



Executive Summary

The Diocese of Trenton
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Trenton, New Jersey 08648



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DIOCESE OF TRENTON

Department of Catholic Schools

The Diocese of Trenton was formed in 1881 when Pope Leo XIII divided the Diocese of Newark into two dioceses. Fourteen counties in the southern two-thirds of the state comprised this newly formed diocese - Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, Warren, Hunterdon, Mercer, Burlington, Ocean, Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland, Cape May, Salem and Atlantic. There were 51 priests, 69 churches, 23 parochial schools and 40,000 Catholics in the diocese. Since the Diocese's inception, ten bishops have governed the diocese and have guided the faithful. Our current bishop, The Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., began his tenure in the Diocese of Trenton in July 2010. The former president of Catholic University of America, Bishop O'Connell is steeped in academia and is a strong supporter of Catholic education. Since 2011, he has invested over \$12,500,000.00 in tuition assistance to Catholic schools. He was instrumental in starting the marketing program, "Catholic Schools Have It All," to raise awareness of the benefits of attending a Catholic school.

The Diocese of Trenton's Department of Catholic Schools is staffed by a team of seven (7) members. Each having their own respective duties and responsibilities within the department. The overall hierarchy within the Chancery is as follows:

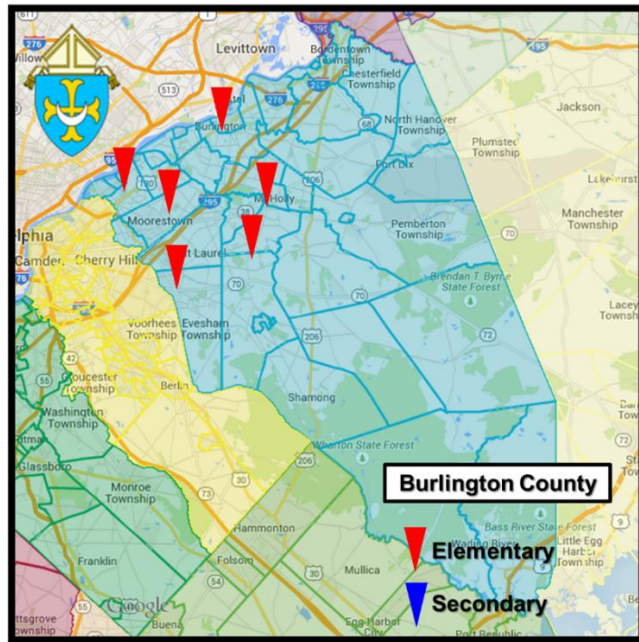
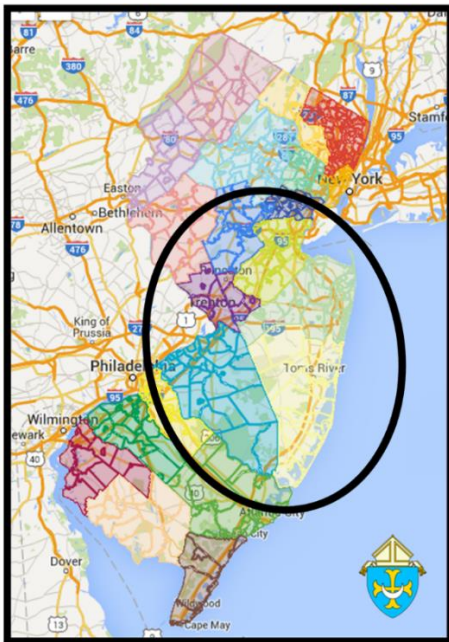
Diocesan Hierarchy		
Bishop		
Very Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., J.D., D.D.		
Vicar General	Chief Administrative Officer	Chief Financial Advisor
Reverend Thomas Gervasio	Mr. Joseph Bianchi	Mr. Kevin Cimei
Superintendent of Catholic Schools		
Vincent de Paul Schmidt, Ed.D.		
Associate Director	Associate Director	Associate Director
Daniel T. O'Connell	Judith A. Nicastro	Michael Knowles
Finance Coordinator	CAC Athletic Coordinator	Administrative Assistant
Marissa Marcille	Dennis Guida	Sherrie Sporek

Today, the Diocese of Trenton encompasses four counties:

- Burlington
- Monmouth
- Mercer
- Ocean

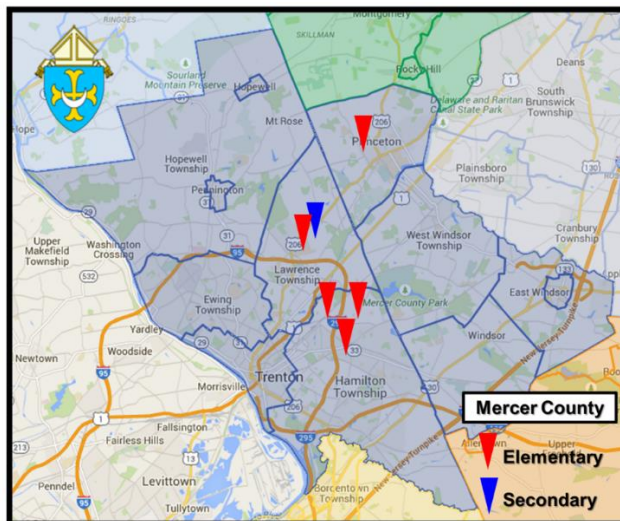
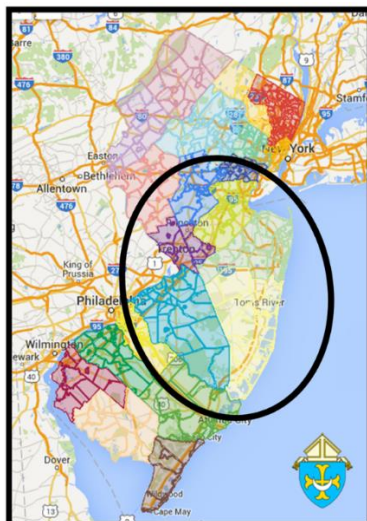


Burlington County Elementary Schools						
School	Open	Address	Pastor	Principal	Staff	Students
Our Lady of Good Counsel	1927	23 W. Prospect Ave. Moorestown, NJ 08057	Rev. Christopher Picollo	Dr. Carla Chiarelli	25	307
Sacred Heart	1944	250 High Street Mount Holly, NJ 08060	Rev. John P. Czahur	Mrs. Kathryn Jensen	15	164
St. Charles Borromeo	1964	2500 Branch Pike Cinnaminson, NJ 08077	Rev. Daniel Kirk	Mrs. Cynthia Smith	20	214
St. Joan of Arc	1965	101 Evans Road Marlton, NJ 08053	Msgr. Richard LaVerghetta	Sr. Patricia Pycik	25	340
St. Mary of the Lakes	1953	196 Route 70 Medford, NJ 08055	Rev. Daniel Swift	Mrs. Maria Sobel	27	275
St. Paul	1870	250 James Street Burlington, NJ 08016	Rev. Jerome Guld	Mr. William Robbins	17	172





Mercer County						
Elementary Schools						
School	Open	Address	Pastor/President	Principal	Staff	Students
Our Lady of Sorrows	1955	3800 E. State St. Hamilton, NJ 08619	Msgr. Thomas Gervasio	Mrs. Maureen Tuohy	17	179
St. Ann	1965	34 Rossa Avenue Lawrenceville, NJ 08648	Rev. Leandro Dela Cruz	Mr. Salvatore Chiaravalloti	21	216
St. Gregory the Great Academy	1965	4680 Nottingham Way Hamilton, NJ 08690	Rev. Michael Hall	Dr. Jason Briggs	38	437
St. Paul	1880	218 Nassau Street Princeton, NJ 08540	Rev. Miguel Valle	Mrs. Kim Clauss	29	308
St. Raphael	1951	151 Gropp Avenue Hamilton, NJ 08610	Rev. Genaro P. Daguplo	Mrs. Ann Cwirko	18	168
Secondary Schools						
Notre Dame	1957	601 Lawrenceville Rd. Lawrenceville, NJ 08648	Mr. Kenneth Jennings	Mrs. Joanna Barlow	73	853

