



ANNUAL REPORT | FISCAL YEAR 2013–2014



VERITASPREP
CHARTER SCHOOL

Veritas Prep is
founded on the belief
that **all students...**



Regardless of
**race, class, or
socioeconomic
circumstance...**



Are entitled to a
**high quality
public education...**



Defined by
**high academic
and behavioral
expectations.**



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Executive Director,
Rachel Romano**

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to share with you our annual report for the 2013-2014 school year. In our second year of operation we expanded our program to serve 162 scholars in grades five and six. Additionally, we hired 15 teachers to join our team and began the hard work of developing them into extraordinary teachers who drive dramatic gains in student achievement.

Research has shown that the quality of a child's classroom teacher is the biggest predictor of a child's academic success. We agree! Veritas Prep scholars' results on the 2014 MCAS tests prove that great teaching can change the trajectory of a child's life and put them back on a path to academic success. With two consecutive years of quality curriculum and instruction at Veritas Prep, more than 70% of our scholars are scoring proficient or advanced in all subjects. The vast majority of these children came to us several grade levels behind.

As we move forward in our third year of operation, now serving 243 scholars across three grade levels, we continue to tackle our biggest challenge: finding and developing talented teachers with the will to do what it takes to put our scholars on a path to college. This year, we will begin growing teachers as leaders to build more organizational capacity around teacher development. We will continue to keep teacher recruitment and retention as a top priority so that we can continue to defy the odds and prove what is possible when talented people join together around a critical mission.

Thank you for your support and interest in Veritas Prep. With your help, we know we can help transform public education in the city of Springfield.

Sincerely,

Rachel Romano
Executive Director

THE NEED IN SPRINGFIELD

Many of our scholars live in neighborhoods where **educational opportunities are limited and expectations for academic achievement are low**. Less than 32% of Springfield residents have graduated with a four-year college degree. Almost half of the students who start as kindergartners in Springfield city schools do not graduate from high school.

Of the students in Springfield...

ONLY
46%

are **reading and writing** at grade level by the end of 8th grade.

ONLY
17%

are able to pass a **grade level test in Mathematics**.

ONLY
8%

demonstrate grade level **proficiency in Science, Technology & Engineering**.

RESPONDING TO THE NEED

Veritas Preparatory Charter School ("Veritas Prep") was granted a charter by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on February 28th, 2011 and opened its doors to serve our inaugural class of 81 fifth graders for the 2012-2013 school year.

We welcomed our second class of scholars, the college class of 2025, on August 19, 2013. In our second year of operation, we served 162 scholars in grades 5 and 6. We will grow by adding a grade every year until we reach full capacity with 324 students in grades 5-8.

OUR MISSION

To prepare students in grades 5 through 8 to **compete, achieve,** and **succeed** in high school, college, and beyond.

