



# **Executive Summary**

**Red Bank Catholic High School**

**Diocese of Trenton**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Description of the School.....	2
School's Purpose.....	4
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.....	6
Additional Information .....	9

## **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?**

Red Bank Catholic is a vibrant, beloved, Catholic co-educational institution with a storied history, an extraordinary spirit, and a record of achievement in the classroom and beyond. Red Bank Catholic High School enrolls over 900 students annually from three counties, fifty-eight towns and sixty-two schools. The majority of the students live in Monmouth County, an area located on the Atlantic Ocean within the New York metropolitan area. Monmouth County is an affluent community, ranked 42nd among the highest income counties in the country. However, there is considerable socioeconomic diversity in the county as it includes towns such as Asbury Park, Neptune and Keansburg where the average per capita income is under \$20,000. Red Bank Catholic remains committed to serving this socioeconomic population. We believe that our diverse population of students has enhanced the school community, and we continue to search for revenue sources to serve our students and families with financial need.

The demonstrated need for financial aid has increased in the last few years, and it currently exceeds \$700,000 annually. We have shifted the focus of development efforts to address this need while still trying to attract resources to enhance and improve our campus. While this dual focus puts pressure on fundraising efforts, we have been fortunate to sustain a steady stream of revenue from outside sources. We will continue to concentrate our efforts on attracting outside funding to make a Red Bank Catholic education accessible to deserving students.

Our applicant pool has dropped slightly in recent years. It has dropped 10-15% since the mid-2000's, and our yield rate from that pool is down to 50-55% from our previous high of 60-65%. Our class size has dropped from 270-280 to its more recent number of 220-225. The applicant pool is currently drawing more students from public schools than parochial. We now have 60-65% of our applicants coming from the public school population. This change in demographics may be in part due to the recent closings of some feeder Catholic elementary schools. RBC has also had to contend with enrollment challenges such as our close proximity to other Catholic high schools, one being an all-male local parochial school, and the recent opening of an all girls' academy. Attracting students, particularly male students, remains a challenge, and increasing the number of our registrants is a high priority.

At Red Bank Catholic, we strive to educate the whole person. We believe there are teachable moments inside and outside the classroom, and we seek opportunities to fully engage the hearts, minds and souls of our students. Our faculty and administration has a mix of professionals who have 30+ years of experience with a nice balance of those with 10 years or less. Staff members are dedicated to creating a nurturing environment that balances freedom with responsibility; challenging academics with spiritual growth; traditional values with 21st century tools; and athletic excellence with sportsmanship. We believe that the arts are an important component of a comprehensive education, and we wholeheartedly support our expansive fine and performing arts programs. We also have over forty clubs that meet during school hours to give students opportunities to explore their interests. We are firmly rooted in the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy whose sacrifices helped build our school and shape our values, and our students continue to reach out to their local community and the world beyond to serve those in need. We prepare our students for college but, more important, we prepare our students for life.

Our academic programs are expansive and extensive for students of all ranges of ability. RBC has a strong program for students with learning differences, coupled with readily available academic assistance programs before, during, and after school. In every facet of learning and subject area, we have developed methods to help ensure student progress and success. Our program includes 16 Advanced Placement courses, viable and popular dual enrollment programs with both Brookdale Community College and Seton Hall University, and online course offerings through the Virtual High School. Our extensive and broad-based curricular offerings are focused on preparing our students for the challenges they face in their futures.

Our campus is a wonderful mix of traditional and 21st century buildings situated in the heart of the vibrant town of Red Bank with its opportunities for volunteering, cultural venues, and diverse shops and restaurants. Our students enjoy a college-like campus which is

## Executive Summary

Red Bank Catholic High School

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created by our separate buildings throughout the complex.

The largest renovation project since a 1966 addition was completed in 2010. After a yearlong professional assessment of space, needs and usage, Red Bank Catholic launched a \$13 million dollar capital campaign. In 2009, the 4,500 square foot Stirnweiss building was leveled to make way for the 25,200 square foot Vincent J. Eck Student Center. The new facility includes two multi-functional classrooms, a weight and conditioning room, four team rooms, a competition gym, offices and Tradition Hall. The campaign also afforded Red Bank Catholic the rare opportunity to purchase an already renovated fine and performing arts space on Monmouth Street. Recently renamed the Red Bank Catholic Fine and Performing Arts Center, this newest space houses our acclaimed dance program, all of our fine arts classes, and our choir and band. The addition of these two buildings has enhanced the college-like experience for our students as they learn to navigate a true campus.