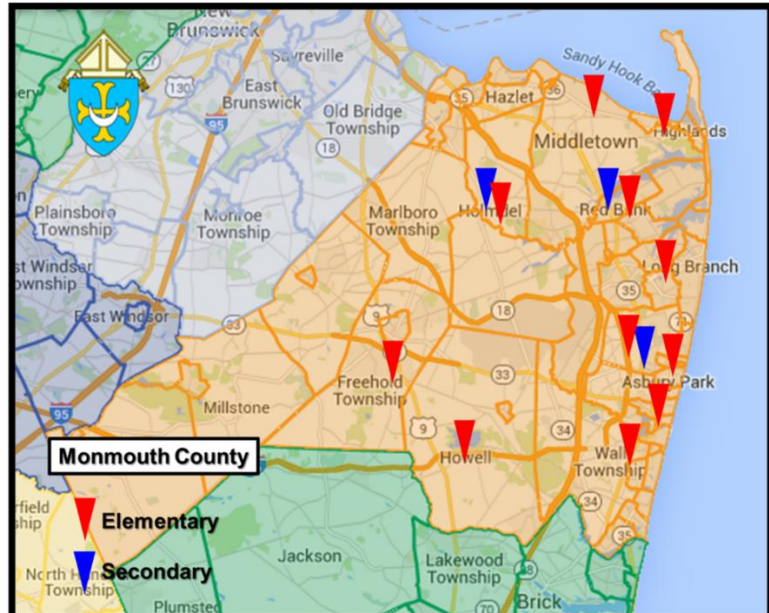
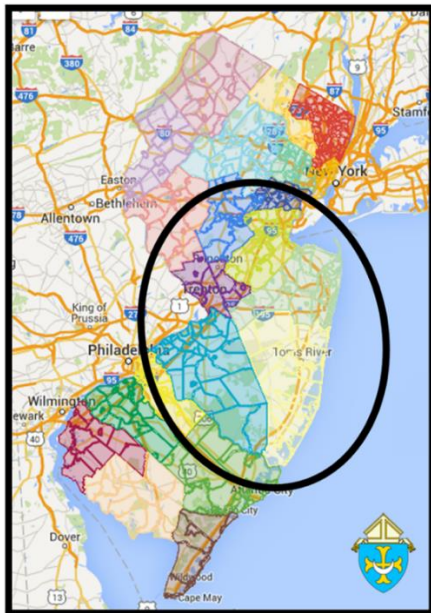




Monmouth County						
Elementary Schools						
School	Open	Address	Pastor/President	Principal	Staff	Students
Holy Cross Academy	2019	40 Rumson Road Rumson, NJ 07760	Rev. Michael Manning	Dr. Mark DeMareo	27	243
Mother Seton Academy	2019	4219 Highway 9 North Howell, NJ 07731	Rev. Peter J. Alindogan	Dr. Karen Juliano	18	180
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	1923	1220 First Avenue Asbury Park, NJ 07712	Rev. Miguel Virella	Mrs. Teresa Craig	17	188
St. Benedict	1962	165 Bethany Road Holmdel, NJ 07733	Rev. Garry Koch	Mr. Kevin Donahue	34	403
St. Catharine	1932	301 2nd Ave. Spring Lake, NJ 07762	Rev. Damien McElroy	Mr. Robert Dougherty	29	316
St. James	1867	30 Peters Place Red Bank, NJ 07701	Msgr. Joseph Rosie	Mrs. JoAnn Giordano	32	427
St. Jerome	1957	250 Wall Street W. Long Branch, NJ 07764	Rev. Sheldon Amasa	Sr. Elizabeth Dalessio	19	222
St. Leo the Great	1960	55 Newman Springs Rd. Lincroft, NJ 07738	Rev. John Folchetti	Mr. Cornelius Begley	43	637
St. Mary	1953	538 Church Street Middletown, NJ 07748	Rev. Jeffrey Kegley	Mr. Craig Palmer	33	403
St. Rose	1921	605 Sixth Avenue Belmar, NJ 07719	Msgr. Edward Arnister	Mr. Gregory Guito	26	297
St. Rose of Lima	1875	51 Lincoln Place Mon Freehold, NJ 07728	Rev. James Conover	Mrs. Cynthia Reimer	19	249



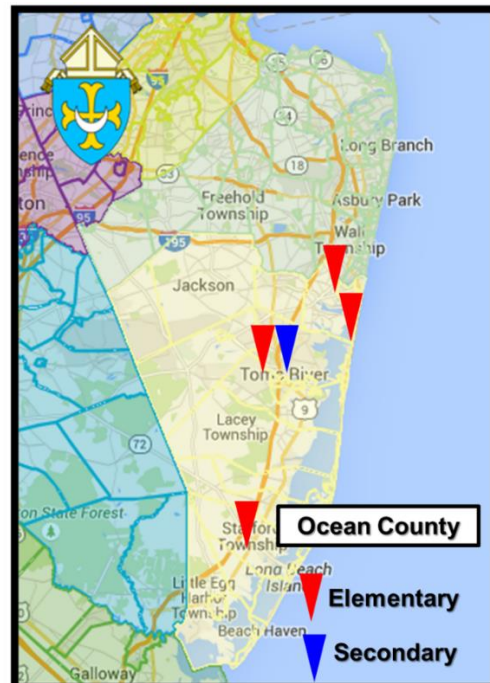
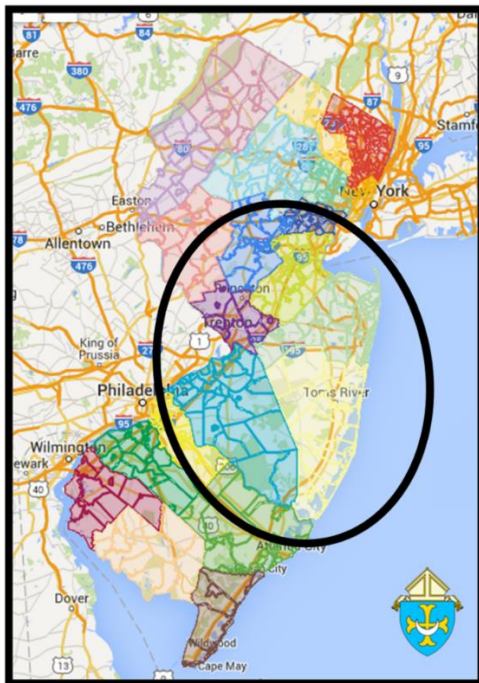
Secondary Schools						
Red Bank Catholic	1967	112 Broad Street Red Bank, NJ 07701	Mr. Robert Abatemarco	Mrs. Karen Falco	89	704
St. John Vianney	1969	540A Line Road Holmdel, NJ 07733	Mr. Stephen DiMezza	Mrs. Margaret Kane	68	798
St. Rose	1921	607 Seventh Avenue Belmar, NJ 07719	Msgr. Edward Arnister	Mr. John Tonero	48	397



Ocean County						
Elementary Schools						
School	Open	Address	Pastor/President	Principal	Staff	Students
St. Dominic	1965	250 Old Squan Road Brick, NJ 08724	Rev. Brian Woodrow	Mrs. Elizabeth Tonkovich	32	429
St. Joseph	1932	711 Hooper Avenue	Rev. G. Scott Shaffer	Mrs. Madeline Kinloch	29	499



		Toms River, NJ 08753				
St. Mary Academy	2019	400 Doc Cramer Blvd. Manahawkin, NJ 08050	Msgr. Kenneth Tuzeneu	Mrs. Lizanne Coyne	18	169
St. Peter	1923	415 Atlantic Avenue Pt. Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742	Rev. Pedro deOliviera	Mrs. Tracey Kobrin	17	179
Secondary Schools						
Donovan Catholic	1962	711 Hooper Avenue Toms River, NJ 08753	Rev. G. Scott Shaffer	Dr. Edward Gere	57	670



There are 97 parishes in the diocese with 259,378 households. The number of Catholics living in the Diocese is estimated to be 680,000. Families in the diocese are served by 26 elementary schools, 5 high schools, and 7 private schools.