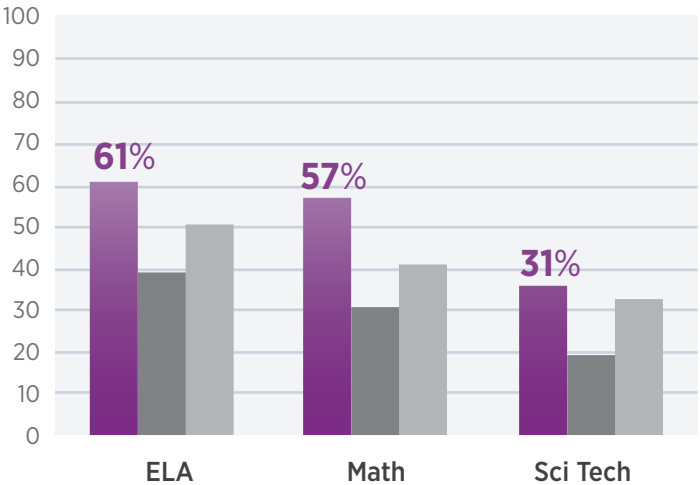


A different school
gets different results

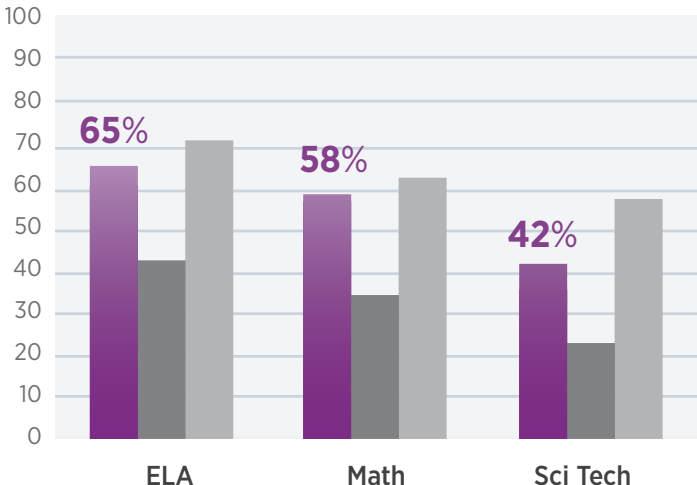
VERITAS PREP COMPARED TO DISTRICT AND STATE

Veritas Prep Scholars are proving that being from low-income households, does not determine one's ability to achieve academic success, and outperform their peers in Springfield and across the state.

Low income students In all grades at proficient or advanced



Grades 5 & 6 Proficient or advanced



■ Veritas Prep ■ Springfield District ■ MA State

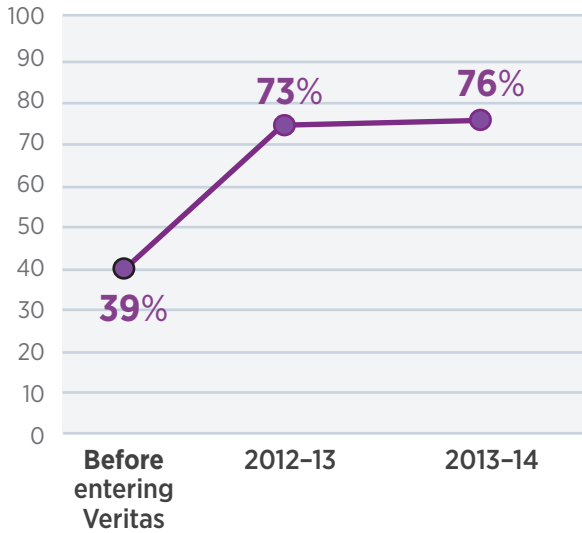


VERITAS PREP STUDENTS OVER TIME

After two years at the school, Veritas Prep Scholars have surpassed their district peers and are outperforming the state with 76% scoring proficient or advanced in English Language Arts (ELA) and 72% scoring proficient or advanced in Math.

