



SAINT THOMAS MORE
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

2022 - 2023 **Annual Report**

WELCOMING HEARTS. INSPIRING MINDS. IGNITING EXCELLENCE.



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Thomas More Catholic School is to be a vibrant, inclusive, student-centered community built on shared values, service, and academic excellence rooted in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

St. Thomas More Catholic School prepares students to be leaders in an ever-changing world through an interdisciplinary, literacy based education built upon three pillars:

SHARED VALUES

SERVICE

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Our School offers a Jesuit education to all students characterized by *cura personalis*, a personalized focus on the whole person: mind, spirit and body.

By their graduation, our graduates exhibit the hallmarks of a Jesuit education: open to growth, committed to excellence, loving, religious, and committed to doing justice by standing with and for others.



We support, we teach, but most of all
we inspire all children to be their best in all they do.



Principal's Perspective on 2022-2023



Dear St. Thomas More Families, Community Members, and Friends:

As the 2022-23 school year comes to a close, we have much to celebrate and be thankful for. This year marked our sixth consecutive year of enrollment growth in our school as well as growth in our larger parish community. We not only welcomed many new students and families to STM, but we also celebrated the opening of a new church gathering space as well as St. Ignatius Hall located in the undercroft of our church. Our church is the heart of our community and it is the place that our students gather each week to celebrate Mass with Father RJ or Father Peter as they engage our students in song, prayer, and reflection about what God calls each of them to be.

We are truly blessed with amazing students at St. Thomas More! The accreditation team that visited our school this past fall was highly complimentary of what they saw in our students. Archbishop Hebda was also very complimentary of the caliber of our students after he presided at Mass and visited with students in our school in late November. Our students are so very welcoming, kind, inclusive, thoughtful, curious, and intelligent. I am reminded every day about the awesome nature and many gifts of our students as they visit my office to chat and as I see how they interact and treat one another as well as our faculty and staff in the classroom, dining room, playground and in school activities.

It is truly a blessing for our faculty and staff to work with your children each day and watch them grow and become their awesome selves. You have heard me say

many times that I believe we have an outstanding faculty and staff. We are blessed with the most amazing Christ-centered and talented educators who are committed to our school and students. This year our faculty and staff have often spoken about what a special thing we have going at St. Thomas More. As someone who has served Catholic schools for thirty years, I can attest to what a special thing I believe we have going at our school, and I hope that you agree!

Thank you for sharing your most precious gift(s)-your children with us each day! We can't do what we do each day without you-our fabulous partners who are the first and primary teachers of your children. For this we are truly blessed! Our students truly embody the Jesuit "Grad at Grad Standards" that include: loving, open to growth, committed to excellence, religious, and committed to becoming young men and women who stand with and for others, particularly the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed.

Please take some time to review this year's Annual Report. We've had a very positive and successful year in so many different ways-both large and small and we have much to be grateful for. We also have much to look forward to during the 2023-24 school year.

With Deep Gratitude,

Pat Lofton, Ed.S.
Principal

ACCREDITATION REPORT

NOVEMBER 2022

STUDENT CENTERED



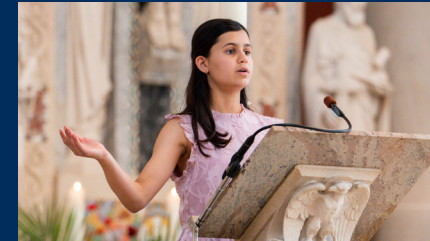
Identified as a student centered, inclusive community where parents, teachers and students feel a deep sense of belonging. Students are known by their name and their unique gifts are nourished.

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP



Teachers and staff are committed to fostering the full potential of each student. Pat Lofton was identified by the St. Thomas More Community as a strong, visionary leader who is known to be passionate, supportive, resourceful, fun, and faith-focused.

JESUIT VALUES



The climate of the school community reflects St. Thomas More's mission, philosophy, and Jesuit values. St. Thomas More excels at identifying and meeting the needs of their diverse learners.

AREAS OF GROWTH

CURRICULUM

Update written curriculum review process and document how assessment results affect instruction.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Review security procedures for locking classroom doors and securing custodial closets.

STAFF EVALUATION

Develop and implement a process for evaluating all employees, including the principal. Continue to improve compensation for staff.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Review school strategic plan and revise the scope of the plan, timeline of action steps, and principal responsibilities.

The areas of growth identified by the team were also identified as areas of growth by our faculty, staff, and school advisory committee, and strategic goals had been developed to address these.

The findings of the onsite team were sent on the MNSAA Board of Directors that recommended the continued accreditation of St. Thomas More through June 30, 2029.