The September 2021 enrollment for schools governed with oversight by the diocese includes:

- 925 preschool students
- 5,897 kindergarten-grade 8 students
- 3431 high school students

The combination of all these students gives our school programs a total enrollment 10,253. This number does not include private Catholic school students residing in our geographic diocese of which we have a great level of cooperation.

The overall breakdown of our schools in the Diocese of Trenton are as follows:

- 26 parish elementary schools in which the pastor has canonical authority
- 3 parish high school in which the pastor has canonical authority
- There are and 2 diocesan high schools that come under the auspices of the Department of Catholic Schools
- A pre-school setting is provided in 24 of the elementary schools
- 7 private schools, governed by their individual policies and are accountable to the Bishop's oversight in Catholic identity which have an upper or lower division.

Each of these schools provide a variety of exceptional academic programs and extracurricular activities and are tailored to the specific demographics of the communities they serve. Schools are committed to the faith formation, the infusion of 21st century skills, differentiated instruction, technology integration and service-learning experiences.

As reported in the NCEA Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing for 2020-2021, the Diocese of Trenton ranked 35th in enrollment nationwide with 13,792 students reflecting diocesan, parish, and private schools.

Our schools serve the following communities:

- Most schools are in suburban areas.
- One elementary school is in the inner city.
- One high school draws 22% of its population from Pennsylvania.
- 13% of elementary students and 15% of high school students are non-Catholic.
- 12% of the students enrolled in our schools receive services funded by either state or federal programs

The diocese works to meet the diverse needs of all our students. To do so in special education, specifically dyslexia, diocesan teachers have the opportunity to take part in Orton-Gillingham workshops. These workshops have been offered by the DCS since the summer of 2017. The Orton-Gillingham approach is a multisensory phonics technique for remedial reading instruction. It is practiced as a direct, explicit, cognitive, cumulative, and multi-sensory approach. While it is commonly associated with teaching individuals with dyslexia, it is highly



effective for all individuals learning to read, spell, and write. Our teachers have been trained to acquire the skills necessary to better assist their students with reading and phonetic difficulties. David Katz, a Fellow from the Orton Gillingham Academy, has delivered this 30-hour instructional workshop each summer. Since beginning the program, 199 teachers have taken advantage of this annual workshop. Of those who participated, 36 teachers have gone on to enroll in the practicum to receive Orton-Gillingham Classroom Educator Certification.

All students, both Catholic and non-Catholic, take part in religion classes and are present for liturgies and faith-based traditions and practices.

Schools serve students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Our mosaic is made up of the following:

Total Elementary Students: 6121

<u>Race</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage to Total</u>
American Indian / Alaskan Native	53	0.8
Asian	131	2.1
Black / African American	398	6.5
Multiple races	263	4.3
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	21	0.3
White	5255	86

*There are 504 elementary students identifying as Hispanic representing 8.2% of our total student population

Total High School Students: 3424

<u>Race</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage to Total</u>
American Indian / Alaskan Native	6	0.09
Asian	154	4.6
Black / African American	143	4
Multiple races	235	7
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	2	0.04
White	2884	84

*There are 198 high school students identifying as Hispanic representing 5.78% of our total student population



Elementary tuition ranges from \$4,000.00 to \$8,500.00 with an average of \$5,985.00.

High school tuition ranges from \$13,685.00 to \$16,750.00 with a diocesan average of \$14,843.00.

The cost to educate an elementary-student averages \$7,571.00 while the high school average is \$16,350.00.

Parishes with schools invest approximately \$3,000,000.00 for the schools' operating budgets. Co-sponsorship from parishes without schools typically totals \$2,600,000.00 annually. This funding is utilized for tuition assistance as well as for the operating budgets of regional schools. Ever sensitive to the financial needs of a family, schools also provide tuition assistance to the extent that a balanced budget can be maintained.

Like much of the United States, the Catholic schools in New Jersey have been impacted by the economy. New Jersey's high taxes have contributed to a reduction in enrollment as middle-class families deal with financial constraints. In the 2020-2021 school year, there were 969 elementary student applications for tuition assistance with 779 students receiving aid. At the high school level, all student aid is directly coordinated by the individual schools.

During the 2020-2021 school year, \$800,000.00 was distributed in tuition assistance to our Catholic elementary schools. Since 2000, \$36,900,000.00 has been distributed to families for tuition assistance or for the operating budgets of our diocesan schools.

Like other dioceses serving Catholics along the northeast corridor, financial difficulties have been instrumental in the closing of Catholic schools. From 1970 through 2021, 45 schools closed. The closures were largely the result of a decline in enrollment and/or an inability to maintain financial viability.

To maintain our strong Catholic identity, high academic standing, vitality, and significance in the educational community in which we reside, the Diocese of Trenton has supported the efforts of our Catholic schools to gain local, regional, and national recognition for their educational offers. These accolades include:

- 10 Blue-Ribbon Schools for academic excellence
- 1 Green Ribbon Schools for environmental sustainability
- Many of National Junior Honor Societies
- 2 - National Schools of Character
- 1 school utilizing International Baccalaureate Programming
- 2 – Principals that have received national recognition for their leadership

In 2012 Bishop David O'Connell, C.M. requested that The Catholic University of America (CUA)



assist the Diocese of Trenton in a planning study for the Catholic schools with a particular focus on the sustainability of the elementary schools of the diocese. Dr. John Convey and Dr. Leonard DeFiore were the representatives of CUA for the study which commenced in April 2012 and ended in May 2013. Known as the Commission Study, the report presented recommendations regarding Catholic Identity, Academics, Governance, Finance, Marketing & Public Relations. The criteria determining a school's viability are monitored on an ongoing basis. Factors include:

- a stabilization or increase in enrollment
- a reduced differential between tuition and the cost to educate a child
- a decreased percentage of the parish's income that is required to support the school.

This report was revisited in 2018 and continues to be a guiding document by which we operate our schools today. The Commission Study was an instrumental tool in the reshaping of the DCS responsibilities. There are now positions within the DCS that have dedicated responsibilities for assisting at the local school level:

- Finance
- Marketing
- Social Media utilization
- Enrollment management
- Data gathering and utilization
- Federal/State entitlement programs

The Diocesan Finance Office works in coordination with the DCS to develop, review, and approve annual operating budgets for each of our schools. The annual budgeting process begins at the end of the calendar year and culminates in a formal budget review in the Spring of the current fiscal year.

Schools use a standard budget templates that provides information related to typical operating financials, as well as school specific enrollments and tuition analysis information. School principals working in conjunction with their business managers, pastors and school finance board members develop annual one-year operating budgets along with 3-year projections. The schools, and their finance offices, use different methods to develop their operation projections. A common method of budgeting in the Diocese of Trenton is zero based budgeting.