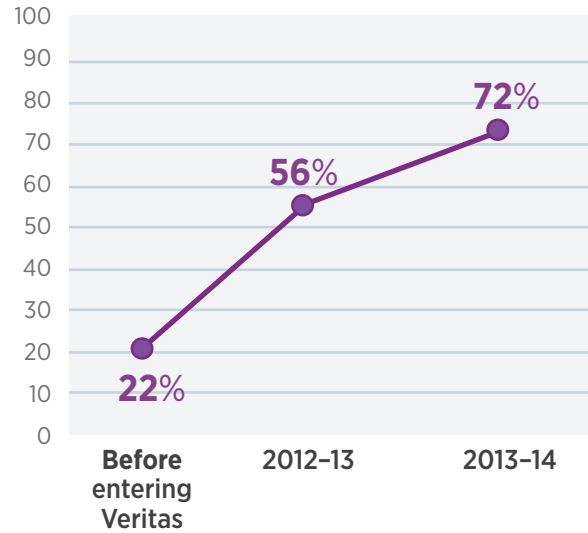
ELA MCAS Scores

Proficient or advanced

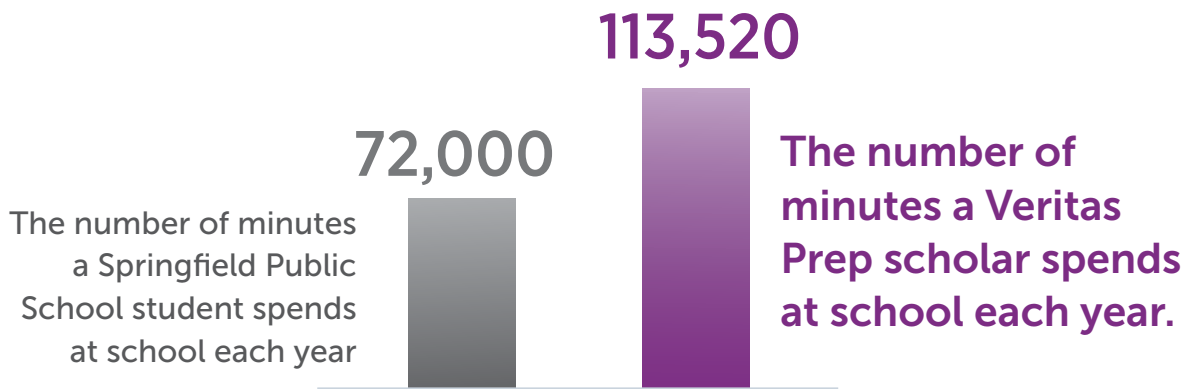


Math MCAS Scores

Proficient or advanced

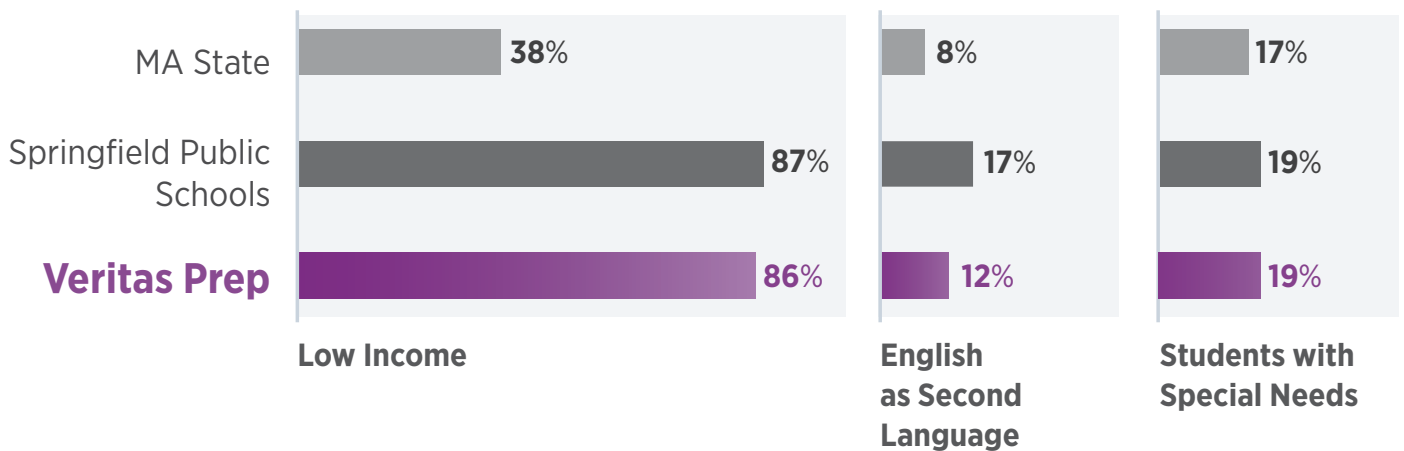
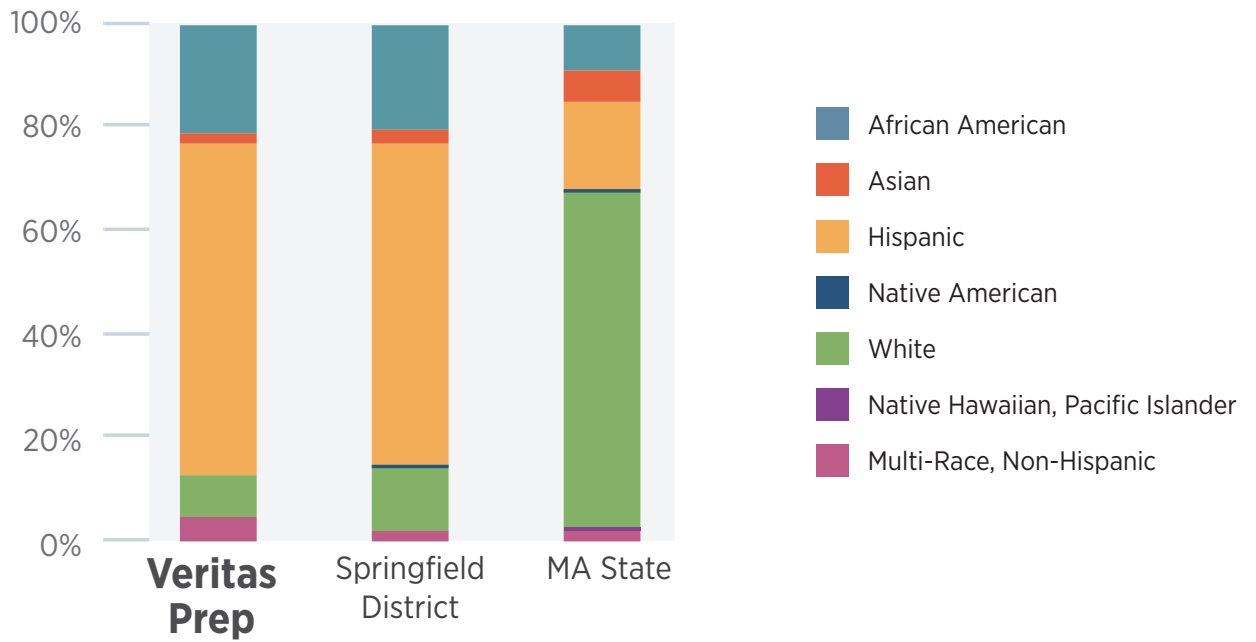


