional. Likes all the aspects of it. Has the right people. Know how to get things done. Will be phenomenal when it comes to fundraising.*
- *Personally, he doesn't like the lottery-based option. In order for this to be successful, you have to have a target audience. Much of the public school system has been watered down. He is*

not sure who is being left behind, but he thinks it is high achievers. Has to be that the kids want to be there rather than being random selection. If you want to use public money, you have to work around it, so he gets it. He thinks it should be merit based. You need to have an intent to teach classical education — he thinks you should have to apply because the kids should want to be there. You have to have a target audience.

- *I understand the concept.*
- *Has a sister living in MN, her son was bullied, and they had to send to a private school — that was only opportunity was private. Opens doors for people who aren't happy.*

Based on the brief summary of the project, what do you believe to be the benefits of the potential campaign to open VCA?

- *Choice for the parents. Often opportunities and services that intend to serve a wide geographical areas doesn't always encompass the entire Chippewa Valley, so to see that it might actually serve the entire map of the Chippewa Valley is a large benefit. The curriculum about a classical education, the focus on the whole child and the whole student is so important.*
- *Provides another option for families that are in between a public school and Christian based school. Smaller and more focused on the individuals and more engaged with the parents..*
- *When it's public, it provides an opportunity for any family of a child and their learning styles or needs. In my understanding, it provides excellence in education. Perception — can be positive or negative, but hopefully positive. Starting to see classical schools popping up in different areas — how do you get education on this project out to the masses for interest and funding? It would be interesting to pull families. People want extra curriculums, how is Veritas approaching that? It's important to people. Partnering with teams, clubs for school sports. Wants to see healthy relationships with the public schools, because I think you will be asking for their partnerships.*
- *Lottery based so it would be fair. Classical education element for their kids would be amazing and they are craving it. Everyone would have access to the school.*
- *To have children steeped in truth through grammar, rhetoric, and logic. To know who they are, why they are here and how they will fit into the world, which gives the human person meaning. They need to know that they matter. Classical education they believes it can reduce suicide. Aids their future. There are so many benefits to a language rich, history-rich education.*
- *The growth of character. Re-establishing respect in our schools and love of one another centered around an educational environment.*
- *It would empower the children. Shows them America isn't what the media or teacher might tell them. Hillsdale gets down to the worth of a person as a whole instead of everybody as a community. Hillsdale tells you that you are an individual and you can succeed compared to being a team.*
- *Giving more options to families who want something different than mainstream public schools —other option is Catholic or religious based and tuition based.*
- *Potential to impact the community. That's a big deal. In a conservative community. More and more people are waking up to see things we thought were good are creating bad qualities. It's*

impacting the business level. As members of society, it's not what we hoped for. Options are limited. The area has grown, but have schools given more options? They are either private or public in terms of enrollment. I think it would be easy to fill seats and keep it moving.

- *People who don't feel they have recourse, have some. Might make people realize there's a better way of doing things. Change has to start somewhere. Like the idea of tuition free, if parents aren't in a good financial situation, they are out of luck currently because of the private, tuition-based options. Not just based on the parents' financial situation.*
- *Need to have our youth have a more diverse educational environment and philosophy. To have kids that are educated with different and more traditional values. It seems to me that is what is being created by Veritas. Traditional education model is good for communities and the Chippewa Valley. Like the concept but have no idea where they're at.*
- *Love that we're going back to the core values of our society as this is talking about the Declaration of Independence. Has our society made mistakes? Yes, but we need to learn from history. The history of our country is not being taught. It is being maligned. Appreciate the uniforms that are suggested. There is a respect and presentation. Believe in respect for the teachers and children need to be taught respect. One of the biggest concerns is finding the right principals and teachers — need to be competitive in pay. Love the training model from Hillsdale.*
- *Biggest is choice in the area. It's something that is lacking. In light of the current community/political environment, options are great.*
- *Parents should have the choice to look at a different education source with the curriculum being different. Major benefit being a tuition free.*
- *More serious focus on school. Get the best out of kids. Focused on the basics. It's ok to want more out of the situation. Truth.*
- *Honoring teachers in the teaching profession — once they have a school that has respect for the teachers and is being paid well, they are going to raise the bar for other teachers.*
- *Cancel culture is not right. The fact that not teaching history anymore is a problem. Need to learn to live in this world together and love being and living in this world. But what is being pushed is not OK. At the end of the day, schools need to be unbiased. They cannot be biased, and honestly, they think that is happening. Respect does not happen anymore. Business is not taught to children anymore. Knowing finances is important, and we are not helping the next generation to understand how to manage their lives effectively. We need to know how to budget and should be learning this in school as children and teens.*
- *Provides a non-tuition based, non-faith based — high quality education classroom-based option where there isn't one right now. Based on waiting lists, there is a demand for this school.*
- *It's a way out for society. It's a path to truth and happiness.*
- *Offering parents another opportunity instead of the public schools today. Public schools' curriculum has been swayed. Lack of money going to arts instead of just sports.*
- *It is much needed to bring in something to our area so that parents can feel good that their children are being taught values.*
- *I know some people have some concerns about the educational system.*

