Executive Summary

Saint Veronica School

Diocese of Trenton

Sr. Cherree Ann Power
4219 US Highway 9
Howell, NJ 07731-3378
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School's Purpose</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Information</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

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

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

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

St. Veronica School located in Howell Township, New Jersey was founded and opened in 1965 as a parish school. The Sisters of the Resurrection along with a dedicated lay faculty and staff serve the school. The school building is comprised of two sections, the first being completed in 1965 and the newer wing in 1991. Together the sections have an enrollment capacity of roughly 600. The physical environment supports a full service kitchen, cafeteria, two science labs, a computer lab, library, full size Pre-K program along with dedicated Spanish, music and art rooms. The facility also has a full size gymnasium with a large stage that incorporates sound and lighting systems for performing arts programs.

The racial, ethnic, and economic demographics of the school body is comparable to that of the surrounding communities and parishes with the largest percentage of students being Caucasian and Roman Catholic.

The school administration and staff is comprised of the following full time employees: principal, guidance counselor, two secretaries, nurse, eleven teachers and two teacher assistants. There are five part time teachers. The pastor is very involved in and dedicated to the school's mission.

Catholic Identity is the essence of the school with Catholic social teaching integrated throughout the curriculum. The school environment is best described as faith filled and nurturing. Striving for academic excellence is evident in all aspects of the curriculum with students responding with enthusiasm and hard work. Students are engaged as the faculty diligently works to provide differentiated instruction to meet their individual needs. Students experience a strong faith life which includes service to others and ceremony and traditions.

Curriculum objectives, scope, and sequence are achieved by incorporating various instructional approaches. Teachers use a variety of assessments including but not limited to projects, paper and pencil tests, portfolios, presentations, problem solving, peer review, and conferencing. Technology and media are frequently used, including but not limited to SMARTboards, iPads, Surface RTs, ELMO, and various educational websites.

The administration and faculty work together to create individual personal improvement plans. These plans are used in conjunction with teacher observations and evaluations. Several opportunities for spiritual and professional development are afforded the faculty with both on and off site offerings. The administration and faculty also hold membership in many professional organizations.

Educational policy is established by the superintendent and advisors of the Diocese of Trenton. The pastor is responsible for ensuring that the policy is put into effect. A School Board, which meets monthly, acts as an advisory group to both the pastor and principal. This board is comprised of seven standing committees. Members serve a three year term. A new board member is given a copy of the school's mission and philosophy along with short and long range goals. Board members attend both Parish and Diocesan training. Each year, the board meets to assess the needs of the school and reviews the Statement of Activities and Financial Reports. Based on their findings, the board makes recommendations for capital expenditures, salaries, tuition, and expense opportunities. Every three to four years, the Diocese conducts an audit of parish and school finances.
There was a time when our maximum class size was 35 students in a class. Like many schools in our area, both private and public, we have had to make changes. Although two years ago we did have a large number of students leave at the end of the school year, it is not necessarily that people are leaving our school, but we graduate large 8th grade classes and do not have large Kindergarten classes to replace them. Full day Kindergarten and Pre-School programs in the public schools have impacted our enrollment a great deal. Low enrollment is not only an issue here at St. Veronica School. Currently our enrollment is 188. In neighboring towns teachers have been let go because there is too low of an enrollment in the Kindergarten. This is a demographic problem; there are fewer school age children in our neighborhoods and this is true in Howell Township as well. For nearly two years, the Howell Township Board of Education and the Administrative team have been working to combine their goal of providing students with the best education possible and a balancing of the different school populations. With one of the Howell Middle Schools closing, due to low enrollment, the Board of Education recently approved a motion to have the administration create a plan for restructuring the Howell public schools by September 2015. Low enrollment has been a problem for us at St. Veronica.

Our school continues to thrive academically. We are proud to say that our Middle School students have scored in the top 20th percentile on the Terra Nova tests. Our Terra Nova scores are high; our students continue to compete in academic competitions and do well in them.

We ensure the success for students who struggle to learn through differentiated instruction, various services through MOESC, including Supplementary Education teachers, Compensatory Education teachers and instructional aides; a Resource Room in Language Arts for grades 3 and 4; adherence to student service plans (ISP); and the use of technological devices.

Academically advanced students are challenged and their learning abilities are enhanced through differentiated instruction; technology integrated in every class; academic teams and groups (Academic Team, Math Team, Goetz Bowl, Donovan Catholic Scholastic Olympics, St. Rose Bowl, etc.); Johns Hopkins Program; Middle school-accelerated program (Math).
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.

In the United States Council of Catholic Bishop's document, Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium, we read, "Young people are a valued treasure and the future leaders of our Church." Therefore, we at St. Veronica School are committed to promoting and sustaining a strong Catholic Identity as we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is integrated into every aspect of our life. We also recognize our responsibility to offer a rigorous academic Catholic education, and ensure that our educational programs will excel academically and exceed the acceptable standards of quality, which encourages and challenges all students to reach their academic potential. We will develop leaders, scholars, and athletes who will champion our Catholic faith through community service and model their lives on the Gospel and Catholic doctrine. Through our traditions, we commit ourselves to the principles of Catholic social teaching.