MORE TIME TO LEARN



WHO WE SERVE

Our student population mirrors the Springfield Public Schools, the sending district of the majority of our scholars. We provide a full range of services for students with special needs and English Language Learners.



OUR MODEL

High Expectations

We believe each of our students is college bound and hold them all to high expectations. Students are meeting those expectations and form the scholarly habits that help them make significant gains. All stakeholders, students and staff, are accountable for achieving results.

Structured Environment

Our structured learning environment allows the focus to stay on student achievement. We teach expectations to students and then hold accountable with their individual "scholar dollar paycheck" which tracks specific behaviors on each individual student.

Curriculum Focused on Outcomes

We truly begin with the end in mind... college success for all students. The road to college begins with the ability to read well, write well and compute accurately.

Data Driven Instruction

Data drives instruction at Veritas Prep. With regular data meetings to look at student work and assessment results, we respond swiftly to the needs of our students. All students receive daily tutoring targeted to meet their needs.

More Time to Learn

We have a longer school day, 7:30am–4:30pm, and a longer school year by up to 10 days more. Each scholar has ample time for all subjects, personalized tutoring, and enrichment with the longer day.

Character Development

Character and discipline are critical components to our college prep curriculum. Our scholars have weekly character ed classes and scholar dollar bonuses are awarded to students who demonstrate our DRIVE values.

Teacher Quality and Effectiveness

We recruit top talent to our team and grow our teachers through quality professional development. All staff members are mission-driven team players who do whatever it takes to put our scholars on the path to college.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF VERITAS PREP SCHOLARS



7:15 am

Students arrive at Veritas Prep; shake hands with a school leader, who checks to see that each student's shirt is tucked in, belt is on, and are ready to learn.



7:25 am

Students head to small groups for Linguistics where they are practicing phonics and fluency this week.

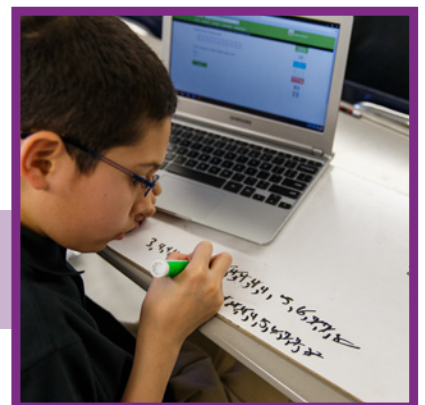
4:25 pm

Students have an end of day meeting in their advisory, record homework in their planner, and pack up and get ready for dismissal at 4:30.