- *The goal of developing kids and focusing on areas that aren't always taught in the public school system.*
- *Like the idea of a charter school that focuses on the importance of emphasizing the basics. Developing character in their students. Moral and civic responsibility. There are college interns helping us with taxes that truly don't even know the basics of their public education.*
- *A segment of the population wants classical education and what a true education means and other factors that might be interjected with political or government reasons.*
- *They are learning for the sake of learning and not just the common core. More hands on in activities — challenging and pushes them outside of their comfort zone. Likes the variety of books that the academy is suggesting and the curriculum. For example, when the government can decide when to shut down a school, it ends up killing motivation and intelligence, so we moved our children to Brookfield Academy and had a very good experience.*
- *The biggest benefit is that there is a gap in what parents want for their children and the education they are actually receiving. Maybe this is just for a certain population (he sees it this way, even in his own life in the difference he sees in his daughters) but maybe more than just some — maybe all are feeling this way on some level and looking for more opportunities for their kids.*
- *Giving another option to parents is important.*
- *The biggest thing is to get back to what we should be teaching our kids. Loved the youtube video. Teaching our kids to be good humans.*
- *Getting parents more involved with their kids' education. She feels like they aren't encouraged to be involved. People think it's frowned upon if parents are involved. They are on screens all day instead of doing things like script writing.*
- *Schools are a hot topic today. The principles of education to deliver at the core and build character is vital these days. We need to try to help students make decisions and problem solve. We need to be able to be problem solvers. We like how they are going about teaching. Accountability. Classical education.*
- *Giving another option for parents whose needs are not being met in the community. It is very much needed in Eau Claire because it is very much tainted when it comes to the political scale.*
- *Having someone to compete against; to raise the tides. Having more schools increases the competition and the need to all be better and do better.*
- *They can make their own decisions as students. They don't need the entire school district to make determinations about what is correct for the students. The mental health balance is important to be more in control of your mental health — screen time can be a huge problem for kids. It can be all consuming of their lifestyle. They need to establish relationships in real life. There needs to be a balance. Even today the technology is overwhelming via Google, etc. Research material of today. There should be a balance between the two.*
- *Giving an alternative option for families. Giving parents an option that also aligns to their values.*
- *Likes that the impression she gets is that it's going to be a disciplined school, there will be expectations for the school, for the teachers, when you have respect, there is so much that*

falls under that. Is this respectful of the people around me? When she sees Veritas, she sees it as a broad perspective. It looks that this school requires respect.

- *Well-adjusted students. Highly educated. Intrinsically fulfilled. Self-advocates. Self-love. Understanding of the world. Critical thinkers. Resiliency.*
- *Innovation is a big benefit. Loves the aspect of mental health being brought into the curriculum. Serves on a state board, a lot of the people using family resource centers, many don't use mental health or dental care. It's about the environment, not about access. Same for adults and children. There is also an access issue. What he likes is that the environment is good already and the additions they're layering in can make such a big difference in an ideal setting. There are people that have cognitive dissonance to this approach and will have a bad taste from the Hillsdale approach. There is the right philanthropy that will quietly give.*
- *A strong supporter of youth activities — so having another experience for students to achieve at their potential. Kids should understand the skills they are good at. Youth should recognize they have something more to give to the world.*
- *I know about Hillsdale. Lukewarm about the concept.*
- *More options, opportunities in lieu of moving outside of the neighborhood school.*

Do you have any questions? Please elaborate if so.

