



# **Executive Summary**

**Saint Dominic School**

**Diocese of Trenton**

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## **Introduction**

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School**

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

St. Dominic School is a Catholic elementary school under the sponsorship of St. Dominic's Church, Brick, NJ, and the Diocese of Trenton. St. Dominic School follows the policies set forth by the Office of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Trenton and has developed Faculty and Parent/Student Handbooks in conjunction with these policies. Parents who enroll their children in the school are expected to meet the faith and financial commitments they have agreed to in a yearly contract between administration and parents.

Monsignor James Brady, Pastor of St. Dominic's Church, is officially the Director of St. Dominic School. He has appointed Mrs. Carol Bathmann as Principal and Mrs. Elizabeth Tonkovich as Assistant Principal to administer the school. Mrs. Bathmann is responsible for hiring certified teachers on all grade levels as well as instructors for special curriculum offerings such as music, art, computers, library, physical education, world languages, and higher mathematics. Monsignor Brady contracts a maintenance staff and kitchen staff to clean and repair the school facilities and to prepare lunches for the student body each day. St. Dominic's also has accounting and clerical staffs to assist with finances and the daily running of the school.

St. Dominic School works with the Brick Public School District to provide publicly funded services to the students and faculty. These services include human resources for child study evaluations, compensatory education, supplemental instruction, in-class support, and speech as well as funds to support staff development, technology initiatives, and educational texts and materials procurement.

St. Dominic School is located in Brick Township, NJ, a mostly Caucasian, middle-class area in which the vast majority of the population is high school and/or college-educated and English-speaking. At the beginning of the 2014 - 2015 school year, St. Dominic's had an enrollment of 525 students comprised of students in grades Pre- Kindergarten through Eighth Grades. The 2015 school year looks to begin on the same note with the same strong enrollment prevailing. .

The vast majority of St. Dominic School students reside in the Township of Brick. However, the school does service a small number of students from the surrounding towns of Point Pleasant, Lakewood, Howell, Manasquan, Wall, Toms River and Bayville. Most of our parent population work in local businesses and industries while some commute daily to jobs in New York or Philadelphia. Many are professionals who are employed in the area's schools, hospitals, and legal offices.

St. Dominic School is a Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade school. There are two sections of each grade level with approximately 30 students in each class. There are 20 homeroom teachers, full-time aides in each Pre-K and Kindergarten class, part-time aides in Grades 1 and 2 and two part-time mathematics teachers who assist the upper grades. On a weekly basis, the children are also instructed by special teachers for music, art, computers, library, physical education, whole language (Spanish), and Health. The Brick Public School District has contracted with Middlesex Regional Educational Services to provide services for supplemental instruction, compensatory education, speech, and in-class support services.

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## **School's Purpose**

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

The Mission of St. Dominic School is to enliven the Catholic faith, foster respect and responsibility, and facilitate academic excellence in every student in order to send forth future leaders to our Church and society.

Saint Dominic School, a Catholic Elementary School, was called into existence by the Saint Dominic Parish Community, Trenton Diocese, in 1965. As a Catholic Educational Institution, our focus is to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, psychological, social, cultural, and physical needs of children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth.

The students learn respect for God's creation, regard for the dignity of the human person, and responsibility as members of the people of God through instruction in Catholic faith and values, providing them with a strong sense of moral direction. The development of each child's faith life is nurtured through times of prayer, liturgical celebrations, service, and the study of the Gospels.

St. Dominic School conducts academic programs to promote personal growth and develop the full potential of each child. Opportunities for athletic, cultural, and social activities are provided. This quality education prepares the students to be productive and positive members of society.

St. Dominic's purpose calls us to lead young men and women to witness to Christ through prayer, example, and service. As Catholic educated youth, they serve God and their country with a spirit of respect and social justice.

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## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

### NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

To develop and utilize an observation and evaluation instrument approved by the New Jersey Department of Education.

- The Principal and Assistant Principal reviewed a variety of New Jersey Department of Education approved evaluation instruments during the 2013-2014 school year. The Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching was selected as the observation/evaluation instrument to be used at Saint Dominic School. Several electronic evaluation platforms were also evaluated, and the OnCourse Evaluate system was chosen. OnCourse allowed Saint Dominic School to add or rename parts of the Framework to align with previous Diocesan evaluation instruments. In-service training and webinars on Charlotte Danielson's Framework and OnCourse Evaluate were provided for faculty and staff during the 2014-2015 school year.

- The desired outcomes of the implementation of a new, online observation and evaluation tool were to utilize a collaborative approach to the observation process, to implement an objective, evidence-based observation and evaluation program that helps to improve lesson planning and instructional practices, and to institute an online system that incorporates ease of communication and scheduling related to observations and evaluations. These desired outcomes were evidenced by the observation reports, pre- and post-conference meetings, individual professional development plans, data from subsequent classroom observations, and data from lesson plans.

To incorporate science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) for learning in the classrooms.

- The administration and faculty of Saint Dominic School sought to attain knowledge in the STEM initiative. To this end, they attended a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Conference, a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Conference, a National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Conference, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Conference. While attending the ISTE Conference in June/July 2014 in Atlanta, they attended STEM and digital resource workshops and met with vendors. Following the conference, meetings were held with Saint Dominic School administrators, the director of technology, science curriculum chairperson, social studies chairperson, and the technology teacher to share information related to STEM.

- In December 2014, the director of technology and the technology teacher developed a curriculum to teach coding and computer programming skills to students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Along with the purchase of a humanoid robot in November, 2014, the students experienced hands-on STEM learning.

- Engineering-related projects were infused into the science and math curriculum. Some of these projects included students using scientific and math knowledge to create a propulsion system for a small boat, students creating an aeronautical rocket design in order to attain maximum altitude, and students designing a carrier to ensure the survivability of a raw egg payload from a two-story drop.

To enhance classroom learning through the use of digital resources.

- In August, 2014, seventh and eighth grade science and social studies digital techbooks were ordered from Discovery Education. McGraw Hill Study Sync ELA program was also added as a resource. The students access the online programs via their iPads.

- The McGraw Hill Common Core Wonders Language Arts program was instituted in grades K-5 in August, 2014. Teachers were provided

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with in-service training in order to learn to use the digital components effectively. Wonders has proven to be a powerful tool in increasing reading comprehension skills and critical thinking practices.

- Richard Larson Big Ideas Math program, which offers both digital and textbook learning, will be introduced to the sixth through eighth grade students in grades 6-8 in 2015.

- Websites and webinars related to the Common Core Standards have been provided for teachers. In addition, administration and faculty members attended a Common Core workshop offered by the Diocese of Trenton.

- The desired outcomes related to the incorporation of digital programs are to incorporate online student assessments and student-driven activities that allow for differentiated learning based on student learning styles and to allow the students access to ever-changing, real-time events via constant updating of information in the Discovery Education programs.

### ONGOING IMPROVEMENT DURING THE NEXT THREE YEARS

The ongoing incorporation of STEM learning in the classroom.

- Administrators and faculty members will continue to explore STEM learning opportunities by attending educational conferences such as NSTA Science Conference (2015), NCTM Math Conference (2015), and ISTE Conference (2016).

- The science curriculum coordinator and the director of technology will collaborate in planning the expansion of the STEM program across grade levels with a focus on additional programming concepts and the incorporation of the Legos program.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

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