2:40 pm

Math Problem Solving class begins. Students are working out challenging problems on their personal white board and sharing their solutions with the class.



9:25 am

Literacy Block begins. Students are reading *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett and learning how to annotate as they read, noting vocabulary that's new to them, looking for clues about the setting, and understanding characters' feelings.



11:10 am

Students have Enrichment class, and today, that means a Health Class with Nurse Abdoo. She's teaching about the food pyramid and nutrition.



8:30 am

Students have a Math Procedures class. They are reviewing adding and subtracting fractions.



12:00 pm

It's lunch time followed by recess. Students eat a Barbecue Chicken Patty on a whole wheat bun, broccoli, a fresh orange and chocolate milk.



2:30 pm

Students have a 10 minute break, with a snack and juice, time to visit the restroom, talk to a friend and then get materials for afternoon classes.



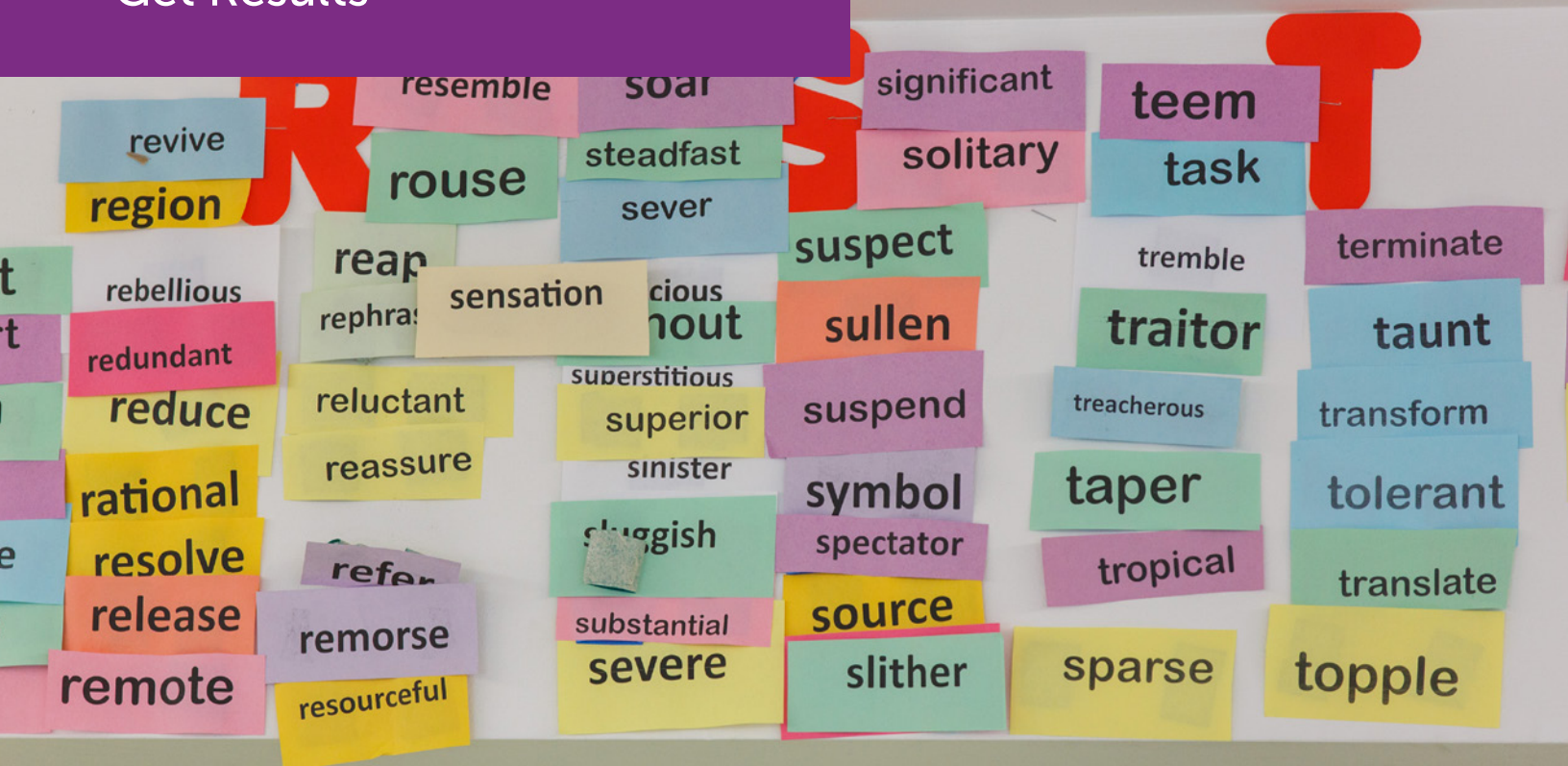
12:45 pm

In Social Studies class students are discussing the similarities between the ancient Mayan and Incan cultures.





High Quality Teachers Get Results



SPOTLIGHT ON MS. ANGELONI

FOUNDING TEACHER, GRADE 5–MATH AND SCIENCE



Ms. Angeloni majored in Marketing & Management at Bryant University in Rhode Island, but found herself drawn to working for Teach For America in the urban school district of Detroit, Michigan, for the first two years after graduation. She taught all subjects in her sixth grade classroom.

“In Detroit I was alone in the classroom—an island—where I was responsible for everything. The most unique aspect of Veritas Prep is the teamwork and collaboration between the teachers and staff. Here, it’s many teachers who have a hand in the education of our classroom of 27 students; support teachers help individual students, plan lessons for those who struggle, and I have a chance to tutor every single student every day if that’s what they need. In my previous school, kids who struggled may have had an opportunity to stay after school once a week for 45 minutes which isn’t enough to make a difference.”