- *How much have they spoken to the school districts? How much interaction has been happening? Honestly, she doesn't have a good, broad perspective of all of the districts and their feelings. What feedback are they getting? How broad have they reached out to parents in all the cities that will serve the students? Have they spoken to directly or indirectly those who are not in favor of this? Have they taken the opportunity to glean the opposition?*
- *Where is the school going to be? Does it have a home yet? Help narrow down a few options or the vicinity of the school.*
- *Where will the school be? — is it going to happen? — where is the curriculum going to come from? — important to partner with local businesses.*
- *No.*
- *For anyone hearing about this for the first time, why isn't what we have good enough with the public schools in the Chippewa Valley? Is this politically based or charged? Please define personal wellness. Are my taxes going to increase because this is a new school?*
- *Where is the location, are you targeting a school district? Are they targeting a specific group or just people in line with this curriculum? Hillsdale is more in line with the homeschool community? Anybody would be interested in homeschooling — but may not think they are qualified— this would be perfect for them. One of the homeschool groups they are a part of, has turned out to be something that it wasn't originally.*
- *Not about the school — or about the Hillsdale model. I was more curious about the campaign. seems like it's more of a reality now with the campaign. Where is that at?*
- *Not really — think it's pretty clear. I'm behind it from a business perspective.*
- *Is fundraising needed to initially get started? Or will there need to be continuous funding? Where do we keep getting funded? — Will there still be fundraising following the initial first years? — What about teacher performance? Are teachers tenured? This idea — it's ridiculous. Just because you've been there, doesn't allow a bad teacher to stay. — What metric system*

will be used to assess teacher effectiveness. — Grades don't work, continuing ed doesn't work — What works? How are we assessing them? — I don't care about A's, I want effort. If you give all kids A's, you are not a great teacher. Your kids are not learning the best if you give all A's — I'm not impressed by A's (alone) What does leveling the playing field mean? Define virtues — Let's list 2-3 virtues that they believe in.

- *Traditional values and history and civics.*
- *Is the \$6M above and beyond the taxpayer? How many other charter schools are in the area — Little Red Schoolhouse?*
- *I don't know much about it — no questions right now.*
- *No.*
- *When you want more out of something, you can make what you can envision.*
- *No.*
- *Where will it be located? What is the timeline? Will there be donor recognition for gifts? Is this gift deductible?*
- *No.*
- *Is the teachers' union involved?*
- *I don't know enough about it except where will it be located? Right now, I understand more of what the school will stand for.*
- *How will it be different than the traditional educational system? Is there a political angle? How would transportation work? Is it up to the parents that would provide a disparity for those people who cannot afford looking at barriers to access? What is this model doing that the traditional model is not? Teachers are leaving the industry in droves; how do you combat that?*
- *What does the difference in curriculum actually look like? How do you actually get to the goals from the curriculum?*
- *With the classical school being connected to Hillsdale... I just love it. In my opinion, the sooner the better for the school to open. If I can do anything to help it get started, I will do it.*
- *What type of student body could be part of this?*
- *Is transportation included in the government funding? Where is the best location? There are many options. Building something from scratch would be expensive. Will there be a teacher's union, and will it have power, or will it be independent?*
- *I don't have any questions specifically about the school — I know they are looking for a location. The only question would be what sorts of people are you looking for/ who is the target for the fundraising campaign for a public school like this?*
- *Concerned that there isn't one location defined and need to focus on one location. People want to keep their money in one location.*
- *Where do you find the types of teachers that will guide the students for the school?*
- *The lottery system is REALLY unclear and needs to be explained fully. It has to fill a need and solve a problem. What is that need and what is the problem?*
- *After watching the videos — do the kids have uniforms? This is a good thing it helps kids not stand out if they can't afford clothes. Does the school assist in buying the uniforms or does the family have to pay for them?*