The little school that started on Pearl Street in 1879 with a handful of local parish students has grown into a renowned institution. Our students are accepted into the finest colleges and universities; the class of 2015 received over \$30 million in scholarships. Students also excel in the fine and performing arts; they seek opportunities to serve their communities, and they participate on 34 teams in 18 sports. Through the years, the Red Bank Catholic campus has adapted and evolved to meet the demands of the times, never straying from our core essence and mission. Through years of outward change, Red Bank Catholic has kept one vision. Every building on Red Bank Catholic's campus stands as a testament to mission, faith, generosity and courage. Red Bank Catholic is an educational institution which honors tradition, nurtures spiritual growth, challenges minds, and looks to the future. Red Bank Catholic is a unique and special place. It is the Home of the Caseys.

## **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 stated mission of Red Bank Catholic High School is to fully engage the minds, hearts and souls of our students. We are committed to developing the whole person, so we seek and create opportunity beyond the classroom. We enroll young men and women of promise and we strive to help them find their purpose. This aspiration is reflected in all that we do from our individualized approach to admissions and scheduling; to our commitment to making diverse extra-curricular programs available to all students and our affiliations with colleges and the Global Consortium Virtual High School to ensure that ambitious students have the opportunity to explore their interests. Red Bank Catholic focuses on the individual student. We meet students wherever they are on their journey and work to help them discover their gifts and maximize their potential.

Before students walk through the doors on their first day freshman year, we take steps to get to know each of them. Our admissions process is unique in that every student and their parents or guardians, meet individually with an academic counselor to select classes. Test scores and transcripts are part of the discussion as are comfort level, extracurricular commitments and interests. This holistic approach best allows for student development and success. Students are not on level tracks. During freshmen year, all students take our unique Leadership course which focuses on executive skills, communications, ethics and personal responsibility. To further assist freshmen, as well as every student at Red Bank Catholic, we offer extra individualized support and assistance through our Room 7 program. Room 7 is a space equipped with state of the art technology and staffed with teachers before and after school and during lunch periods. The Room 7 staff focuses on remediation, prevention, enhancement and strengthening of core skills. It is a positive, accessible service that hundreds of students of every skill level utilize.

In response to emerging and growing interests, RBC works continuously to expand and develop our course offerings. We purchased a building adjacent to our campus that we dedicated to our fine and performing arts programs. Our acclaimed, growing dance department is flourishing in this professional environment. A dedicated engineering lab was recently built and our Introduction to Engineering students are thriving in an advanced, hands-on environment. Criminology was added to the curriculum; the business department has expanded; over 200 courses from Biotechnology and Bioethics to Constitutional Law are offered to students through RBC's membership with the Global Consortium Virtual High School. Red Bank Catholic established a Dual Enrollment Program with Seton Hall University and Brookdale Community College which allows qualified students to earn college level credits that are transferrable to over 200 colleges. Ten RBC teachers with Masters or Doctorate degrees oversee these courses and are also adjunct professors at the colleges in partnership with Red Bank Catholic. Qualified seniors may participate in externships through the Thomas G. Labrecque Leadership Program. Student externs have worked at places like Monmouth University's Psychology Research Department, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Barclays, Standard & Poors and NJ Design. Through curriculum and outside opportunities, we strive to help students explore their talents and interests. Our unique extra-curricular program broadens student opportunity for discovery.

Our master schedule provides monthly time during the school day for clubs to meet. This schedule allows every student to participate in something of interest regardless of transportation and/or athletic conflicts. Over 60 clubs reflecting a wide array of interests are offered. From Junior Statesmen and Model U.N., to performing arts and music interests, to service clubs like Habitat for Humanity, every student can explore an individual passion. Students enroll in clubs on line during a limited registration period which simulates college course registration. It is significant that the largest club at RBC is the L.I.F.E. Club, or Living in Faith Effectively. This club focuses on service and empowers students to make a tangible difference in their communities. The LIFE Club distributes Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to over 300 families, and restocks local food pantry shelves. They also collect and distribute gift cards to families affected by natural disasters and they collect hundreds of much needed donations for Birthright. The L.I.F.E. Club is a vital, empowering organization that has been a force for good for over 20 years. RBC students also learn that they can make a difference through their efforts in collaboration with the Maryknoll

## Executive Summary

Red Bank Catholic High School

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Missionaries. Red Bank Catholic was the first Maryknoll Affiliate student service organization in the country. This distinction was earned through the hard work of hundreds of students, with hundreds of hours of service to the less fortunate across the globe. Red Bank Catholic does not have a service requirement. Service is part of the culture. It is at the core of our mission to fully engage our students' hearts and they respond enthusiastically.

In order to fully engage our students' minds, hearts and souls, we must treat students as individuals, respect and recognize their unique gifts, create opportunities for discovery, maximize their potential and instill in them a sense of responsibility to their fellow man. This is a lofty ambition, but one worthy of our legacy and our students' talents, gifts and dreams. Our openness to adapt and change and introduce and respond to opportunity, supports our mission to form the whole person. At Red Bank Catholic, we believe in the power of discovery.