As part of the review process, vitality metrics are reviewed to determine current and long-term financial sustainability from a pure income versus expenses perspective. In addition, income sources are reviewed to determine the actual cost of education (ACE) versus the realized tuition income. Enrollment trends are also analyzed to provide projections of total enrollment as well as gaining insights into grade levels.



B40				Delinquent Diocesan Payables (Prior June 30, 2020)				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
4								
5		Total School Budget (Total Expenses)		\$ -				
6								
7		Funding Sources						
8		Elementary Tuition	\$ -					
9		PreK Tuition	\$ -					
10		Total PreK-8 Tuition	\$ -					
11		Fees (Registration, Tech Fee, Book Fee. .)	\$ -					
12		Parish Subsidy	\$ -					
13		After School Fees	\$ -					
14		PTA	\$ -					
15			\$ -					
16			\$ -					
17								
18		TOTAL ALL REVENUE	\$ -					
19								
20		Total Budget Surplus/(Deficit)	F minus A	\$ -				
21		Self-Funded Programs						
22		PreK Revenues (Tuition & Fees)	\$ -					
23		less Expenses (Salaries & Benefits + other expenses)	\$ -					
24		PreK Net	\$ -					
25		AfterSchool Revenues	\$ -					
26		less Expenses (Salaries & Benefits + other expenses)	\$ -					
27		AfterSchool Net	\$ -					
28								
29		ACE = Actual Cost of Education						
30		Total Expenses K-8	\$ -					

Members of the DCS, along with the Diocesan Finance Office, support the school principals and business manager in many ways. As previously stated, templates for budgeting along with historical data being maintained by Finance supports the schools in the financial operational oversight. Also, the Finance Office provides a representative who is a contributing member of the DCS. The allows for an integrated understanding of school operations beyond the aspects of focusing on the financials.

Lastly, schools are provided the opportunity to offer financial assistance to their families. This is coordinated between the Finance Office and the DCS. Budgets are established related to total award grants. Schools then provides application information to their families that is hosted by the FACTS Management Company. The awards are then granted to families based on established criteria. All aspects of financial aid are coordinated at the diocesan level in concert with participating schools. Money for the Diocesan tuition assistance program is provided by parishes without schools. They are billed approximately 6% of their ordinary income from the prior fiscal year.

A key factor in the Diocese of Trenton's commitment to financial aid is to make sure the Catholic faith is passed on to the next generation of Catholics in Central New Jersey.

The Catholic Faith is steeped with rich traditions. A Catholic school needs to make the most of those traditions so that they may be alive in our schools. Math is math whether you are a public-school student or a Catholic school student. Having a strong Catholic identity that is woven into the very fiber of the existence of the school is what makes a Catholic school different and that is the difference that makes the difference.



It is evident that the Schools of the Diocese of Trenton embrace Catholic identity.

- As a new school year begins, a segment of the new principal and new teacher orientations covers the topic of maintaining Catholic identity in our schools.
- The new administration of the DCS is developing an extended presentation on Catholic identity for new principals (especially those who come from the realm of public education). These presentations would take place several times during the first two years of a new principal's tenure.
- Schools begin the year with a Mass of the Holy Spirit.
- Schools have a commissioning service for their teachers early in the year at a faculty gathering or at a gathering of the entire school.
- In recent years, schools have used free spaces to develop a prayer area or, in a few cases, an actual chapel in which the Eucharist is present. This year, for example, St. Peter School in Point Pleasant Beach will host Bishop O'Connell to anoint and bless the altar of sacrifice.
- Attending First Friday Mass is a common event at many schools.
- Schools have a penance service at least twice a year in Advent and in Lent.
- All schools begin each day with prayer and elementary schools also end the day with prayer.
- All teachers have been instructed to begin class with a prayer.
- Schools are replete with religious articles such as statues, crucifixes, religious motivational posters, realia, icons, and other images. The same can be said of the offices of the DCS in the Chancery.
- Prayer services and class Masses are frequent events in diocesan schools. At times, school chaplains will take the opportunity to use a class Mass as a teaching Mass to explain the elements of the liturgy.
- Schools develop religious presentations in which students participate such as the Christmas Nativity Scene at Notre Dame High School or the Living Stations at many of our schools.
- Last year, during the pandemic, the faculty of Donovan Catholic prepared a Stations of the Cross presentation that was posted on YouTube, so that students could still participate in this annual devotion.
- Each year there is a Diocesan Youth Convention for all middle school and high school students. An integral part of the day is Mass which is celebrated by one of the five bishops of New Jersey.
- Schools actively participate in service projects. Whether it is making sandwiches for first responders, visiting with, and singing for, the elderly or collecting diapers for new young mothers, or our three-year program called Hearts to Hospitals, Catholic school students share in their special call of service to others.



- The Diocese of Trenton was the first to begin a chapter of Catholic Athletes for Christ (CAC) for high school students, thanks to Bishop O'Connell. Each high school participates in meetings and group prayer at the local level. In addition, each year the DCS sponsors a leadership workshop for representatives from the Diocesan schools as well as private Catholic schools in the area. Recently, Dennis Guida, the coordinator for Catholic Athletes for Christ, was appointed as a member of the Department of Catholic Schools to work with Fr. Jason Parzynski who is the chaplain for CAC. The CAC provides an annual retreat for male athletes and their fathers as well as a retreat for female athletes and their mothers. With the new coordinator, more great activities are on the horizon.
- Curriculum guidelines of the various disciplines make connections to the Catholic Faith as strategies for instruction. In addition, documents on infusing Catholic identity have been published on the teacher extranet to assist teachers in all disciplines at all levels.
- In the spring of 2021, the new administration of the DCS facilitated the piloting of the ACRE and ARK assessments of religious knowledge in grades 5, 7, and 11. Eight schools participated in the pilot program. The principals of those schools, along with the Diocesan staff, meet and discussed which assessments should be used as we move forward.
- Religion Curriculum Guidelines are currently being updated. Data gleaned from the ACRE testing will greatly assist in this update.
- The principals have attended two all-day workshops on resilience and social emotional learning. The latter was presented through a Catholic lens by a Catholic psychologist. It is the goal of the Department of Catholic Schools to provide another session of professional development during the coming year to assist the principals with their mental wellness after a difficult year and a half of dealing with the pandemic.
- Each year, principals have a scheduled Spirituality Day. Over the years, various topics have been presented. The theme of the May 2021 Spirituality Day was *Making Our Schools Intentionally Catholic*. This was presented by Fr. Garry Koch, D.Min., the pastor of St. Benedict Parish and a professor at Seton Hall University.
- All diocesan meetings sponsored by the Department of Catholic Schools begin with a prayer or a prayer service.
- The Department of Catholic schools has collaborated with and continues to collaborate with the Departments of Catechesis, Evangelization, Family Life, Youth and Young Adults, Development, Worship, and Communications & Media.

In a video presentation entitled *Catholic Schools: Something to Believe In*, which all new principals, administrators, and teachers view at their orientation, Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M. says this, "It is only in a Catholic school that the students have the unique exposure to faith. It's in the religion curriculum for sure. But do you know what? It should be in the very air that they breathe. The challenge for each of us or for all who work in a Catholic school is this:



To make our schools, to make our Catholic schools intentional, where our Catholic identities give our students something to believe in.” Pope Francis has noted that “The Mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful.”. This is the tradition and the legacy of Catholic schools. This is our identity, our Catholic identity, and we embrace it with zeal.