- *The people who are involved for the initial concept, why are they involved? What is the driving factor to get involved? What ties them to this and why is it important to them? Of all of the options, why is this curriculum and system right for the Chippewa Valley? What is the capacity at the 5-year mark for the school? What is the student-teacher ratio and why was that number chosen? What is the vision for the future for the school? How does the school look to collaborate with our community partners like technical colleges and universities or other schools? Will this take funding away from districts that would be considered in a negative light? Is there an accreditation process?*
- *Need to have a good location. The biggest thing is having something that's reasonably close to home needing transportation.*
- *With this school is there more freedom to what students come in without having specific criteria? What does Veritas mean? What does classical mean? What makes this stand out differently from other schools? Many would say their goals are the same. Will there be a focus on outdoor and indoor focus? Can they play sports within the academy — like the Veritas Basketball Team or will they go to the team where they reside? What does Veritas — truth really mean? What does classical really mean and how does that relate to a great school? What are the differences between how curriculum is created and implemented in Veritas, versus public school versus Montessori?*
- *Need more people and more avenues to reach as many people as possible. Is the Chippewa Valley willing to give money to the cause?*
- *Because it's a public school, there's a lot of things that are being allowed and taught in public schools. Will those things be allowed and taught at this school? Furies, critical race theory, transgender topic.*
- *The biggest question we face is "How can you take money away from the public schools," but my answer is, imagine if your school district was opening another school so the student and teacher ratio is less. We are doing the SAME thing, but we are using a different curriculum. As the public school we are serving the same kids and we are using a different curriculum. We are still for everyone. Where will you find teachers during this staffing shortage? How can you take your children away from their hometown school? Is this only a conservative school?*
- *People are asking him: it would be helpful to address the question of Hillsdale. It seems like they are a resource. Maybe explain what they do and how they; at the end of the day, it's autonomous and who is ultimately in control. The focus on virtue, doesn't have to be religious. Virtues and values are synonymous.*
- *No questions, but he recently went through the YMCA interview, and nobody knew the mission statement. He wants the objectives to always remain the same even though the goals might change in the future. He doesn't think there will be trouble getting off the ground, but as long as the organization doesn't come back to the community time after time. We need a strong sustainability plan.*
- *Why don't they get elected to the school boards when half of the schools are starting to empty out to change it. Run for the boards with this philosophy. Where are you going to have this located? Are you sure the state will give them the money after one year of operation? The public funding will not succeed without \$2.4M. Are you guaranteed that after one year you*

will still get that funding from the state? If the state gives them money, do they need to have union teachers?

- *What about — elementary school — how it feeds into older grades and what about state testing? Are they still preparing for those? It's important that they know how to take those tests.*

Do you have any concerns? Please elaborate if so.

- *They have, founding, design, and Board committees/groups, are they confident all individuals are on board for the long haul? Is the team strong enough? Can they make it through fundraising and getting it off the ground? And then reaching their goals to serve all the students they want to in their plan? It looks like they've done a lot of work so far. She knows a lot of groundwork has been done.*
- *Finding capable and committed teachers from the pool of teachers we already have. How are we going to get the caliber of teachers we need for this school? How do we attract good quality instructors?*
- *I'm worried because there seems to be a conservative approach to supporting things. I don't know if I understand the funding. I know that the public schools in our area get less money per student and get less than neighboring school districts. It's frustrating seeing this north/south divide. If somebody wants to give a gift of money, let them. Why are we working on a funding formula from the '80s in terms of public schools and in the sense of facilities?*
- *A lot of money to raise.*
- *She thinks that many challenges have been addressed. There may be naysayers. It is 2500 years old, classical education is. We as a society don't understand that there was a different education prior to the industrial revolution. The education in our nation was shifted into a consumer-producer mindset instead of focus on the person. Overcoming the traditional sense in the current mindset as opposed to the classical mindset and why we educate humanity. To help someone understand what grammar, rhetoric and logic is for the child and the parent.*
- *The mini case summary funding bullets are not clear at this time. This really needs clarification.*
- *Doesn't want it to morph like another group did, fearful that if they don't have freedom, they will lose their power.*
- *How would the teachers be recruited and supported and funded?*
- *No - we're not Catholic but logistically, that schoolwork was the best for us in terms of scheduling and location. What happens on snow days, public transportation? How will that work? What about Christian private school — can we support them both starting at once? Do we have enough of everything for one community to serve two new schools at the same time?*
- *Not sure the awareness is high enough. It's a tight circle, so people are talking — but is it too lofty and what time would it take to get there if it's not a big public thing? I think you'll see a lot of people who are already here in interviews that are giving but what are we doing to get more involvement, more buy in, more money from the community?*
- *Transgender — what is their stance? — there are pride flags in the middle school being sold at lunch (in public schools).*