## **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.**

The concept of Red Bank Catholic High School started in the basement of the original Saint James Church in 1867. That dream has grown into a beloved institution with over 14,000 alumni and nearly 1,000 students from 58 towns and 62 schools. Through the years, Red Bank Catholic has adapted and evolved to meet the demands of our times, never straying from our core essence and mission. In recent years, we have seen our campus expanded and refurbished with the enthusiastic support of our alumni, friends and families. We have introduced technological advances to ensure that our students are getting the best 21st century education we can provide for them. We have created more student driven opportunities, and we have been honored on national stages. We have had successes as well as challenges, and we have learned from both. Red Bank Catholic continues to adapt and evolve. Our notable achievements and meaningful challenges can be categorized in three areas of focus: collaboration, celebration and support.

### **I. Collaboration**

Collaboration is essential for success in a complex institution like Red Bank Catholic. Our intentional focus on collaboration has resulted in some significant successes in recent years. Two years ago, we formed a Curriculum Committee made up of a diverse group of faculty and administrators. The team includes 1 religion teacher, 3 history teachers, 2 world language teachers, 1 science teacher, 1 engineering teacher, 1 math teacher, 2 administrators and the Director of Guidance. This committee has met regularly twice a month. Their focus has been on vertical and horizontal alignment, increasing formative assessments, teacher collaboration time, and similarity of assessment within departments. This team has fostered a renewed sense of collegiality and collaboration. Some of their ideas have resulted in implementation of benchmark testing, establishment of level up and level down protocols, additional professional development opportunities and the execution of cross-curricular projects. The group continues to meet to set immediate and long range goals.

Changes to our physical plant reflect our desire for increased collaboration. A well-planned campus inspires thoughtfulness, creativity and connection. RBC undertook an ambitious, systematic approach to refurbishing our academic spaces. To focus on staff collaboration, academic wings were created in each department. Formerly class size needs dictated where classes were scheduled. Now, disciplines are grouped in wings to engender collaboration within departments. Departmental wings also create a comforting sense of order for students trying to navigate our campus. To foster cross-disciplinary development, teacher prep spaces were strategically created and placed on wings so teachers, departments or small groups could meet and collaborate. These spaces also met a need for more instructional storage space for teachers without a home base.

Technological advances also encourage collaboration and conversation. The introduction of white boards, multi-media podiums linked to laptop computers, DVD's and VCR's, mobile technology carts and the creation of "The Quig" (a shared space in the Media Center equipped with 28 workstations), a ceiling mounted projector and two flat screen LCD monitors for interactive distance learning, all call for increased collaboration as teachers work to share resources and skills. They enthusiastically collaborate with each other. We put technology in the hands of our teachers, thus transforming how we teach and how we work together. Students are encouraged to bring their own devices, such as laptops and tablets, as part of our BYOD program.

The desire to increase student opportunities led to our collaboration with local colleges through our Dual Enrollment Program and our becoming members of the Global Consortium Virtual High School. Both collaborations have greatly expanded the areas of interest our students can explore through RBC.

In addition to working on increasing collaboration among the faculty and staff, we sought to increase collaboration with an important constituent group--our parents. We took a new approach to parental involvement this past year. The PTA became the Parent Connect Association, created to ensure that parents, students and faculty feel included, connected and engaged. The mission of the PCA is to inspire involvement and create a positive sense of welcome and belonging for all members of the Red Bank Catholic community. This transformed



## Executive Summary

Red Bank Catholic High School

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association had some early successes including a welcome event for new parents which had exceptional attendance, the distribution of a streamlined welcome packet and an enthusiastic reception to their first fundraising event. We believe the concept has great merit and great potential. With clear direction and administrative support, the PCA can grow into a vibrant, vital force for engaging, welcoming, informing and including important stakeholders.

### Collaboration Goals

We want to broaden our collaboration goals. It is our hope to expand cross-curricular conversations and planning. We have started to offer some STEM opportunities, but we want to explore more STEM and STREAM initiatives. We hope to encourage collaborations outside the classroom to give our students real world applications, as our accounting classes did when they partnered with our Make-a-Wish Club to keep track of their donations and expenses. We plan to increase collaborations with colleges by expanding our Dual Enrollment opportunities. We hope to use technology, particularly the new website we launched, to increase our teachers' ability to share and create together. We want to build on the early successes of our new parent organization to create opportunities for and inspire involvement. Collaboration has been a focus and will continue to be going forward.