Along with such a strong Catholic identity, for our schools to be viewed as successful, they must incorporate an outstanding academic program. Having said that, an academic program can only be as solid as the curriculum upon which it is based. In the Diocese of Trenton, a set of curriculum guidelines for each discipline is provided to all teachers and administrators. These guidelines are developed with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools as their foundation.

The following represent salient points regarding the curriculum in the Diocese of Trenton.

- As the new administration in the DCS moves forward, there will be a concerted effort to provide a review/update process that is in synch with the release of curriculum from the New Jersey Department of Education.
- While there will be an effort to synchronize curriculum development with the New Jersey Department of Education, it must be clear that, unlike public school districts, there is no one person whose sole responsibility to develop curriculum. In this office the Associate Director for Curriculum & Instruction wears different hats which bring with them many different responsibilities.
- The Implementation Schedule from the New Jersey Department of Education has scheduled the following curriculum standards to be adopted in September of 2022:
 - Standard 1: Visual and Performing Arts
 - Standard 2: Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
 - Standard 5: Science
 - Standard 6: Social Studies
 - Standard 7: World Languages
 - Standard 8: Computer Science and Design Thinking
 - Standard 9: Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills
- Math and English/Language Arts Standards were released in May of 2016 and are currently not under review.
- Curriculum Guidelines for World Languages and Early Learning Guidelines for Affective Development were released in 2018 for use in the Fall of 2019.
- Curriculum Guidelines for English/Language Arts and Science were released in 2019 for adoption in the Fall of 2020.
- The proposed Implementation Schedule for the release of Curriculum Guidelines from the Diocese of Trenton follows:
 - 2023 Social Studies



- 2024 Mathematics with Algebra & Geometry Components and Religion
- 2025 Fine Arts
- 2026 Physical Education & Health and Educational Technology
- 2027 Begin cycle again with World Languages and Early Childhood.
- Curriculum committees are formed when curriculum guidelines need a review/update.
- Curriculum committees are created using the following protocols: I
 - A flyer is created and sent out to all principals.
 - Principals, in turn, are asked to forward the flyer to all appropriate members of the faculty who teach the discipline involved.
 - Potential committee members contact the DCS to indicate their interest in serving and an initial date for a meeting is established.
 - Committees meet every six to eight weeks during the school year. As this is the case, it normally has taken two to three years to update and formulate the new guidelines.
- Before a final draft of the curriculum guidelines is established, a copy of the draft is sent to principals and department chairs to obtain stakeholder feedback to make any necessary changes or additions.
- With the last few sets of curriculum guidelines, there has been an effort to include links to Catholic identity as well as cross-curricular information.
- With the adoption of the ACRE testing program, we will now be better able to discover gaps in the Religion Curriculum Guidelines to effectively develop the faith formation process in the Diocese.
- Based on the virtual experiences that developed during the Covid pandemic, a greater emphasis will be placed on including virtual components to the curriculum guidelines.
- With a new administration in the DCS, the hope is that the time frame for the process of updating the curriculum can be reduced to a year.
- Once the updated guidelines have been completed, they are submitted to the superintendent for approval.
- After approval, a workshop is scheduled for administrators and representatives of the teachers at each school.
- This workshop involves members of the curriculum committee leading a presentation of the updated guidelines and the specific new features of the guidelines. At times, a guest speaker who is a respected expert in the field of the discipline is invited to speak to those in attendance.
- The curriculum guidelines then go into effect at the beginning of the next school year.

The curricula of a system of schools are living documents that change in accordance with research, advances in effective pedagogy, and the needs of the students of the Diocese of Trenton.



Part and parcel with a robust curriculum is the integration of technology to support the delivery of said curriculum. The Diocese of Trenton continually works to improve the implementation of technology in our classrooms. Whether delivered as a stand-alone technology class or included as part of instruction in another discipline, increased use of practical technology as a tool for learning is paramount. Extensive platforms are researched to provide current and productive digital opportunities. Furthermore, the technology curriculum is regularly reviewed and adjusted to maximize student outcomes. In a continued effort to expand the digital classroom, the diocesan plan is three-fold:

- Increase instructional delivery through use of technology
- Enable educators through professional development
- Provide the hardware and software necessary to achieve the process.

As a non-public system, funding is often limited, however, in working closely with the DCS, schools in the Diocese of Trenton have effectively enhanced student use of technology through funding sources available. These include:

- NJ State Technology funding for non-public students
- Title II funding for professional development
- Outside funding sources including, but not limited to, private organizations, business and industry, and opportunities available to by public and non-public schools

It would be an understatement to say that the Covid - 19 pandemic brought a change to the digital classroom. Along with educators worldwide, this pandemic forced the Diocese of Trenton refocus all technology efforts toward the remote classroom. Administration, faculty, and students alike were propelled into a new and, at times, challenging direction requiring constant change and adaptability. Schools responded to this challenge with speed, adaptability, and uncompromising professionalism. More tech savvy educators worked with their colleagues to increase both their comfort level with, and their proficiency in, a multitude of technology platforms. Technology directors in schools assumed additional roles to ensure that education continued with minimal interruption and learning loss. Schools devised creative and functional protocols for digital learning. Depending on school size and Covid impact, schools used a variety of methods including:

- All remote learning
- Remote and/or in-person learning (depending on the student's situation)
- Hybrid learning
- Remote and in-person learning simultaneously

Additionally, Covid brought the need for greater funding to implement the necessary change to our technology infrastructure. The pandemic forced the Catholic schools to procure more hardware, software, and professional development. The realization was an imperative that every child attending school in the Diocese of Trenton have access to both a device and a viable



internet connection. In working directly with the DCS, schools were able to take advantage of the following sources:

- ESSER – Elementary and Secondary Schools Relief Fund
- GEER – Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund
- PPP – Paycheck Protection Program
- EANS – Emergency Assistance to Non-public Schools
- EANS II
- ECF – Emergency Connectivity Fund

Formerly, the biggest challenge for immersion of technology in the classroom lay with educators who were uncomfortable making the change from traditional instruction to a more digitally based delivery. The adjustments made resulting from the pandemic have changed that reality. The world is technologically driven, and our Catholic schools must be as well to compete. Continued and expanded use of the tools and knowledge gained through Covid - 19 funding sources will propel schools, and educators, technologically forward. Furthermore, the results of lessons learned during Covid will be included in future technology curriculum, making technology more commonplace in other disciplines. STREAM, already a focus in our schools, will expand even farther. Working with the DSC, schools will continue to capitalize on any funding opportunities provided by either private industry or government sources. Additionally, the DSC will continue to inform and encourage our schools regarding technology opportunities provided by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and other resources. With teachers willing to move forward, and leadership that supports them, technology will continue to grow in all our schools.

Technology is one aspect to the Professional Development program that is found in the Diocese of Trenton. The DCS develops and implements a School Leadership Professional Development program annually. The program provides an opportunity for continuous professional development for our school leaders. Topics are identified for each day of the three (3) days of professional development. The DCS works to develop a focused and engaging themed based agenda for each session to include:

- Acquiring keynote speakers
- Securing subject matter experts
- Contracting with education resource providers to participate

Each session is hosted at one of our Catholic schools within the four counties which comprise our Diocese. Most importantly, each session provides our school leaders the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community of their peers. Past days of professional development have explored various relevant and timely areas of focus for our leaders.