- *Finding the right teachers and keeping them. The fundraising capacity is here. I would like to see that expanded upon. The engagement level is not what it was 10 years ago, and I don't know the secret recipe for how to engage them. I don't know what their motivation is to give and get involved. We need to be innovative to adjust the model.*
- *No concerns. I don't mean to be wishy washy; my stake just isn't that high since I don't have kids in the school system. If my kids were in school, I'd have a different opinion. I'm not your typical Eau Claire individual, we just are nomads. If I had an alternative, - I may have gone this route for my kids (this school is more in line with the old fashion, old school thing) I'm not much of a religious person.*
- *Struggle moving their child from public school to this school because of uniforms. She thinks her child would struggle with going from non uniforms to uniforms.*
- *How will people perceive this? The progress that's been made has made a difference. We need to offer more and fit a vision for what the community needs. Going back to what it used to be.*
- *From the video that they watched the Western civilization teaching being a concern — she wants her kids to be global citizens. Motto — train minds and improve hearts. She didn't like the language. We don't need to improve their hearts we need to stop getting in the way of the heart of things that hurt the heart. She likes inspire minds and fortify hearts.*
- *We don't know enough about the opposition. We don't know enough about the competition. Why do they care or not care as a community? The competition looks different throughout the journey.*
- *No concerns.*
- *Don't have a building is a concern. Having a "face" or headmaster for the school is a concern. Giving the Hillsdale affiliation don't want to show they are a political school.*
- *How are we going to approach title 9, she thinks they need a strong plan. They are a public school and need to do a lot of research on their position because it's easy to try to avoid it.*
- *He understands the concept, but this seems like a harder sell. He thinks there should be a strict dress code instead of uniforms. Didn't like saying the 5 missions every morning.*
- *Hope money can be raised. I hope there are enough people who see the mission as valuable. Many people give and I hope people see that this is important and donate toward this school.*
- *It seems politics has seeped into all schools, so it is something to consider. There could be some disruption with teachers moving to other areas but if it is important enough, then get ahead of the disruption by controlling the narrative and get ahead of the project. You must be very proactive and strategic with your communications.*
- *The classical academy isn't getting a fair shake.*
- *In regard to the area and their acceptance of the idea — there are enough quiet conservatives that would appreciate having it. However, there are more left wing, outspoken people who tend to think the louder you shout the more influence you have. I'm concerned about them being too vocal in this matter and the quiet conservatives not speaking up.*
- *No concerns. Which grade levels are being opened up?*
- *My main concern is since the government is not funding this, how are we going to collect the money? Lots of businesses are struggling after the pandemic, so that is my concern. It is hard as people are trying to get back on their feet after Covid.*

- *Nope.*
- *Location is very important. Having parents see where it would go is big.*
- *I am not sure all will see the value, but for some people, they will see the value and want to see it happen.*
- *The current system tries so hard to put up barriers and runs falsehoods that aren't true. She had a client talking about Veritas and they had misinformation about the school. People aren't aware of how you can be a charter school and be a public school. People pay property tax and don't understand where that money is going.*
- *The biggest concern I have is safety, to hear their plan for safety. Athletics is an important part of K-12. How do you integrate with the physical activity component of the curriculum? We are looking at a school now where the kids could play all sports due to the small size. The culture of the school sounds great, but how will you ensure this is fulfilled and implemented? ARPA funds are drying up. Fuel and food prices are high. Manufacturers are laying off people.*
- *Where are they going to find the teachers? We are in the Midwest and not everyone wants to be here. How are we going to attract the teachers here? This might be a challenge.*
- *Public education is heavily funded. Public charter schools don't receive the same funding. Don't want our students to be left behind because the funding isn't there. Want the school to be high quality. Not in elementary school as much, there's certainly more than just education when it comes to the higher grades too. What about the social aspect, the community you create? Need to focus on creating that for the older grades.*
- *It seems like the video showcases puppy dogs and rainbows. The mental health aspect is important right now. If this school can help with that it would be a plus and a big thing for this school to conquer. There needs to be social balance as well.*
- *This should not be about politics. There is misinformation about this school that it is only conservative. Just because the college that is associated with it has a conservative bent, does not necessarily mean that any focus is solely conservative. A lot of education needs to be done so that the board and focus of the school is apolitical.*
- *No, he thinks this will be a different group of people in the library, but it will still happen.*
- *No concerns more of a caution to not lose your way. Concern is the public perception.*
- *There are fewer and fewer children. Schools are less interesting. I am not a huge charter school advocate. If we have something wrong, why don't we fix it instead of starting over.*
- *Kids may not be ready as public schools for state testing.*

On a scale of 1-5, with one being poor and five being excellent, how do you regard this area's present, general economic condition for this proposed campaign which would run summer/fall 2023-spring 2025?

Please answer if you believe the proposed \$6M fundraising campaign will be accepted and supported by area philanthropic leaders.

Please list the major fundraising campaigns currently under way or being planned in the area of which you are aware.

(Please refer to the potential job descriptions in a campaign.) What names of individuals would you expect to see in leadership positions (chair or co-chair) in a campaign for this project?

Whom would you recommend has the credibility within the philanthropic community to serve as general chair or co-chairs of the campaign?