Our Mission Statement reads:
St. Veronica School provides academic excellence in a safe, loving Catholic community rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We foster reverence, respect and responsibility and encourage students to become lifelong learners who are confident, knowledgeable, and caring citizens.

As a school community we believe:
-We believe that St. Veronica School has as its foundation the gospel message lived out in service. The education provided for our students is one which integrates the principles of justice, peace, and respect for all people and reverence for the earth. It is our belief that these values will assist in developing socially conscious young women and men.
-We strive to develop a community which is loving, committed, and alive in faith.
-We cultivate a community where everyone experiences the very essence of our faith - that all are created in the image and likeness of God.
-We are called to proclaim the Gospel, and seek to integrate the message of Jesus within our school family.
-We proclaim and shout the Good News, "God loves me!"
-We nurture within our students a deeper commitment to the service of God, one another, the community and the Church.
-We create a learning experience that is academically appropriate and solidly based on practices promoted by the Diocese of Trenton and in accordance with NJ Core Curriculum and Content Standards.
-We incorporate scientific reasoning, critical thinking skills and advanced technology so that students will meet with success in this global world.
-We sharpen learning through active engagement in dance, music, band, theater and visual arts, and foster meaningful communication in a foreign language.
-We offer a well-defined Health and Physical Education program in order to promote personal fitness that will lead to a healthy lifestyle.
-We promote participation in the athletic program in order to develop lifelong skills and positive values.
-We collaborate with parents, the primary educators of their children, to assist them in the education and the development of faith-filled and socially conscious young Catholic leaders.
-We involve parents and members of our community to advance the mission of our school. Together we make decisions that actively strengthen the long-term viability of St. Veronica School.

Saint Veronica School is a community of faith which is loving, conscious, and active. Called to proclaim the Gospel, we seek to integrate the...
message of Jesus within our school family and work to make it a better known, understood, and lived reality. This is reflected in our Mission Statement:

St. Veronica School provides academic excellence in a safe, loving Catholic community rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We foster reverence, respect and responsibility and encourage students to become lifelong learners who are confident, knowledgeable and caring citizens.

Realizing God's love for each of us, we treasure that gift in one another and seek to live the motto of our Sisters of the Resurrection, "With Charity and Truth".

Understanding that the experience of Christian community leads naturally to service we continue to strengthen and build a vibrant community so that through this experience we can nurture within our students a deeper commitment to the service of God, one another, and the Church. We, at Saint Veronica School, strive to instill in our students, commitment to Christian values in an environment that stimulates their physical, social, academic, moral, and spiritual growth. Our goal is to educate the whole child, taking into account all areas of development. We believe that every person is unique and special in the eyes of God. Our curriculum encourages a spirit of curiosity and acquisition of knowledge. It works to cultivate individuality and the formation of meaningful Christian values. Working to develop a love for learning within our students, we also try to foster in them a sense of creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making skills.

In addition to achieving academic excellence, we embrace our school motto, "Reverence, Respect, and Responsibility". It is our aim to instill in our students a desire to be more loving, responsible Christians. Our students' personal relationships with Jesus are strengthened daily when, as a school community, we unite in a spirit of prayerful reflection and call to mind His presence in our lives. Participation in various liturgical and communal celebrations also helps to enhance the faith life of our students.

As educators, we have a specific responsibility to encourage our students to achieve their maximum potential. We do this in sequential stages, utilizing various techniques to enhance the learning process. We educate our students by building on their prior knowledge and by helping to broaden their ability to think critically, to express ideas, to analyze problems, and to make intellectual decisions. We assess their progress in a variety of ways until mastery of the required skills is achieved. Having accomplished these goals, our students then meet with ongoing success and advance to higher levels of learning. We offer further services for those students needing additional individualized instruction in a specific area.

In a Christian atmosphere conducive to the growth of the whole child, we strive to help our students develop a sense of self-worth and accountability by encouraging them to know, use, and discover their own particular gifts and talents. Striving to uphold the individual as a gift from God, we provide opportunities whereby our students develop an awareness and acceptance of themselves and others, so that they are able to make responsible choices and be accountable for them. We also strive to instill self-discipline in our students through an assertive discipline program, where they are rewarded for positive behavior and encouraged to work to the best of their ability. Ultimately, our goal is to focus on the gifts of our students and help them to become more responsible, loving, Christian individuals.
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.

We have had a number of notable achievements in the past three years. Our teachers have focused on a more rigorous instruction, which is evident in the data provided. They are committed to engaging in more researched based strategies and techniques to promote critical thinking skills, problem solving techniques, thereby providing academic excellence. We have seen results in our Terra Nova testing. Looking at the scoring results, for the area including ABOVE the expected levels of performance, we used the criteria of 95 percentile or better. In most areas of above average performance, we far exceeded the local and national percentiles.