Examples of these are:

- School Law with Sr. Angela Shaughnessy
- Social Emotional Learning with Dr. Tim Hogan



- Marketing and Implementation of Technology in the Classroom with Eric Scheninger
- Social Networking with Stan Phelps
- Inclusion of Gifted Students with Janette Boazman
- Adopting of the Danielson Model of Evaluation with Dr. Carol Rauch
- Assessment and School Safety with Dr. Tom Gambino and Robert Sensi

The DCS continues to use data to explore topics for future sessions. For instance, the DCS has recently reviewed our STAR data from the testing windows from 2019-2020 of our Catholic middle schools. Based on that review, the DCS scheduled a PD Day to focus on Curriculum, specifically reading, to improve in this area.

The Professional Development Days for the 2021-2022 school year in which our school leaders will take place as illustrated in the figure below:

2021-2022 Principal Professional Development Days Invoice and Registration	
Please submit registration forms and check to <i>The Diocese of Trenton – Department of Catholic Schools</i> (Attention: Mrs. Sherrie Sporek) by October 1, 2021	
School:	
County:	
Principal:	_____
October 8, 2021 – St. Dominic – Brick	Social / Emotional Learning Dr. Timothy Hogan / Sr. Marcy Springer \$70.00
November 12, 2021 – St. Paul – Burlington	Curriculum – Today and Tomorrow FACTS \$70.00
April 14, 2022 – St. Rose of Lima – Freehold	TBD TBD \$70.00
May 20, 2022 – Chancery	Principal Spirituality Day Gratis

Another service to the schools that the DCS provides annual workshops for onboarding our new teachers. A full day is set aside at the start of each school year to undertake this training. The agenda includes large group sessions as well as cohort-based breakouts. The larger session involves matters such as HR/Benefits/Church Teachings. The breakouts focus more specifically on classroom teacher subject areas like

- Our Student Management System
- Teacher expectations/classroom management



- Catholic Identity

The Department also provides annual workshops for onboarding our New Principals. These sessions provide new administrators opportunities:

- To meet colleagues
- To meet staff members from the Chancery Office
- Provide details related to school operations, policy, and procedure

Our schools also provide schools level based professional development focused on their own needs and interests. For the 2021-2022 school year, the DCS has instituted a grant program that provides financial support to our schools. Our schools are providing insight into their specific planned professional development to the DCS. This coordination of school level PD within the DCS will allow for support in sharing ideas and data across all our schools, as appropriate, resulting in overall higher success rates at the local school level.

The DCS utilization of the Genesis SIS platform was directly linked to the goal of comprehensive data collection and management at the diocesan level. As such, recognizing that solid and comprehensive student information management would provide the platform for data collection, storage, and reporting, the Diocese of Trenton was the first diocese in the state to adopt a uniform Student Information System (SIS) for all elementary schools (Genesis). Since that early beginning, the Diocese of Trenton has moved toward an even more robust SIS for elementary schools, which allows for expanded operation to include:

- Faculty gradebooks
- Lesson plans
- Report card processing
- Finance management
- A parent module
- Digital permanent records
- Medical records
- Digital use of standard school forms

The digital use of forms when communicating to parents eliminates the need to send a paper copy home to parents.

The elementary SIS is managed by the diocesan office and uses a standard protocol for all schools, providing for continuity of data. The continued goal is to aid school office personnel, administrative assistants, athletic trainers, nurses, guidance staff, discipline officers, as well as faculty and administration in embracing a digital SIS that promotes transparency and open communication.

The collective use of an SIS when collecting and managing data serves the Diocese in:

- Efficient collection for reporting to the NCEA



- Effective use of data for marketing and recruitment
- Current/accurate data for reporting for state and federal funding
- Current/accurate data available when proposing legislative change friendly to non-public schools
- Planning/budgeting

Diocesan high schools each have an independent SIS, and not necessarily the same as other schools, but routinely report on enrollment and staff data when requested by the Diocese. Additionally, the high schools provide all NCEA data collection digitally to the DCS for inclusion in the yearly report.

Through the DCS, all schools in the Diocese can request information on parish membership for families with school age children. Using this information becomes a powerful tool when recruiting and marketing. The church software of choice is a program called Parish Soft.

The Diocese of Trenton maintains a strong commitment to the advancement of non-public schools in the state of New Jersey. As such, the Associate Director for School Services/School Data Management works closely with representatives from the other four NJ dioceses, the NJ Catholic Conference, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the NJ non-public school community at large to ensure that students receive all opportunities provided by law. The diocesan Associate Director for School Services/School Data Management was elected, for two years, as Chair of the New Jersey Department of Education Non-public Advisory Committee. Additionally, she has served on the NJDOE Title I Committee of Practitioners, representing the non-public school community, and as the President of NJ chapter of the Council for American Private Education (CAPE). She was a non-public school representative on Governor Murphy's planning committee for reopening all New Jersey schools following Covid. The plan, entitled "The Road Back" is located at <https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>. This strong presence on the state level allows for prompt and greater understanding of developments with all government developments that impact our schools – knowledge which is immediately passed on to all principals.

Additionally, the Diocese is a strong advocate for legislation beneficial to non-public school students. When necessary, the DCS, through a system called Legislative Action Alerts, will mobilize all stakeholders within our school communities to contact their local, state, or federal legislators.

The DCS works with principals to ensure that Catholic students receive all entitlements due to those attending non-public schools. The Associate Director for School Services/School Data Management is available for consultation meetings with principals and local LEAs. As a result of these consultations, any concerns or any issues could be escalated to either the state department of non-public schools or the state ombudsman.



Federal and State funding for Catholic students in the Diocese of Trenton include:

- Federal – Title Funding
- Federal – IDEA
- Federal – Telecommunications (E-rate)
- Federal – Covid related funding
- State – Textbook
- State – Nursing
- State – Technology
- State – Security
- State – Transportation

The DCS routinely notifies our Catholic school principals regarding their compliance with required documentation. When necessary, the office works with schools to assist in ensuring this compliance. Examples include:

- Memorandum of Agreement with County Prosecutors
- Security Drill Statement of Assurance with the NJDOE and County Prosecutors
- Update of Crisis Manual shared with local police departments
- Completion of the NJ Non-public School Enrollment report (used by the state to generate funding)
- Adherence to Janet's Law – which requires every school to have an AED available on school property and individuals trained for its use
- Appropriate NJ Department of Agriculture documentation for student nutrition
- Adherence to all NJ Executive orders (as per Covid - 19)

One of the elements the DCS for the Diocese of Trenton prides itself on is the depth and frequency of its communication with our schools. The DCS has multiple outlets for this communication, and in full disclosure, is redundant for said communication.

Most items of significance pertaining to the operations of the schools are housed on the “extranet” system. This system is available to administrators, teachers, and PTA members alike. In addition, there is a SIS Genesis portal on the extranet. There are unique logins for each, but this system of folders is a trove of information ranging from:

- Policy and Procedure
- Human Resources
- Principal Connection Newsletters
- Memorandums from the Superintendent
- Surveys
- PTA news, memos, manuals, forms
- Calendars of Events
- SIS manuals
- SIS support



- Pertinent articles on pedagogy
- Catholic identity documents
- Discussion boards for sharing activities

Regarding routine communications, the DCS publishes the Principals' Connection twice a month throughout the school year. This is a newsletter that comes out with information that is pertinent but not immediate in nature. The content usually tells of:

- Upcoming events or deadlines on the calendar
- News received from the various educational departments or committees within the State of New Jersey
- New ideas, initiatives being floated for future discussion by the DCS
- Positions needed to be filled in a school

If necessary, due to immediacy or significance the DCS will publish memoranda for each school administrator for dissemination to their respective schools. Examples of these are:

- Information about employment practices
- Covid – 19 information
- Mandates from the State of New Jersey
- New policy updates that happen mid-term

To be certain, when communication is deemed necessary about school operations, the preferred method is emails or direct phone conversations. Emails from the DCS to a single school, a group of schools in a region or the entirety of the schools in our Diocese are of a constant (daily) basis. All offices within the DCS utilize these tools and methods of communication. It has been an effective form of communication and the DCS prides itself on timely, even quick, response times. Never is the DCS mentioned in the “never hear from them” vein.