Campaigns have several different committees that work together to prepare the campaign for solicitation. From the list of committees, who are some other possible volunteers in the Chippewa Valley who you think would be important to become involved?

Years of experience in capital campaigns teach us that most successful campaigns have similar patterns of giving. Show gift table. Who do you feel would be able to contribute 15-20% of a campaign goal for the project if a campaign is to move forward?

Whom would you suspect may be the largest contributors to this campaign?

Would you consider accepting a leadership position in a campaign if you are asked?

If you answered yes, please list which committee you may be interested in serving.

Would you consider serving on one of the short-term committees? Please list which committee(s) you may be interested in serving.

Would you volunteer your efforts in some way if it were small, such as providing input on the case statement?

This is at a very initial stage of a potential capital campaign, but do you believe you (or your company/foundation) would consider making a personal gift to the campaign, if asked?

If you answered yes, what possible amount could you see giving over three to five years to help the Veritas board consider if they are able to move forward? (If hesitant use this language. Use gift table, add "even if it is a minimal amount")

Do you have any final comments you'd like to share?

Appendix C: Focus Group Facilitator Script and Participant Responses

Focus Group Script

Welcome to the focus group, part of the Campaign Readiness Summit, which will provide feedback for the proposed plan you just heard about from the Veritas Board.

Brief Introduction of participants (10 minutes)

Let's take about one minute each to introduce yourself and explain your interest in being here.

Introduction questions (10 minutes)

1. Based on the background in the mini summary, what do you believe to be some of the benefits of the school opening capital campaign? Who wants to start listing some ideas?

Specific questions (30 minutes)

2. What are specific questions you have regarding the school opening?
3. How do you envision VCA will better serve the Chippewa Valley?
4. Do you have any concerns about the proposed campaign or project?
 - a. Do you see the Hillsdale connection as positive or negative?
5. Do you believe the organization may experience challenges that have not been addressed in the school opening plans? If so, please provide your suggestions.
6. What else would you need to know about the fundraising campaign to feel comfortable giving an outright one-time gift or a multi-year pledge?
7. What are some strengths of the project?
8. Do you see any weaknesses in the project?
9. "Is there anything we haven't touched on today that you would like us to know?"
10. Are there any other white elephants in the room that we aren't addressing?
11. Finally, here are two items that are used during a potential capital campaign – a gift table for the full amount needed for the \$6M school opening and the job descriptions for the committees that are usually needed in a campaign. Please take a minute to look at each and then I will share some information about each.

12. If it is determined funding is available to move forward in a campaign, the following committees would be necessary to set the stage for the campaign.

13. Are there any questions you have from reviewing this information? We will be sending you a link to finish some questions for your thoughts that will be private and will be held in confidence. Please do respond to that email link as the survey is extremely important and will only take a few minutes to complete.

Thank you for coming today and sharing your feedback. We appreciate the time you've given us today. Your comments have given us good information to formulate a report with recommendations for the completion of the campaign.

Focus Group Responses

Focus Group #1 Responses

- Topic: Based on reading, any questions on opening of school?
 - Comments:
Age of kids starting?
Is that the typical age for when a school starts?
- Several school options, thoughts on having another option.
 - Comments:
Options are always good, make sure presence is known and sticks in community.
Good, there's a lot of public-school options right now, so more options are good.
- Lottery-based make sense?
 - Comments:
Not easily understood, make sure tuition-free is made known and it's randomized
- Schools you know of that serve lottery-based?
 - Comments:
Altoona
- Any concerns?
 - Comments:
Public vs private, knowing differences with funding.
- Do we accurately communicate we're independent?
 - Comments:
"Where's the money coming from" was made clear.
- Do we need more clarification on Hillsdale? Positive, negative?
 - Comments:
Curriculum initiative? Lacking building character in common schools, having this option is huge especially right now.
Felt strong in building children character,
- Concerns with proposed campaign?
 - Comments:
2024 is a hopeful date?

Pledge timeframe a yearlong? Need money before opening? What are teachers making here? How does pay work for them vs working public? Paying coaches?

Extracurriculars?

Slow to start extracurriculars, McDonnell possibly co-op, discussed with Pablo center, possible to hire parents for sports.