Ms. Angeloni believes that teachers at Veritas Prep share the belief that all students can meet the high academic and behavioral expectations. “We’re not going to give up on them and they realize that quickly. When they start to really learn the material, they develop a sense of pride, and teachers are proud of them, too, so all students start to really work to keep being proud of themselves. They are so excited to tackle a problem, and prove over and over that they can master it.” She further explained that teachers who don’t ask more of their students who have fallen behind are doing a disservice to them. “As teachers we have to find the ways to motivate our students to keep achieving at higher levels than they thought possible.”

A STUDENT'S STORY

KAREEM WEDDERBURN, GRADE 6



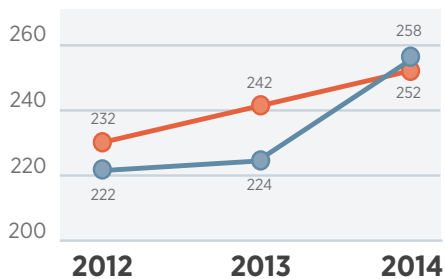
Kareem came to Veritas Prep academically behind by two or three grade levels in Math and English, primarily because behavioral and emotional issues had impacted his learning in elementary school. When you hear Nardine, Kareem's mom, explain it the growth he has made over 5th and 6th grade at Veritas Prep is incredible. "He is more focused, more mature, and his behavior and math skills have improved so much. Now, he likes school," she added. On the 2014 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests, Kareem scored in the high-proficiency range in both Math and ELA.

Kareem and his Mom have worked closely with support staff to help him close the gaps in his learning. "I love this school because it has changed Kareem's life. Ms. Raskin and Ms. Major worked with us so much to help him set goals and manage his behavior. He feels better about himself and likes the staff," she adds. Even though there was a period of adjustment, no one gave up on the idea that Kareem could meet the challenges he faced.

Nardine believes that the Scholar Dollar paycheck system has had a great effect on improving Kareem's behavior. "He knows what the expectations are and that there are consequences for negative and positive consequences. He can't wait to show me his "paycheck" every week and feels proud of himself for winning chances to go on field trips because he's done so well," she explains.

Kareem's favorite part of school is Social Studies, and he hopes to be a train engineer some day. Mom hopes that Kareem will continue to keep making improvements. "I used to hope that he just maintained what he has gained so he can go to high school," Nardine summarized, "now I know he has the right tools so he can't lose! He'll just keep moving forward."