To make certain that the local principals are in the constant know about the workings of the DCS, and to make communication clear and timely, a monthly ZOOM call was instituted in lieu of quarterly Principals' Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings previously held. The former format had two (2) representatives from each county of the Diocese meet and then disseminate information to their colleagues thereafter. The DCS has determined that “face-to-face” meetings, held monthly were a more effective manner to give important information, especially during the period of the pandemic. These meetings were recorded and shared for review or in case a principal could not make the meeting itself.

Pastors also receive timely and accurate information from the DCS regarding their schools' operations. Content about school operations is shared predominately through two channels. The quarterly publication, Pastor's Portal, is a newsletter that outlines the directives and progress of the schools in addition to the comments from the Bishop about overall operations.



Furthermore, minutes of the Curia Meetings are shared with Pastors, which always includes a full reporting of the Catholic schools' operations and monthly concerns/highlights.

Finally, the DCS goes to extremes to make sure its digital footprint meets the needs of our stakeholders. Our two websites (www.catholicsschoolshaveitall.org and www.dioceseoftrenton.org/catholic-schools) are up-to-date and populated with content that is relevant and impactful. Throughout the Covid – 19 pandemic, these websites were the go-to spots for information for parents seeking to find out more about the schools' actions and reactions to the pandemic and the "Road Forward," as outlined by the New Jersey State Departments of Health and Education, that allowed the opening of the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Trenton. In addition, our social media feeds (Facebook, Instagram) have pressing content that is "right here, right now" and highlights not only information that parents, and stakeholders might require, but also feel-good and informational stories about what is going on in our schools that parents might want/need to know.

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Trenton are also purveyors of content through similar channels. The schools' reach is often-times mirrored after that of the DCS. Schools utilize localized websites, social media of all types and "school reach" phone-type platforms. However, the critical link in school to parent communications is the consistent and constant use of digital folders and emails with the parents. Schools use this method of communication, about all things school related, as the preferred choice.

Marketing, on behalf of the Catholic school program by the DCS, spreads the message about our successes and overall mission effectiveness. The marketing efforts are a collaborative effort with the DCS and the Diocese of Trenton's Office of Communications.

The DCS maintains a very active website and social media presence. Combined, these are the primary communication platforms that communicate our school-wide messages and illustrate our brand.

Soon after Bishop O'Connell was installed, the Diocese of Trenton launched a campaign entitled "Catholic Schools Have It All". This campaign has been very successful in communication to the public why our schools are dynamic in the educational space and as we believe: the Diocese of Trenton really do "have it all." The website for this program is:

<https://www.catholicsschoolshaveitall.org/>

The DCS Further illustrates our programs on these platforms by the extensive use of:

- Videos
- Written narratives
- Displayed examples of school programming

The goal of these efforts is to demonstrate how our Catholic schools meet:



- Spiritual needs of our children
- Academic
- Social
- Emotional

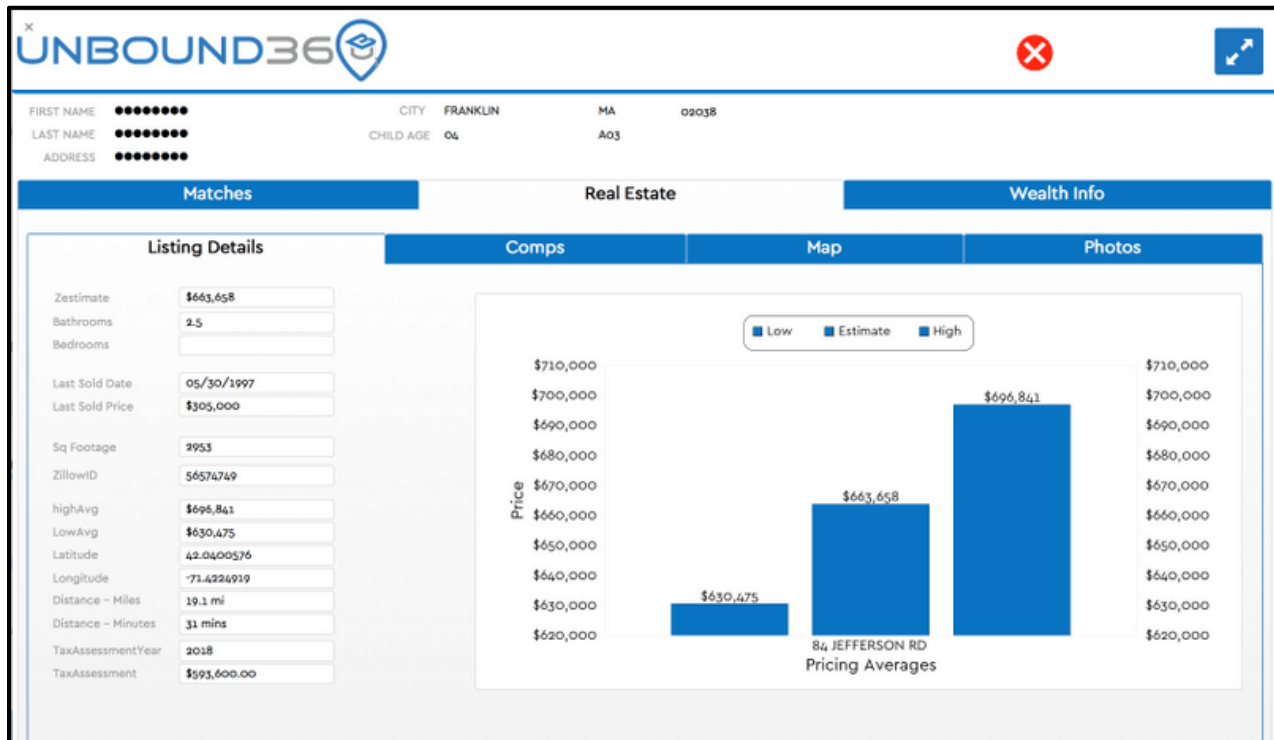
In addition, the DCS maintains a website, <https://dioceseoftrenton.org/catholic-schools>, and a Facebook account, <https://www.facebook.com/catholicschoolshaveital>, to continue to illustrate our brand to the public.

Each of our Catholic schools also maintain their school specific websites and their school specific social media. This allows them the opportunity to market their school directly. These local sites allow the local schools to tell their story, to communicate their Catholic Identity as well as their individual schools' charism.

Many of the Diocese of Trenton's Catholic school have partnerships with professional marketing companies to assist in marketing in general and/or their social media presence. A common example of a third-party partnership the eCatholic platform. Many of our school programs use eCatholic to host their website which was a direct and give social media assistance. These partnerships are a direct result of Diocesan efforts to co-ordinate technology and media.

Individual schools have partnered with recommended third-party vendors to assist in their unique marketing efforts to the greater community. Donovan Catholic High School has taken the professional development opportunity, provided by the Sheninger Group, and expanded on their initial presentation to play a vital role in their school marketing in coming years. St. Mary's of the Lakes has likewise engaged Partners in Mission to assist in their marketing efforts and student recruitment.

At the end of the 2020-2021 school year, the DCS engaged and partnered with an inbound marketing company, Unbound 360, <https://www.unbound360.com/>. This company's platform allows our Catholic schools to "micro-target" specific potential new student prospects for each of our schools. The platform uses data analytics to develop candidate prospects for a given school which can be used to support a traditional marketing approach or to take advantage of the digital age and be used for social media and other smart phone application type advertising.