- Challenges anticipated? Other schools opening?
 - Comments:
 - It's hopeful, but meeting deadline could be tough with funding, another similar school is opening however its religious based.*
 - What's the goal for enrollment?*
 - Is it a challenge to bring kids to the school? Getting teachers, goal to make small class sizes?*
- What are the pros?
 - Comments:
 - Parents will be more committed.*
 - Tuition-free*
 - Lower class sizes, parent involvement*
 - Something that is new.*
- Thoughts on 20-mile radius?
 - Comments:
 - Good reach*
 - Disciplinary follow-through*
 - Can kids get kicked out?*
- Any weaknesses in the project?
 - Comments:
 - What do other private schools do for sports?*
 - Before and after school options?*
 - Get extracurriculars in order.*
- Anything else need to be known about investing in school?
 - Comments:
 - See more details about the curriculum being an investor.*
 - A well-constructed PowerPoint, teachers can be hard to come by so how you can bring them in*
 - 5- or 10-year plan, showcase your vision for the school*
- Looking at sheets, who's needed yet.
 - Comments:
 - Know a few potential candidates.*

Key Points:

- Having that variety is good.
- Make sure tuition-free is super clearly established.
- Parental involvement is good.

Focus Group #2 Responses

Introductions:

What do you believe to be the benefits of the proposed campaign to bring VCA to the Chippewa Valley?

The biggest benefit is choice. Don't like automatic placement and as a parent, would like the opportunity to choose the best school for her kids. Giving parents more options to choose from instead of "you go to this school because you live on this street."

Is intrigued by the curriculum and Finnish model. How do you raise your child, not just memorize information to be able to pass a test? How can you reach them on multiple levels — likes the idea of the whole child curriculum.

We see things happening now that we didn't experience as kids. Kids are exposed to more at such a young age because of technology and because of the world we live in. Finds importance in building on mental health and confidence at a young age.

What questions do you have?

What is the secret sauce for faculty? Is there a process that will vet or select the correct people to make them stand out to give the students a different educational experience?

Where will they be located?

When we talk about the board, especially in comparison to a public-school board — how are they different?

Are you organized as a nonprofit? A: yes

As a charter school, is there funding from the state? A: yes

How many kids will be allowed a seat per grade?

Is transportation provided? Will it be your own private transportation, or will you work together with the public school system?

What concerns do you have about the project?

What is classical? How is it set apart?

Where does the school's funding come from?

How are you selective in the students you allow to attend? (We answered this in terms of the lottery system, but I think the question was more geared toward how you make sure that the students are good students — similar to the faculty question.)

Once you're in, you are in? Not going through the lottery process year after year? A: Yes (I think there is still confusion on this and maybe needs to be better worded than lottery)

How are you meeting needs for students with special needs?

What about for students that are performing above their grade level?

Benefits of the proposed project to the community:

Smaller school,

Higher quality,

More choices.

Is the curriculum clear? Do you have questions on what the Hillsdale curriculum is or how it is set apart?

Yes, it is clear when you read it all. You do have to dive into the info provided to fully understand it. Once you take the time to read it.

Suggestion for a one pager kind of like the mini case statement JUST on the curriculum. (Her point was that perception is reality and it's important from a marketing/PR perspective to be clear on who Veritas is)

The 3 stages of learning just MAKE SENSE. It's really neat that it makes sense. Mentally for their brain development, it makes sense.

We want to rid ourselves of the elitist, just the heart of development.

Are there stats for students who have gone through a classical education? Long term what does that look like? Kids in college, out of college, etc.

Any thoughts of negative connotation with Hillsdale? From your perspective:

Where is Hillsdale?

Personally, I have come across pushbacks, but it comes from school specifics, not the curriculum. Push back came from big people in the community — being transparent and a PR push to say, "you may have heard of this, but that's not what we are trying to be."

Is this really not religiously affiliated?

Strengths of the project:

Timing, good time for the society

The location is perfect.

Planning - impressed with the amount of work, data, time — it has all come together in a beautiful package and is well displayed.

You can tell the people behind this are passionate — it's because there is a need, not because it will make them rich.

Passionate people being the face of the project is so important to the project.

Weaknesses:

Overcoming stigmas

"Charter school" — that's where the rich or religious kids go. It's private, it's elitist, it's taking \$ from the school districts.

Maybe the current economic situation combined with the political situation.

As a 2-section school, I view that as a weakness. We were deterred from a 2-section school when we were choosing schools for our daughters back in MN - 3 section is ideal for growth. 2 section is viewed personally as a weakness.

Any other feedback:

Fundraising process — what is it now? Where is it headed? What does it look like in the long term?

Any experience with Hillsdale on what to expect?

We want to see the benefits, not the properties. We want proof that it works. It sounds great! But we want to see it in action.