Academic Year in Review 2022 - 2023

CULTURAL COMPETENCY & ANTIRACISM TRAINING

St. Thomas More has a visible commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive, and innovative learning environment for all students through our classrooms, student behavior policies and practices, implementation of classroom technology and application of culturally sustaining practices.

This school year, over half of our K-8 faculty participated in an eight month class entitled Antiracism in the Classroom: Beyond White Privilege that was facilitated by the Minnesota Writing Project at the University of Minnesota. This year-long course allowed faculty members to develop their antiracist pedagogy and better understand themselves as racial beings through curated reading, writing, and discussion. The ultimate goal of our shared work is to move beyond deadlocked conversations and toward more productive antiracist pedagogies. The rest of our faculty will participate in this class in the 2023-24 school year.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

This year St. Thomas More began its second year of its relationship with CLIMB Theater. CLIMB'S mission is to inspire and propel people toward actions that benefit themselves, each other, and their community through plays, classes, and other collaborative works.

CLIMB Theater visited individual classrooms this school year to work with students on building accountability, resiliency, empathy, advocacy and self-control. Students were engaged and motivated to become the best version of themselves through their participation in this year-long residency.

IMPROVING OUR LUNCH PROGRAM

We continued to have Agra Culture & Davanni's Pizza serve as our school's lunch providers. The lunch provided by Agra Culture was both fresh and healthy and consumed by many students each day. Plus, Davanni's pizza on Wednesdays is a huge hit with our students.

This year, the State of Minnesota passed legislation providing both free breakfast and lunch to all K-12 students in the state of Minnesota beginning July 1, 2023. Our School Advisory Committee has been discussing this new program and unanimously recommended that we continue our relationship with Agra Culture and Davannis during the upcoming 2023-24 school year so that our school can better understand the nuances of the new "free" program to make sure that it aligns with our school goals. In addition, there are many requirements for our participation in the program and the application process takes 6-9 months.

More details will be forthcoming over the course of the upcoming academic year.

GROVES ACADEMY - BELIEVE & READ PROGRAM

This year marks the fourth year of our partnership with Groves Academy and the Believe and Read program. As you know from previous correspondence, we have chosen to partner with Groves Academy because they have a long and successful history of working with children around the Twin Cities who have reading disabilities, ADHD, and executive functioning challenges. Through a grant we received from the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE), our K-3 teachers attended professional development throughout the year and received coaching from Carol Kimlinger, our school's Coordinator of Student Support Services who also serves as our in-house literacy coach. Through Carol's work and that of our primary teachers, we are able to identify those students who have challenges with reading fluency in grades K-3 and determine the best course of intervention to help every student find success and work up to their potential.

Through the Believe & Read program, as well as the one on one support provided by Carol Kimlinger, our school assisted our youngest students in grades K-3 in their reading fluency so that every student in grades K-3 made positive improvement in reading fluency over the course of the 2022-23 school year. STM is blessed with outstanding teachers who know how to effectively teach K-8 students how to read, write, and use both oral and written language effectively so they are prepared for the rigors of high school.

MORE MILESTONES FROM THE ACADEMIC YEAR:

- New classroom furniture in kindergarten and grades 5-8
- Addition of new school counselor, Teisha Devine
- Success in the pool, on the field and stage as well as in the classroom
- New after school programs—Girls Who Code & Hovland Conservatory After School Violin Program
- Matilda Musical—Cast & Crew of 90+ students, countless parent volunteers!
- Enrollment reached 316 students in preschool through grade 8!
- 28 students received \$1,000 scholarships from the Aim Higher Foundation making Catholic School more affordable for families with demonstrated financial need.



School Finances 2022 - 2023

St. Thomas More is grateful for the generosity of our parish, parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends that help ensure the financial health of our parish school. The sharing of time, talent, and treasure helps to advance the mission and ministry of our school, and your financial generosity directly impacts students in our school by keeping tuition affordable, attracting and retaining the most highly qualified faculty and staff, providing the necessary resources to provide the highest academic and faith-centered learning environment for our students, and making this outstanding education available to anyone who desires it regardless of financial position. Below you will find a brief summary of some of our different very successful fundraising initiatives from the 2022-23 academic year:

FALL RAFFLE

This year's fall raffle raised over \$50,000, and these funds help offset operating expenses.

SCHOOL AUCTION

This year's auction grossed over \$145,000! Over \$60K was raised to help cover part of the cost of replacing the sound, projection, and lighting system in our beautiful auditorium.