### II. Celebrate and Communicate

It is critical to tell our story and share our successes in order to attract prospective students, generate a sense of value for parents and guardians, engage alumni and articulate our brand to those colleges and universities our students are interested in. The stories of our student, faculty and alumni successes are powerful illustrations of the value of a Red Bank Catholic education. In sharing, we expand our reach and reputation. We use a variety of ways and means to recognize, communicate and celebrate our successes.

Perhaps the most visible and labor intensive recent advance in the area of communications was the creation of a new website. The undertaking was a significant investment in budget and staff. The new website gives us an immediate platform to share news and information, a way to engage and connect with all of our constituent groups, and provides teachers a myriad of ways to link our students to digital resources. The faculty transitioned to the new learning management system quickly and enthusiastically. Our technology team led a series of integration workshops and our teachers were using their dashboards before the opening of the 2014-2015 school year. The students embraced the technological upgrade. We have only begun to tap the potential of the website, but we will continue to focus on the opportunities it affords us.

We are committed to producing The Casey Connection, our popular magazine which is distributed to all current families and alumni. It reaches over 10,000 homes. The magazine is a worthwhile investment and a wonderful means to celebrate, share and engage. It is also critically important for our development efforts. We use a variety of other direct mailings targeted at constituents at different stages in our lifetime engagement cycle. Particular focus is paid to prospective students because it is crucial for our enrollment numbers. We retooled parts of our Open House and added an evening session during the week. Our admissions materials were redone and we enhanced our acceptance procedure in an effort to increase enrollment. We will continue to focus on student recruitment and retention. Sharing and celebrating our stories will help in these important areas.

### Celebration Goals

In order to connect with our constituents and engender much needed support, it is critical that we share and celebrate our successes and that we communicate our plans and needs. We are developing a comprehensive strategy for lifecycle engagement. We want to focus on targeted, specific communications designed to engage constituents wherever they are in their relationship with Red Bank Catholic. From prospective students to current parents to alumni marking their 50th reunions, we hope to find meaningful ways to connect and engage our stakeholders. We will continue to explore the tools our new website offers us including customized newsletters and social media options, to enhance our targeted focus.

Internally, we need to set up formal processes for sharing successes so that the appropriate departments have access to news that should be shared. We plan to implement structure so that good news, collaborations, advances and important events can be communicated in a timely and effective way.

### III. Support

At 83%, tuition revenue is our majority source of funding for our operational costs. We depend on the generosity of our families, friends and

## Executive Summary

Red Bank Catholic High School

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alumni, the fundraising efforts of our parent organizations, grants and a return on our investments to bridge the 17% gap. Increasing demand for financial aid has put pressure on the budget and development efforts, but we remain committed to being a viable option for a diverse student body that represents every socio-economic demographic. Our plans, however, cannot be limited by budgetary constraints; thus, we put a great deal of focus and energy into development.

Successful development depends on strong relationships, so much of our development efforts focus on meaningful engagement. We do not believe one size fits all when it comes to fundraising, so we have used a variety of methods, some successful, others less so, to engage our different constituencies. We use events, direct mailings, personal outreach from the principal and personalized stewardship to build important relationships. The annual fund remains a vital source of support, and it increased this school year in both the total number of donors and dollars. Going forward, we hope to increase donor participation. We continue to secure and manage memorial scholarships by working closely with families hoping to honor loved ones with a connection to RBC. Our very personalized approach has built meaningful and lasting tributes that we believe help both the families and our students. Creating a new mission of inclusion for our parent organization was a step toward increasing engagement and building relationships. We think our focus on engagement throughout the lifecycle of a constituent will lead to success now and down the road. We have enjoyed the rewards of the relationship building our predecessors achieved with the alumni of the 40's, 50's and 60's. It is incumbent upon us to secure relationships that will ensure the overall health of the school for decades to come.

### Support Goals

We need to continue to engage our many constituencies and to demonstrate a strong case for support. We also need to explore other sources of support such as grants and estate planning. We have had a few successes with grants and are actively working to be eligible for more. We have consulted experts to create a planned giving and estate planning arm of our development efforts. Concentrated focus on meaningful engagement and connection with our many constituent groups is vital for increasing support. We plan to increase our one-on-one contacts as they are most successful in securing major gifts. We plan to use new tools, such as the website, and social media to engage, connect, inform and hopefully, encourage investment. We are working to create very specific plans that identify opportunities for investing in RBC by supporting capital improvements, financial aid, and academic initiatives.

### Conclusion

Our focus has been, and will continue to be, on increasing opportunities for our students, our teachers, our parents and our alumni. Those opportunities will be for collaboration, shared celebration and ways to support our priorities and our dreams. The Red Bank Catholic community is committed, involved and invested. We hope to continue to tap into the swell of enthusiasm, energy and support to advance our mission.

## **Additional Information**

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

All pertinent information is contained in the previous responses.