Another element of the DCS's efforts to support the marketing of our Catholic high schools is a push to unify the efforts of all schools in the specific area of recruitment. Instead of a continued school by school approach whereby the students in elementary schools within the Diocese of Trenton must research on their own what the process for each diocesan high school acceptance might be, the entire process is now simplified, unified, and explained in a simple document with Diocese-wide dates of testing, acceptance and well-defined open houses and other opportunities for student-based school visits.



https://issuu.com/diocesoftrenton/docs/dot_schools_7-8th_grade_highschool_info_brochure?fr=sMDQwYTIyMjM2ODQ

As marketing develops, so too must the strategic planning which is so vital to the future of our Catholic schools here in the Diocese of Trenton.



Catholic schools have faced challenges from many economic and social forces over the last many decades. The impact in the Diocese of Trenton has been realized with the closure of parishes and parish-based schools. In addition, during the last 18 months, due to Covid – 19, the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Trenton were heavily impacted. Schools are now starting to emerge from the pandemic. At some level the pandemic has provided an opportunity for Catholic schools to introduce themselves to new families. It also has provided an opportunity to “re-invent” ourselves when it comes to our introduction of technology and focus on differentiated instruction. Catholic schools have had a significant amount of financial support, which has provided needed capital to make some of these investments.

As we look forward there are very specific strategic objectives, we are looking to achieve here in the DCS:

- **Investment in our School Leaders**
 - Data driven planning associated with professional development
 - Pursuit of asynchronous self-paced continuing education and credentialing
 - Cultivation of new school leaders through focused mentoring as well as leadership development program.
- **Investment in our Teachers**
 - Data driven professional development
 - DCS sponsored support for our schools to pursue professional development
 - Financial support for degree completion and/or certifications
- **Investment in our Students**
 - Focused and funded efforts to support differentiated instruction in reading and math using programs like Imagine Learning and IXL
 - Collaborative support as it relates to pedagogical technology implementation

The DCS also looks to provide continued support to our schools through a service member model approach. The DCS will provide opportunities to support schools in areas like school board development, school advancement, long term financial planning. This is all in addition to the traditional role that we have played in the systems approach to school oversight.

As part of our focus on continual process improvement, the DCS will work to embark on a stakeholder based strategic planning effort in the coming year that will result in the creation of a roadmap for leading our schools into the future.

In the Diocese of Trenton, the Catholic schools responded rapidly to safely and effectively open for traditional classroom instruction. Still yet, the Catholic schools simultaneously supported remote online learning for those families that chose this option for their child(ren). The Catholic school leaders worked in close collaboration with the members of DCS to achieve this objective.



Major areas of focus that were addressed to achieve a safe opening included:

- **Facilities**
 - Catholic schools adhered to strict state, local and Diocesan requirements for opening and remaining open during the pandemic
 - PPE were purchased and school operating procedures were impacted from morning drop off to end of the day departure and all aspects in between
 - New protocols were established for health screening and monitoring
 - Additional efforts were expended to support cleaning and sanitizing
 - Classrooms and common space areas were reconfigured to support social distancing and other Covid related measures.
- **Finances**
 - Many of the Catholic schools were able to obtain financial support provided by the Federal Government.
 - The schools worked in concert with the DCS and our Diocesan Finance Office to properly secure all available and eligible funds.
- **Instruction**
 - Using technology, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Trenton were able to achieve synchronous instruction for those in school and remote students within the first days of the pandemic
 - Our Catholic schools provided a high level of technology and a laser focus on differentiated instruction
 - Chromebooks and other devices to support student learning in class and remote.
 - Our Catholic teachers embraced Google Classroom and other digital resources to make their instruction relevant and engaging.
 - Professional development was created in response to the pandemic needs to allow for best practices and knowledge sharing to occur in near-real time as our teachers and students adapted to education during a national pandemic.

The synergy created in the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Trenton was achieved with thoughtful and caring leadership. The focus never wavered from the primary goal of the health and safety of all in our schools as the number one priority. Despite the occurrence of a national pandemic, our schools were able to provide for the spiritual, academic, social, and emotional needs of our students, faculty, and staff.

The Diocese of Trenton has some obstacles to overcome to become truly revolutionary in its scope of impacting student outcomes and faith formation. No program is perfect, and ours is no exception. However, you will see examples in our COGNIA review of an evolving program that is dedicated to mission, committed to student success, and firmly recognizes our place in the fabric of the communities in which our schools reside.



Areas of growth potential in the DCS are:

- **Catholic Identity** In today's society, and with the students in our programs, Gospel values are a constant concern. Our schools do a phenomenal job of imparting Catholic values into our schools. However, the bar of expectations for our students is very high. The DCS must lead and continue to investigate ways to integrate Catholic identity into our program to make sure our students know what it means to embrace a truly faith-filled, Catholic life dedicated to service and others.
- **Communication** With new leadership and different leadership styles, comes an opportunity to increase messaging and the impact of said messaging. Communication is an area in which the DCS will evolve and grow.
- **Professional Development** Given the new technologies available to our Catholic schools and the acceptance in the delivery of these technologies, the DCS can grow a staffs' knowledge base and effectiveness through robust and deeper professional development. The cost and availability of the purveyors of "best practice/professional development" can now be addressed using technology and data to drive real growth in this area which schools can now afford. In addition, the abundance of higher education opportunities for further certifications and degrees delivered directly to the school, the classroom or wherever the instructor's locale might be will make it more convenient for our instructors to become the best they can be for the sake of our students. The Diocese of Trenton has established, and will continue develop, funding to make this happen for our instructors.
- **Marketing** An area in which there is a strong knowledge base within the DCS is in marketing. Be it social media or through traditional channels, our schools can benefit from the collective knowledge of the DCS when it comes to getting the mission of a school out to its stakeholders.
- **Business Acumen** Our Catholic school leaders are spiritual professional leaders, but not all are well-versed in the areas of business operations. The DCS must lead around business operations. Budgeting, contract negotiations with vendors/suppliers, or human resource management are areas, coupled with the aforementioned increased level of communication, in which the DCS could increase support and assist the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Trenton.
- **Reorganization of the DCS Itself** The DCS office has a wonderful opportunity to re-imagine itself in the coming months to better serve its Catholic schools. With a new superintendent hired in August of 2020, one of the existing team members retiring this coming December, the addition of an Associate Director of Development and Operations and the increased use of a member of the Finance Department exclusively for our schools, the DCS is positioned to get data as to exactly the best way forward to support our Catholic schools. As superintendent, I like to speak about "added member benefit." What that means to our schools is as an affiliated school with the Diocese of Trenton, our responsibility is to make sure that the supports for the needs of today, but also the challenges of tomorrow, are addressed. The DCS need to be out front and



leading our schools, not being reactionary to the issues schools bring to the Department. As the superintendent, this is a great challenge and with the support of the team in the DCS, its one we collectively embrace.

The Diocese of Trenton has an incredible opportunity to continue to form the faith lives of our students, for generations to come. Our 140 years of dedicated service to central New Jersey is but a fraction of what is possible. To fulfill this mission, the DCS must remain focused and committed to drive results in the areas of:

- Catholic identity/Mission advancement
- Student achievement
- Financial stability within our schools
- Growth mindset in the classroom, and the communities themselves, in which we serve
- Infrastructure (policies, procedures, physical plant, human resources, etc.) to support programming

The DCS is up for these challenges and the ones to come in future years which have yet to be defined. *Catholic Schools Have it All* in the Diocese of Trenton...today **and** tomorrow.