Kareem's MCAS Scores



■ Math ■ ELA



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Aaron Mendelson, Chair, has been a Financial Advisor with Northwestern Mutual Financial Network in Springfield for over twenty years. Mr. Mendelson is deeply committed to serving his community and contributes his entrepreneurial and financial skills to the community in a variety of ways. He served on the Board of Directors for the Children's Study Home in Springfield. He also served on the Board of Directors and the Loan Review Committee for the Community Savings Bank in Springfield. Mr. Mendelson was a member of the Audit Committee for Baystate Medical Center and is currently a member of the Springfield Business Leaders for Education group. Mr. Mendelson holds a BA from Brown University.

Michael Sweet, Vice Chair, is an attorney with Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury and Murphy in Springfield, where he has been a member since 1996. Prior to joining Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury and Murphy, Mr. Sweet practiced law with the Wall Street-based firm Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam & Roberts. His general business law practice includes corporate transactions, debt and equity financings, business organizations and commercial real estate. He is also a member of the Connecticut Bar. He is a member of the board of directors of a neighborhood-based charitable organization in the North End of Springfield where he recently completed a term as chair of the board. Mr. Sweet is a graduate of Brown University and holds a J.D. from Boston University School of Law.

Anthony Gabinetti, Treasurer, is Senior Manager in Audit and Accounting at Meyers Brothers Kalicka, P.C. in Holyoke, MA. Tony, who has been with MBK since 2006, focuses on for-profit audits, compilation and review. A CPA licensed in Massachusetts, he is a member of the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Tony holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Fordham University.

Lisa Doherty, Secretary, is the Founder and CEO of Business Risk Partners (BRP), a national program administrator providing specialty insurance coverage to businesses. BRP underwrites on behalf of several major carriers, providing specialty insurance products including E&O, D&O, EPLI and fidelity coverage. Since its inception in 2000, Ms. Doherty has led BRP in the development of an extensive, distribution network, including national endorsements within industry associations. Ms. Doherty began her insurance career as a Specialty Insurance Underwriter with AIG in New York City, then spent several years as a D&O Underwriter at Executive Risk and moved west to run the Pacific Northwest FINPRO practice of Marsh. She returned to the east coast to develop Executive Risk's international operations. She left Executive Risk, to start BRP. Ms. Doherty has a BA from Brown University with a dual concentration in International Relations and Economics.

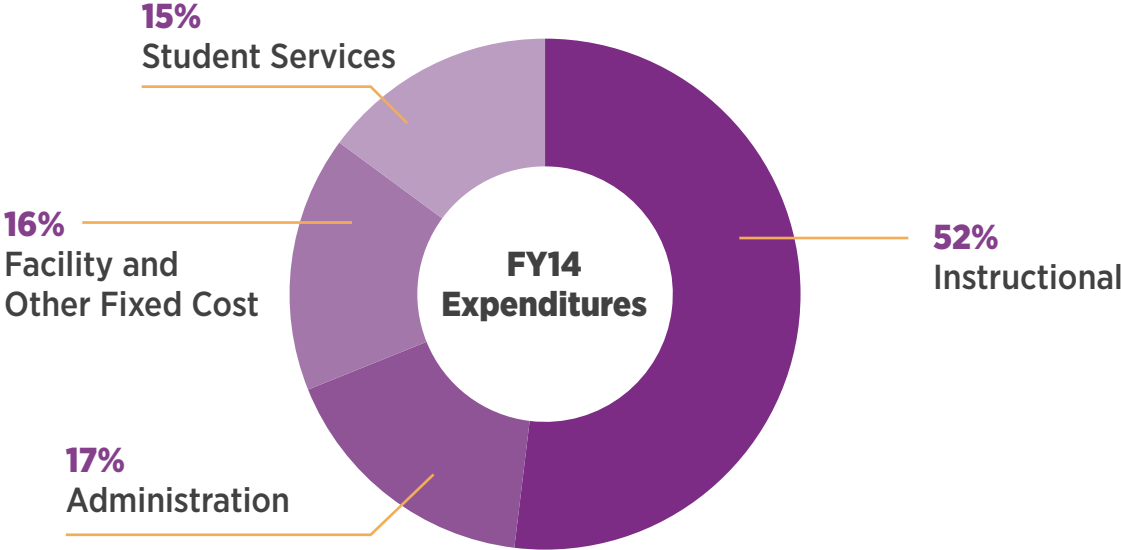
Louis Abbate is the former CEO of The Willie Ross School for the Deaf in Longmeadow where he led for 28 years. But his start in education was in 1974 as a special education director and guidance counselor at Frontier Regional School District, the first job of its kind, after the special education law had just been passed. He was also director of the school psychology department at American International College, and established the curriculum for AIC's new department. Then in 1985, he became executive director of Willie Ross School, a nationally renowned school whose curriculum and programming have been modeled across the country.

