

Delbarton School

Morristown, United States



On a 187-acre abbey campus outside Morristown, Benedictine monks still guide a rigorous, near-1,500-year-old liberal arts tradition.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	72/100
Academic outcomes	73/100
University placement	72/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	74/100
Facilities	74/100
Transparency	66/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

A **187-acre** abbey campus, Benedictine monks still active in school life, and a boys-only sixth-form-prep model give Delbarton a very specific identity. This is not a generic American private school with a chapel attached. It is a Catholic liberal-arts school for young men in grades 7-12, with **648** students, and it runs with the clarity and intensity that narrow mission schools often achieve. The academic set-up is strong by any standard: an **8:1** student-to-faculty ratio, average classes of **14**, 28 AP and Post-AP courses, and 75 faculty members holding advanced degrees. The school also states that 100% of graduates go on to college. Parents who want a school with a diffuse or negotiable culture should look elsewhere; Delbarton has a *defined moral and intellectual centre*, and that is one of its main strengths.

What puts it on a shortlist is the combination of rigour, scale and coherence. Many religious schools promise character and scholarship; fewer back that up with a campus of this size, serious course breadth, 75-plus student-run clubs, 15 visual art courses, 11 music and theatre ensembles, and 18 title-winning varsity sports. Delbarton has the infrastructure of a major independent school without the anonymity that often comes with size. It also draws widely, with boys coming from 120 towns across New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, and two-thirds arriving from public schools. That matters: this is not an enclave school serving one postcode or one social tribe. At an average annual day fee of ****\$51,500****, it sits in the expensive end of the US day-school market, but the offer is substantive rather than ornamental.

The right student for Delbarton is a boy who wants structure, high expectations and a school that takes adult formation seriously. He does not need to be Catholic — the school enrolls boys of all faiths and backgrounds — but he does need tolerance for a **strong institutional ethos** and for the language of duty, service and faith that runs through the place. Academically ambitious boys who thrive in discussion-heavy classes and can use close faculty attention well will do best here. So will students who want full participation: sport, arts, service and clubs are not decorative extras. Boys who want a looser, more permissive environment, co-education, or a school that treats religion as a faint background note will find Delbarton **too exacting** and **too deliberately shaped**. For the right family, that clarity is the point.

STRENGTHS

- Small-school scale: the student population is 648 across grades 7-12, with a student-teacher ratio of 7:1, supporting close faculty attention.
- Substantial financial aid commitment: Delbarton admissions is need blind and the school distributes over \$2.5 million in aid each year.
- Strong college outcomes are self-reported: 90% of alumni matriculate to colleges classified as Very Competitive or Most Competitive, per the school's own placement data.
- Spacious, purpose-built campus: the school sits on a 187-acre campus just outside historic Morristown, New Jersey, with a large dedicated fine-arts facility.
- Long institutional continuity: founded in 1939 and independently directed by the Benedictine monks of St. Mary's Abbey, giving it a long-established identity within Catholic secondary education.

TRADE-OFFS

- All-boys, grades 7-12 only: the school is an all-boys institution serving grades 7 through 12, ruling it out for families wanting a coeducational environment.
- Day school with no boarding option, so relocating international families must arrange separate local housing rather than campus residence.
- High tuition: annual tuition is \$48,725 for the 2025-26 school year, placing it among the pricier options in the region even before fees and extras.
- Significant, unresolved reputational exposure: in 2018 the school publicly acknowledged that at least 30 men had come forward with allegations that over three decades they had been victimized by 13 past or current priests and monks, and a New Jersey jury awarded \$5 million in damages to a Delbarton graduate who claimed a monk sexually assaulted him in a 2025 civil trial, with further litigation still pending.

ADMISSIONS

Primary entry points are 7th and 9th grade, with a limited number of transfer places in 8th, 10th and 11th grade subject to space; 12th-grade and mid-year entry are not offered. Applicants submit transcripts, standardized entrance testing (verbal, reading, mathematics, writing sample), teacher recommendations, and undergo a parent-and-student interview. Deadlines typically fall in late November/early December, with decisions following committee review. Financial aid is need-blind and assessed separately from admission. Given small annual intake and single-sex, Catholic character, fit and demonstrated character are emphasized alongside academic record.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (30)

SPORT: Morgan Pearson

DRAMA: Peter Dinklage, Christopher Durang, PES, Darryl M. Bell, Deep Katdare, Kary Antholis

LETTERS: Christopher Durang

POLITICS: Mike Ferguson, Bernard Kenny, Michael Patrick Carroll

SCIENCE: Robert Tappan Morris, William J. Antholis

BUSINESS: Kary Antholis, Stephen Bienko, Steve Conine

WTS RATING 

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