Appendix D: Online Survey Questions and Answers

1. Thank you for taking our survey. Please review this brief description of the project before taking the survey. You can find the overview [here](#).
 - *This sounds like an incredibly beneficial addition to the community!*
 - *Read it.*
2. Do you believe the vision to bring a public, tuition-free, lottery-based, non-religious charter school to the Chippewa Valley is important? VCA will enroll students through a lottery system, which will guarantee equal opportunity to anyone wanting to attend. When students receive a lottery seat, VCA will also offer a seat to their sibling(s) if openings exist. If not, siblings(s) will be placed on a waitlist with the following exceptions: -Kindergarten will hold an open lottery every year and not maintain a waiting list prior to the enrollment date. - Rather than an open lottery, VCA will populate 6th grade from the advancing 5th-grade class. Once students on the waiting list are placed, VCA will offer any available seats on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - *Yes*
 - *Yes*
 - *Yes*
3. If yes, please list in what ways?
 - *This is important as we have nothing like this in the area. Teaching children to learn in these avenues and to build character is key in today's society.*
 - *There are not (to my knowledge) any schools in the Chippewa Valley that provide a tuition-free classical education to students. I, as a parent, also appreciate having high-quality schooling options.*
 - *It will be perceived as fair and impartial.*
4. If no, please list why.
5. Based on the brief summary of the project, what do you believe to be the benefits of the potential campaign to open VCA?
 - *The benefits of this campaign are to provide an opportunity for children in the area to learn character development and development of critical thinking and analytical skills through a classical curriculum. It's important for our youth to be virtuous, well- rounded and thoughtfully educated.*
 - *Unique, high-quality, tuition-free schooling option for our community*
 - *increased options for children*
6. Do you have any questions? Please elaborate if so.
 - *When will we know if Veritas will be for certain opening in 2024? What will the class sizes be?*
 - *No*
7. Do you have any concerns? Please elaborate if so.
 - *The proposed total student number per grade is small, especially given staff priority in the lottery and the 20 mi radius for people eligible to enter the lottery.*
 - *No*

8. Please answer if you believe the proposed \$6M fundraising campaign will be accepted and supported by area philanthropic leaders?
 - *Yes*
 - *Yes*
 - *Yes*
9. Whom would you recommend has the credibility within the philanthropic community to serve as general chair or co-chairs of the campaign?
10. Would you consider serving on one of the short-term committees? Please list which committee(s) you may be interested in serving.
 - *Event Volunteer (short term as need)*
 - *Event Volunteer (short term as need)*
 - *Event Volunteer (short term as need)*
11. Campaigns also require strong committees that work together to solicit and provide awareness for a campaign. Who are some possible community volunteers who would make good volunteers for this campaign? Please list 3 to 5 names.
12. Would you consider accepting a leadership position in a campaign if you are asked?
 - *Possibly*
 - *Possibly*
 - *Possibly*
13. If you answered yes, please list which committee you may be interested in serving.
 - *Events*
14. Years of experience in capital campaigns teach us that most successful campaigns have similar patterns of giving. Please review the \$6M gift table that represents the giving patterns for a typical successful campaign. You can view the gift table [here](#). Who do you feel would be able to contribute 15-20% of a campaign goal for the project if a campaign is to move forward?
15. Whom would you suspect may be the largest contributors to this campaign?
 - *Business owners*
16. This is at a very initial stage of a potential capital campaign, but do you believe you (or your company/foundation) would consider making a personal gift to the campaign, if you are asked?
 - *Possibly*
 - *Possibly*
17. If you answered yes, what possible amount could you see giving over three to five years, even if it is a minimal amount to help the Veritas board consider if they are able to move forward?
18. Do you have any final thoughts you wish to share?
19. Contact Information

Appendix E: Gift Table

Veritas Classical Academy Gift Table \$6M						
Range of Gifts		Number Required	\$ at this Level	Total Donors	Total Dollars	Percent of Goal
1,200,000	1,250,000	1	1,100,000	1	1,100,000	18%
500,000	999,999	1	750,000	2	1,850,000	31%
250,000	499,999	3	1,124,999	5	2,974,998	50%
100,000	249,999	7	1,224,997	12	4,199,995	70%
50,000	99,999	7	524,997	28	4,724,991	79%
25,000	49,999	8	299,996	36	5,024,987	84%
10,000	24,999	28	489,986	40	5,514,973	92%
5,000	9,999	65	487,468	105	6,002,441	100%
	<1,000	many	>23,606	many	>6,050,000	