

PARISH SCHOOLS BEGIN THE JOURNEY

Catholic education in the DuBois area enjoys a long-standing tradition, dating back to the late 1800's when St. Catherine's Church opened its school on West Weber Avenue. Other local parishes, such as St. Joseph's on State Street in DuBois, St. Mary's in Reynoldsville, St. Francis in Clearfield, and SS. Cosmas & Damian in Punxsutawney also operated very successful parish schools. Currently, only St. Francis and SSCD, along with DuBois Central Catholic, continue to operate vibrant elementary schools. Thanks to bussing, some provided by the local school districts, others provided by DCC itself, students of all grade levels from a 20 mile radius and beyond can experience a Catholic education at DuBois Central Catholic.

For over a century, Catholic education in DuBois has continued to offer a person-centered educational experience based on the Gospel message. Currently, numerous second and third generation families have chosen Catholic education for their offspring, which is a testament to the trust families place in the value and purpose of Catholic education: *preparing youth in mind, body and spirit to recognize and develop their talents and then share those talents with the local community and beyond, as they take their place as future members of the Church and productive members of American Society.*

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## CATHOLIC EDUCATION BECOMES REGIONAL

In the Fall of 1961, the mission of Catholic education truly became regional as the doors of 'Central' on Hospital Avenue opened for the first time, becoming the first high school completed under Archbishop John Mark Gannon's master plan for regional high schools throughout the Erie Diocese. Such schools as Elk County, Kennedy, and Venango followed. Bishop Gannon, founder of the university in Erie that bears his name, pursued a vision that became a reality throughout Western Pennsylvania.

In the 1990's, a new chapter in the mission of Catholic education began to be written as the dream of bringing all levels of instruction under one roof became a reality with the *Building Our Future* Capital Campaign. This campaign resulted in the construction of the current one-story, four-wing educational complex housing pre-school through grade twelve. Located in Sandy Township, this new state-of-the-art facility opened its doors in the Fall of 2002. Interestingly, the blue water tower visible from the front of the old Central on Hospital Avenue is also visible from the back of the new Central on Central Christian Road.

Each day over 45 professional educators, employed by DuBois Central Catholic, work with area youth from various ethnic, social and religious backgrounds. Students and staff of all religious affiliations enter Central each day.

The school is governed by a Board of Pastors and subsidized by their parishes. These local parishes have a vested interest in this mission and are at the core of financial support: St. Mary's in Reynoldsville, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Sykesville, St. Bernard's in Falls Creek, St. Tobias in Brockway, and St. Catherine's, St. Joseph's, and St. Michael's in DuBois, along with Clearfield's St. Francis.

Thanks to the unwavering commitment of area pastors, generous benefactors, faithful alumni, local businesses, dedicated educators, supportive families, and cooperative students, *The Central Difference* lives on, poised to reach and challenge generations to come to *learn well, live well, and serve well.*

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DCC RECEIVES ACREDITATION BY THE MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

The DuBois Central Catholic Community, now in the second decade in its new educational facility, continues to experience exciting changes as it is awarded once again accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Daily bus service for students wanting to attend the Catholic school system has been expanded to include the areas of Brookville and Clarion. The Advanced Standing Program not only includes college-level courses taught during the school day but also after school hours and on the weekends at the newly-built branch campus of the Butler County Community College, located in Brockway, with several DCC teachers on their staff as well. The Dale Carnegie Course is an option for upper-level students who partner with students from the Brockway Area School District to avail themselves of this added educational opportunity. A PIAA approved co-op with Brockway football has benefited both schools.

Continuing to strengthen the curriculum both vertically and horizontally has resulted in improvements in math scores, one of DCC's key Middle States objectives. Likewise, the community outreach program has been improved through the creation of a structured Student Service Program that details both class and individual service hour goals, all documented and tracked by computer for each secondary student in grades 6 through 12. In addition, the elementary level has an established service component geared to the abilities of younger students in the school system. A defined, well-run Student Service Program system-wide has achieved another Middle States objectives.

In addition, a successful rotation series of courses for both juniors and seniors has been in operation for several years that strengthens the upper class curriculum offerings. For juniors, the rotations are nine weeks in length and include SAT Verbal Prep, SAT Math Prep, College/Career Choices, and Non-Coed Physical Education II. For seniors, the rotations are 12 weeks in length and include Societal Issues, Social Justice, and Contemporary Issues in Humanities.

Several new high school courses have been added: EMT Course for State Certification offered during the school day and Introduction to Engineering, along with AP certification for a number of other courses. Planning has been completed with the creation of DCC's own Robotics Team. Several teachers have been sanctioned to add AP to their advanced level courses.

A hands-on, day-long presentation from the Pittsburgh Science Center has been on a two-year rotation basis for many years, spearheaded by our science department; competing in the yearly PJAS (Pennsylvania Junior Academy of the Sciences) events has been a top priority of science teachers on the middle and high school levels, with our students competing at regionals and then many advancing to states over the recent years. Likewise, DCC's chapter of the Future Business Leaders of America qualifies students each year for both regional and state level competitions. Most recently, DCC's 6th Grade Religion Team placed first in regional competition, advancing to the diocesan level later in the school year.

Other notable successes since entering the new educational complex have included the completion of two soccer fields, a baseball field and a softball field. Communication between school and home has been enhanced further through the use of technology, most notably emails. Another successful Capital Campaign in 2008 has brought further financial stability to the entire school system. And the "Block Scheduling" format on the secondary level is celebrating its 17th consecutive year of educating students as it incorporates the audio, visual, and kinesthetic-tactile into the mix of classroom activities. For sure, the longer periods have enabled teachers to add both enrichment, variety and in-depth learning into each classroom experience.

Our *Tech 21 Initiative*, which began in the Fall of 2010 with only 9th graders required to have their own personal laptops for daily classroom instruction, has now been expanded to include all secondary students (*Grade 6 through Grade 12*) as they travel from class to class with their personally-owned laptop or notebook ready for teacher instruction.

Likewise, the use of iPads on the elementary level has been made possible through the purchase of several iPad carts that allow entire classrooms of students to have easy access to iPads for classroom instruction. In addition, iPads carts are also available for middle and high school instruction in both secondary wings. The fact that DCC's entire building is wireless has made the forward-thinking vision for technology in education a smooth transition.

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### **THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT**

The entire Catholic school system believes in the essential role that educational technology plays in preparing young people for work and citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. DCC's focus is to create and foster digital-age skills for both teaching and for learning since collaboration and interaction are two key abilities that students will need to understand and to master for the jobs of the future. Of course, the basic educational beliefs in teacher-student respect, teacher-student accountability, and Christian service remain strong as the Central community strives to *learn well, live well, and serve well*.

Always looking for not only new educational programs, but also novel ways of improving current ones, DCC this September embarked on its first-ever *all-day pre-school course*, entitled Kindergarten Prep. This curriculum expansion has answered the needs of many area students and their families by providing another layer of educational experiences to better prepare students for the ever-changing rigors of both kindergarten and first grade.

Without a doubt, DuBois Central Catholic has been blessed with a foundational history going back 125 + years. And DCC is definitely excited and ready to accept the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to serve as leaders in educating the youth of today, building on its strong tradition of faith and belief in the mission to help all students discover and develop their individual talents so they, too, can make their contributions.