- 2012: Grade 3 Reading and Social Studies; Grade 5 Science; Grade 6 Reading and Language; Grade 7 Reading, Language, and Math
- 2013: Grade 2 Math; Grade 8 Math, Reading, Language, and Science
- 2014: Grade 2 Math and Social Studies; Grade 3 Math, Language, Science, and Social Studies; Grade 6 Science; Grade 8 Reading and Social Studies

We were able to locate a consistent or above-average performance in a number of areas. We based this positive trend on a trend that continued to increase between 2012-2014.

- Grade 2: Reading (82/82/91); Math (84/92/100); Science (60/60/90); Social Studies (75/82/100)
- Grade 3: Science (89/91/100)
- Grade 6: Science (91/92/100)
- Grade 8: Social Studies (78/90/96)

We looked at our results over the last three years and targeted the following areas as being points of overall HIGH performance, with scores between 90-100.

- In 2012 in four to five grade levels we exceeded high performance in Reading and Language.
- In 2013 in more than three grade levels, we exceeded high performance in Reading and Science.
- In 2014 in more than five grade levels, we exceeded high performance in Reading, Language, and Social Studies.

Our primary focus is student achievement.

Looking at the scoring results, for the area including BELOW the expected levels of performance, we used the criteria of 60 percentile or below. In most areas of below average performance, we far exceeded the local and national percentiles.

- 2012: Grade 2 Science; Grade 4 Science
- 2013: Grade 2 Science; Grade 4 Reading and Math; Grade 5 Language
- 2014: Grade 4 Science

We were able to locate a consistent or decreased performance in a number of areas. We based this negative trend on a trend that continued to decrease between 2012-2014. And while it was a decrease in our school, we were still trending higher than local and national averages.

- Grade 3: Reading (96/87/82)
- Grade 5: Reading (94/90/85)

Aside from the academic, another area in which we would like to improve is our marketing efforts. This is crucial for the continued growth of
Our goals for the next three years include helping students to become proficient in comprehension in order to become purposeful, fluent and independent readers. They will also demonstrate proficiency in writing across the curriculum with clarity, organization and structure. Our goals also include equipping students with the skills and strategies that deepen their understanding of concepts and processes, to think critically in order to solve problems, analyze facts, make comparisons and draw references. All students will have access to and develop proficiency in utilizing technology to improve their academic achievement in all curriculum areas. We will also encourage and increase appreciation of the arts.

Our Marketing Team will collaborate with the P.T.A., School Board, Faculty and Staff to reawaken the importance of Catholic education and a sense of common ownership of the school. Increased efforts are being made to further develop relations within the parish community and to continue to establish partnership with local businesses. We will continue to foster a culture that encourages parents to recruit new members.
Additional Information

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

As professional colleagues, we strive for a deeper spirit of openness, support, and cooperation. Participating in PLCs, we willingly share ideas and materials with one another and enhance the learning process of our students. We realize that successful professional relationships are based upon integrity and mutual respect, contributing to the Christian atmosphere which prevails at Saint Veronica School. As a faculty, we assist our parents who are the primary educators of our students. We mutually support one another and together we share the responsibility of providing quality education. Open communication between parents and teachers is encouraged. Parent-Teacher conferences, Parent Access, progress reports, and report cards also help to keep parents informed of student performance. This communication plays an integral part in the spiritual and academic development of our students.

It is the duty of the pastor to see that the total educational program established by the superintendent and advisors, approved by the bishop, is put into effect. He delegates the leadership duties of the school to the principal, who coordinates the efforts of all personnel to achieve the harmony and cooperation necessary for the attainment of a positive learning environment. Adhering to Diocesan Guidelines, the administration and faculty work together to clarify, implement, or modify policies in order that academic excellence and commitment to Christian values may be realized within the school environment.

In 1998, St. Veronica School formed a School Advisory Council, which transitioned into a School Board in 2007. The School Board helps the principal and pastor manage ever-growing responsibilities. The purpose of the School Board is to offer the pastor and principal appropriate broad-based support for the parish school. A local School Board enables the parish community to commit to ownership of the parish school.

The cornerstone of our faculty is the presence of the Sisters of the Resurrection working together with our certified faculty. Our dedicated teachers and staff work with parents to provide quality Catholic education. Teachers are offered many opportunities to attend workshops and in-service seminars. The administration offers financial assistance for those pursuing graduate work in the field of education. These professional development experiences enable them to keep abreast of new educational trends.

Aligned with NJ State Standards, the Common Core Standards, as well as the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Elementary and Secondary Schools, our curriculum is clearly designed to achieve defined objectives based on skills and knowledge. Curriculum of all subject matter is presented in a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential manner. Skills are continuously reviewed and reinforced so as to insure student mastery on the basis of readiness and ability.

Our curriculum follows the guidelines established by the Diocese of Trenton and the State of New Jersey. It is reviewed and evaluated periodically to ensure that what is taught is accurate and relevant. Implementation of this curriculum involves the participation of the entire faculty so that it can effectively be incorporated into the classroom.