

Executive Summary

**Donovan Catholic
Diocese of Trenton**

Dr. Edward Gere
711 Hooper Avenue
Toms River, NJ 08753

Donovan Catholic High School with a school enrollment of 710 students accepts motivated students who desire a multi-faceted, rigorous college prep education. Applicants' prior academic records, standardized test scores, attendance records, and conduct records are evaluated to determine acceptance and placement. Opportunities abound for students of diverse levels of ability and learning styles in our Collegiate Scheduling, Laptop Learning environment. The community continues to maintain an aging infrastructure and creatively address transportation challenges and families' financial difficulties in meeting tuition costs. The academic offerings continue to expand to a greater talented and gifted program, a larger international student program, a more comprehensive special needs program and a reach-out plan to non-English speaking parents.

The academic program, led by three administrators and sixty-four qualified faculty members, fosters integrity, diligence and achievement through a wide variety of instructional methods, classroom management, authentic assessment and regular communication with parents/guardians. Students enjoy a positive, nurturing environment where teachers are available to provide extra help, not only for their own students, but also for any student in their subject areas of expertise.

Visual and auditory reminders of our commitment to faith permeate the school; more importantly, the daily example of administration, faculty and staff, as role models, sets the tone for faith in action. Morning and afternoon prayers reach the students through Donovan Studios, teachers pray at the beginning of those blocks not covered by the televised prayers, class Masses offer a more intimate opportunity to pray, and school-wide prayer services and Masses provide a large communal opportunity to celebrate the Faith.

The Christian Service component of Donovan Catholic offers all students the opportunity to share their gifts in a dynamic service program. It provides many events for all members of the school community to deepen their understanding and commitment to Jesus and His message of compassion and peace, service and love.

Donovan Catholic students are required to meet the following minimum Christian Service Hours Requirements in order to graduate:

- 10 hours of Christian Service completed during freshman year
- 20 hours of Christian Service completed during sophomore year
- 20 hours of Christian Service completed during junior year
- 20 hours of Christian Service completed during senior year

Students who exceed 100 hours of service in a single school year earn a bronze service award; those who exceed 175 hours, a silver service award and those who exceed 250 hours, a gold service award.

Donovan Catholic High School views all co-curricular activities (sports, performing and visual arts, clubs, field trips and school programs and on-campus and off-campus events) as extensions of the classroom, holding students, coaches and moderators to a strict code of sportsmanship and decorum. Coaches serve as mentors beyond the sports to the academic, spiritual and social development of their team members.

PURPOSE

Donovan Catholic High School, located in Toms River, New Jersey, celebrates its mission, "to educate its students to live their faith, respect and serve others, and pursue academic excellence in a college preparatory environment," as the basis for all policies, programs and initiatives.

The Parish of Saint Joseph, Diocese of Trenton, commissions Donovan Catholic to provide a Catholic based education, rich in the Dominican tradition, for the youth of Ocean County and its environs. Fulfilling this mandate, the school forms the core of students' spiritual and academic growth, their religious and community service, and their social and physical development. All policies on the school level flow from the diocese and the Bishops' Charter (USCCB). The Administration, faculty and staff support and enrich the school's Catholic culture by integrating Faith within the curriculum and encouraging prayer and worship as a school community. A parish school, Donovan Catholic enjoys a strong priestly presence and a deep commitment to Catholic education by the Saint Joseph Church community. Donovan Catholic espouses the principles of forgiveness, love and service to others, supporting the school's commitment to enriching the faith of the entire Donovan Catholic community. The central purposes of Donovan Catholic are to provide a safe educational environment based on Christian principles and Gospel values, to implement a solid curriculum serving a wide variety of learning styles, and to encourage cultural, personal, and social growth of its students.

Administrators, faculty, and staff recognize their unique responsibility and privilege in assisting parents with their children's education. Parental involvement is necessary, encouraged, and supported at all levels of the educational process. In mutual concern, all work as one community of faith to nurture every individual student's abilities and to guide youth in choosing spiritual, academic, and career paths.

The school encourages teachers to work in common acceptance of Gospel values and in a shared desire to live these values in their own lives, as well as to foster their development in the lives of students. This collaboration makes possible a collegial style of administration and decision-making. Students complete a comprehensive educational program in an atmosphere reflecting tolerance, sensitivity, and acceptance for individuality and in a climate fostering service to fellow students and the world community.

The school commits to Roman Catholic traditional values and attitudes, and strives to instill them in its students. A prominent Catholic atmosphere fosters service projects, private and communal prayer, and liturgical celebrations. Students prepare to make informed decisions in an increasingly complex and changing world, to form a lasting commitment to Gospel values, and to accept responsibility and leadership.

The school commits to academic excellence in recognition of abilities, needs, and goals of the student body. It provides programs that enable students to realize academic and personal potential. These programs reflect integration of Christian values into the full range of academic courses. Donovan Catholic graduates those individuals who maintain its academic standards and uphold its code of conduct. Education is a dynamic process that requires our commitment to continuous self-evaluation and commands an ongoing review of this educational philosophy in order to meet students' diverse needs.

PHILOSOPHY

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NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

The PSAT for junior scores in all three subject areas: reading, math and writing, are slightly higher than State and National scores. The College ready score, an average of all three subject areas, has been above the State and National levels; however, we look forward to raising them. The Class of 2016 appears to have weaker test-taking skills in reading, writing and math than preceding classes, an area we address in our Continuous Improvement Plan.

Student teams have excelled in academic competitions on the state level, athletic teams have advanced to county and state levels, visual and performing arts students have won countless medals and recognition on the national level. Ninety-seven percent of graduating students of 2014 went on to college, many to upper tier schools. The Class of 2014 garnered \$22,296,276.00 in college scholarships, based on their high school success.

NOTABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

The information gleaned from the PSAT scores for the last three years reveals an increase from sophomore year to junior year in all areas: reading, math, and writing; however, the growth is minimal. Students' writing, as measured by exit essays and teacher feedback, has improved over the last three years, thanks to a cross-curricular commitment to raise writing standards through our Middle States Writing.

We have begun a Blueprint 20/20, a strategic plan for the present and future of Donovan Catholic High School and expanded our connection to students, families and the larger community through vast and diverse multi-media communication. We have expanded our Veritas Scholar Program, initiated a Virtual School Day Program and begun the pursuit of an International Baccalaureate School component.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Donovan Catholic High School is committed to increasing critical reading and comprehensive math skills as measured by the PSAT during the next three years. We plan to continue to fulfill our commitment to Blue Print 20/20 and to increase student accountability, as we pursue the International Baccalaureate School program, and further promote excellence in our school. We plan to increase data collection and analysis to assist us in ongoing improvement. We plan to continue to improve communication with our Stakeholders and offer parents opportunities to support them as primary educators of their children in the Faith.

Our School Board is an advisory board only. The governing body consists of the following:

Director, Reverend G. Scott Shaffer

Administrators:

Principal Dr. Edward Gere

Assistant Principal, Mrs. Eileen McCullion

Vice-principal, Mrs. Kathleen D'Andrea

The strong support of Director, Rev. Scott Shaffer and the Parish Finance Committee promotes facilitates Donovan Catholic as a viable, sustainable school. Through their efforts budgets are analyzed, capital improvements are implemented and long range projects are planned.

The Parish of Saint Joseph Church negotiates with the American Federation of Teachers Union (AFT) strongly supporting its employees providing accurate and concise breakdown of salary, benefits and policy.