



## SEEING THE PROGRAM IN ACTION



VIBRANT MINDS



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# LEARNING SHARING, & CARING TOGETHER

TK-6  
CHARTER  
SCHOOL



# VIBRANT MINDS CHARTER SCHOOL

## OUR STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING & LEARNING HELPS SCHOLARS DISCOVER THEIR INTERESTS & TALENTS.

We acknowledge that each of our scholars enters our school with unique interests and talents. It is our intention, in partnership with parents, to help each scholar discover his/her interests and talents through a rigorous academic program and highly enriched opportunities.

Once scholars' interests and talents are discovered, then they can be transformed into strengths through personalized mentoring by teachers and specialists.

Unlike educational systems in which scholars are either viewed as "empty vessels" waiting to be filled and/or "broken vessels" needing to be fixed (a deficit-based approach), we believe a strength-based approach to teaching and learning creates a more positive, rewarding, and effective learning environment.

## HERE'S HOW OUR PROGRAM WORKS

In elementary school, many scholars do not have sufficient life experiences to know what their interests and talents are. For this reason, it is essential to provide scholars with many opportunities to discover them through a rigorous academic program with “voice and choice,” as well as an abundance of enrichment opportunities.

### Rigorous Academics

- Reading Workshop/CAFÉ with reading choices
- Process and On Demand Writing with topic choices
- iReady Reading and Math
- FOSS
- Inquiry-Based/Project-Based Learning
- Technology Infused Education with Differentiation, Individualization, and Personalization

### Abundant Enrichment

- Visual/Performing Arts (VAPA) during school day
- After-school Little Labs
- After-school Big Labs with VAPA, STEAM, and Life Skills electives

### Character Development

- Morning Gatherings
- Values in Action with Virtues and Character Strengths
- Leader in Me
- Zones of Regulation
- PBIS

## HERE'S WHY IT'S EFFECTIVE

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.

— Albert Einstein

Traditionally, school systems have focused on measuring children, determining where they have gaps to fill or challenges to overcome, and then “fixing” them through an emphasis on remediation. A constant focus on children’s weaknesses makes school an unhappy, unmotivating place. This is a deficit approach to teaching and learning. It causes many children to view themselves as flawed learners, and they eventually disengage from school.

While Vibrant Minds Charter School provides support for developing foundational skills necessary for future success in school and life, we work from our scholars’ interests and talents and then transform them into strengths through character development and mentoring. We celebrate an individual’s progress with a growth mindset rather than compare scholars with each other with a fixed mindset. We acknowledge the power in the word “yet” when a scholar is initially unable to master something, and we teach, “Smart isn’t what you are. Smart is what you become.”

Through our rigorous academic program and abundant enrichment opportunities, our scholars are able to share what they are learning with enthusiasm. They acknowledge their strengths, both in terms of character and learning. When you walk onto our campus, the energy is high because our scholars’ involvement is high. We strive to keep learning a joyful experience in which our scholars are motivated by critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. It works!

## RESOURCES STRENGTH-BASED TEACHING & LEARNING

These links and references are just a small sample of what has inspired Vibrant Minds Charter School’s strength-based approach to teaching and learning.

VIA Character Strengths  
[www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org)

The Leader in Me  
[www.theleaderinme.org](http://www.theleaderinme.org)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support  
[www.pbis.org/school](http://www.pbis.org/school)

StrengthsFinder  
[www.strengthsquest.com](http://www.strengthsquest.com)

Growth Mindset  
[www.mindsetworks.com/science](http://www.mindsetworks.com/science)

CTA’s Institute for Teaching  
[www.teacherdrivenchange.org](http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org)

Edutopia  
[www.edutopia.org/blog/creating-safe-strength-based-classrooms-lori-desautels](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/creating-safe-strength-based-classrooms-lori-desautels)

*The Talent Code: Greatness Isn’t Born. It’s Grown. Here’s How*  
by Daniel Coyle (2013)

*Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*  
by Angela Duckworth (2016)