



Executive Summary

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School

Diocese of Trenton

Sr. Jude Boyce
First Ave. & Pine St.
Asbury Park, NJ 07712

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Introduction

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

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

Description of the School

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

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School is a school of 218 students which is an increase in enrollment of 49 students over the last three years. However, for a true picture of Mt. Carmel, it needs to be known that in 2004-2005 there were only 124 students and the school was at great risk of being closed. At that time the school was composed ethnically of African-American and Haitian students. In the last five years and primarily in the last three, the school's ethnic population has changed to 70% Hispanic. Most of these students are of Mexican immigrant families.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School resides in the city of Asbury Park, NJ. Asbury Park can be characterized as an inner city at the shore. This is a very unusual combination. The city has many aspects. There is an extremely poor section of the city where a great number of our students reside. Our free and reduced lunch percentage is 90%. The area by the beach, however, has been renovated and there are million dollar condominiums in Asbury in the section nearest the beach. There are also reputed to be 18 active gangs in Asbury. All of this in one square mile.

The changes over the last three years in the school have been a large increase in enrollment of primarily Hispanic students and a large amount of teacher turn over. Four of our homeroom teachers out of nine have come onto the faculty in the last three years. One of our unique challenges here at Mt. Carmel is that our homeroom teachers cannot speak fluent Spanish. We do have one staff member from Bolivia who translates for our staff at parent conferences and helps the students arriving directly from Mexico without the ability to speak English. We have not had professional development in the area of Hispanic culture and /or methods in teaching ESL students in an inclusive classroom for our teachers.

One of the best features of our school is the amount of technology and professional inservice in this area that we have acquired in the last three years and more. We have Smartboards, Apple TV's , 60 inch flat screen TV's in every room. We have rolling carts of laptops and iPads to be used by the students. We have had an Apple workshop on the use of the iPad as well as inservice in the classrooms on the integration of technology into the curriculum. We also have had workshops on the use of the Smartboard in the classrooms.

Another great feature of our school is the presence of two afterschool programs that include snack time, homework hour and enrichment classes. Our homework hour is staffed on the whole by our own day school teachers which actually gives the students an extra hour of school a day. Out of our 218 students, we have 114 students enrolled in the older grade five-day a week program and another 48 younger students involved in some way in our mini-stars three days a week. These programs enrich the students' knowledge and broaden their experience in areas not normally taught in the day portion of our school. Examples of enrichment classes offered are gardening, soccer, volleyball, dance choreography , knitting, sign language, brain games, mediation training, "Leap into Science" classes, CSI mystery classes, video production, Website 101, rock band formation, fashion design, etc. One of the most interesting offerings is the Bike Squad where the children actually learn how to fix bikes at the Second Life Bike Shop and after so many hours of volunteer service at the shop, they are allowed to choose a bike for themselves. The Second Life Bike Program was highlighted on one of the major news networks in our area. Our 21st Century Community Learning Program, one of our afterschool enrichment programs , was chosen by the US Dept. of Education as one of three programs to be highlighted on the Department's website.

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With 90% of our children on free or reduced lunch, the amount of tuition that is collected is minimal. Our parents try their best and are expected to contribute. We have a sliding scale and we take in approximately \$300,000.00 a year in tuition. This does not even equal half of our budget but we have many benefactors, Diocesan tuition assistance, fundraising efforts and actual assistance from the Dioceses. We have just hired this year an Advancement Director and are looking forward to good results from his efforts.

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.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School is a place of learning where staff and children are respected for their cultural diversity, accepted as individuals, and nurtured with loving care. We encourage our students to make decisions and accept responsibilities that will develop them into well-rounded, self-confident and responsible members of our Church and world community who are grounded in the values of Jesus Christ. While recognizing the individual differences within the learning process, we endeavor to teach academic skills, to inspire creativity, and to measure excellence through varied instruction and assessment. We are striving with the compassion of the Gospels to respect the varied cultures within and beyond the community.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School has, throughout its history, served the parish and the surrounding community. Grounded in faith - administration, faculty, families and students are nourished by one another in the strength of our source of life: Jesus Christ. Rooted in His teachings, we are committed to the values of his Church and its tradition.

As a total school community, with the support of the Pastor of the parish and the parents/guardians, we realize the importance of educating the child spiritually, academically, physically, and socially. As educators, we strive to provide a safe, stable, nurturing and healthy environment where growth in all areas is possible. While recognizing the individual differences within the learning process, we endeavor to teach the basic skills and inspire creativity and excellence through varied instruction and assessment.

Our goals are:

- * To develop within the child a personal faith relationship with God
- * To cultivate respect for all God's creation
- * To provide the highest quality education in a diverse educational environment that will empower our students to develop their God-given talents
- * To provide our students with experiences and activities that will enable them to assume a value-centered role in society

We strive to prepare each graduate of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School to meet the challenges of the 21st century in the following areas:

Vision in Faith

- * Has an appropriate knowledge of Scripture and the Catholic faith tradition
- * Continues to develop a relationship with God
- * Has a feeling for what is sacred
- * Active participant in liturgy/ liturgical celebrations

Values

- * Is a person of honesty and integrity
- * Shows respect for self and others
- * Demonstrates a compassionate attitude
- * Shows a reverence for the sacredness of the earth as our home
- * Accepts responsibility for actions

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Education

- * Possesses a desire to become a life-long learner
- * Willing to be challenged academically
- * Self-motivated in the educational area
- * Utilizes research skills
- * Is an active problem-solver and critical thinker

Member of a Global Community

- * Appreciative and respectful of cultural diversity
- * Thinks in global terms especially on issues of social justice
- * Treasures the foundation and beliefs of democracy

Technology

- * Develops 21st Century creative, collaborative media and information fluencies
- * Uses technology/digital media as an educational and communication tool and a media device
- * Displays an awareness of an ever-changing world
- * Applies inquiry skills in order to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

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

Notable achievements during the last three years are:

- * Being awarded a \$300,000.00 a year grant for five years for the 21st Century Community Learning Center
- * Hiring an Advancement Director
- * Our Principal was named Principal of the Year for NCEA Region 3 in 2013
- * Partnership with Friendship Train Foundation which has allowed us to initiate the 21stCCLC grant and maintain the younger students' afterschool program
- * Increase in enrollment of 49 students in two calendar years
- * Becoming more stable financially with little reliance on the parish for resources

Areas of improvement

- * Higher enrollment
- * The acquisition of updated technology equipment
- * Financial improvement resulting in the lack of parish subsidy

Future areas of improvement

- * Increase in standardized testing scores
- * Technology enhanced learning resulting in greater academic challenges for gifted students
- * Greater development of advancement office and achievement
- * Improved professional development and self-evaluation of the school board with limited jurisdiction
- * Certification in catechesis for all teachers
- * Increase in parental involvement both in spiritual and academic areas
- * Research and adoption of a digital system for tracking math skills
- * Develop a formal process for planning and evaluating professional development program

Additional Information

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

It is exciting for us here at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School to be on more secure ground for maintaining our school into the future. Through our development office, one of our future goals is to establish an endowment fund for our school.