Susan Alston is an innovative leader and manager with skills in strategic fundraising, donor, and relationship management, and, most currently the Vice President and Director of Development for the Center for Human Development in Springfield. She often exceeds fundraising goals of the organizations she works with, including CHD, the VNA Healthcare Foundation in Hartford, Ct, UMASS College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA. She received her Bachelor of Science at UMASS, and her Master's Degree in Strategic Fundraising and Philanthropy at Bay Path College, Longmeadow, MA.

Ashley Martin works for the Achievement Network as Managing Director of School Support for Western Massachusetts. She coaches school leaders and teachers with planning and tools to effectively use interim assessments to drive student achievement. She holds a National Board Certified Teacher in Adolescent/Young Adult English Language Arts, has over twelve years ELA teaching experiences in middle school, high school, and college. Ms. Martin brings a deep understanding of the educational challenges and opportunities that exist in the City of Springfield. Ms. Martin earned a BA in English from Birmingham-Southern College, a MA in English from The University of Alabama, and a MA in Secondary English Education from Wake Forest University.

Carl Wistreich has a broad professional background, including serving as a corporate lawyer for a major international law firm, a senior executive in business development, mergers and acquisitions, legal affairs, operations and human resources for a \$20 billion privately-held company, and as an entrepreneur and CEO of his own business. Currently, Mr. Wistreich is the owner and chief executive of L&B Truck Services, a distributor and maintenance and repair services company for heavy duty trucks and replacement parts in the northeast. Prior to purchasing the company, Mr. Wistreich was a Senior Vice President at C&S Wholesale, the largest distributor of food and related products to grocery stores in the U.S. Mr. Wistreich has also worked for the U.S. government in Washington D.C for a United States Senator and serving as a law clerk for a federal judge following law school. Mr. Wistreich holds a J.D. degree from New York Law School, graduating magna cum laude, and a B.A. from Colgate University.

FINANCIALS



BALANCE SHEET	
Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$136,740
Accounts Receivable	\$524,394
Prepaid Expenses	\$19,874
Fixed Assets	\$22,696
Due from Related Parties	\$984
TOTAL ASSETS	\$704,688

INCOME STATEMENT	
Income	
Tuition	\$1,929,236
Government Grants & Funding	\$347,509
Nutrition Funding	\$99,682
Private Support Funding	\$322,422
Student Programs & Misc. Income	\$2,716
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,701,565

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$54,736
Accrued Expenses/ Accrued Payroll	\$170,877
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$225,613

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Expense	
Personnel Costs	\$1,464,095
Administration Costs	\$110,971
Instructional Services	\$206,963
Student Services	\$322,173
Operation & Maint of Plant	\$384,490
Fixed Charges & Misc. Expense	\$22,337
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$2,511,029
NET INCOME	\$190,536

Current Equity	
Unrestricted Equity	\$456,379
Investment in Capital Assets	\$22,696
Total Equity	\$479,075
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$704,688

WITH DEEP GRATITUDE

Thank you to the following individuals, organizations, and foundations that have generously supported The Friends of Veritas Preparatory School, Inc. in the 2013-14 fiscal year:

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PO Box 850, Somers, CT
860-558-3350
davidbutler@gmail.com



370 Pine Street | Springfield MA 01105 | (413) 539-0055