CSCOE GRANT

STM received a \$15,000 grant from the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence that is being used to create a new chapel space in our school, creating a space where students can gather for prayer, meditation, and yoga calm that is offered to all students in K-8.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP & ANNUAL FUND

The Parent Partnership Program was launched during the 2017-18 academic year. This program invites current St. Thomas More parents to make a tax deductible donation to help bridge the gap between tuition paid and the actual cost of educating each student at our school. The Annual Fund program invites alumni parents, grandparents, parishioners and other supporters of the school to help bridge that same gap. The current gap is approximately \$2000 per student. This year we secured just over \$11,620 in Parent Partnership gifts and over \$40,546 in Annual Fund gifts. Donations to the Parent Partnership and Annual Fund help our school achieve and maintain a balanced operating budget, retain highly qualified teachers and outstanding programs at our school, as well as help support financial assistance for families who could not otherwise afford to attend our school. We would love to see more families participate in this very important giving program.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The School Advisory Committee (SAC) serves as an advisory body to the principal and pastor. This advisory body's primary responsibilities include: 1) Supporting the principal and pastor in obtaining the time, talent, and treasure necessary for the school's long-term viability; 2) Developing and overseeing the implementation of a school strategic plan with the school administration; and 3) Recommending policies and practices that are consistent with the school's mission. The SAC is not involved directly in school operations, faculty and staff employment, or curriculum and assessment decisions.

Our school was the beneficiary of the gifts and talents of this year's SAC that was chaired by parent, Steve Stenzel and members, Melissa Ryberg, immediate past chair, Patrick Felicetta, President of DeLaSalle High School; Ken Goodpaster, former STM trustee; alumni parent and parishioner, Katherine Gernes and current parents, Patty Houser, Anton Jones, Jessie Tierney, Kelly Schwab, and Ellison Yahner.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE MORE

Over the course of this past school year, we have received unsolicited donations -both large and small- from people who simply love our school and students. Donations to our school qualify as charitable deductions for federal tax purposes and may help reduce your tax liability. You are encouraged to check with your financial advisor regarding any questions you might have. With this being said...

- Monetary gifts of any size can be made at any time. Our school accepts cash, checks, and credit/debit card payments. Gifts can be made in the school office or on our school's website.
- St. Thomas More also accepts gifts of securities, stocks, and bonds. Please contact Elizabeth Thimmesh in our school office to find out how to initiate such a transfer.
- Many corporations will match their employees' gifts to nonprofit organizations, thus increasing the overall gift. You are encouraged to contact your employer to see if your company has a matching gift program.
- Including St. Thomas More Catholic School in your estate planning is a simple way to ensure your giving will continue for future generations. You may contact Elizabeth Thimmesh in our office regarding this.



STRATEGIC GOALS 2023-2024

- Implement FACTS Student Information (SIS) & Tuition & Fee Collection Systems
- Continue teacher professional development focused on Responsive Classroom, Top 20, and Cultural Competency
- Develop more retreat opportunities for students
- Review social studies curriculum
- Identify new instrumental music offerings for STM students
- Study State of Minnesota new free breakfast and lunch program to determine feasibility at STM
- Develop Master Plan for our School's Campus
- Implement Composting Program

SCHOOL CHANGES 2023-2024

- Creation of school chapel on second floor for students and staff
- Replacement of all entry doors located on the rear of school building
- New desks and chairs for grades 1-4 classrooms
- Culling of library collection and reorganization of our library media center
- New sound & projection system in auditorium
- Hiring of new assistant principal



Children do not
simply attend
Saint Thomas More
Catholic School
they belong.



Saint Thomas More
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

The Jesuit Parish of the Twins Cities

OUR PARISH

St. Thomas More Catholic School is a ministry of the Community of St. Thomas More. Our school and parish have been administered by the Society of Jesus (The Jesuits) since 1991. Our Jesuit identity both guides and defines who we are and what we do each day.

Our parish school has a long and proud history dating back to St. Luke's School founded in 1904, and Immaculate Heart of Mary founded in 1952. Over the years we have been known by different names, but the spirit of our school and community has remained the same. We have a rich tradition of offering a transformative Catholic education in the heart of Saint Paul.

We have flourished from the roots of our founding schools, and we have been blessed by the pastoral leadership of the Jesuits for over 30 years. The visionary leadership and joy of our pastor, Father R.J. Fichtinger, S.J. and our new associate pastor, Father Peter Etzel, S.J. this past year have helped us continue to grow during the past year.

The parish has accomplished so much in the past year—from transitioning to a new pastor, hiring a director of

operations and a youth faith formation director, to using the new gathering space and St. Ignatius Hall for parish events and visiting groups. This has been an exciting year of positive energy and growth.

Our parish hosted three very successful Lenten Fish Frys this spring in our school's cafeteria. Fish Frys are a wonderful representation of our school and church communities coming together in shared joy for our parish.

Fr. R.J. and the entire parish staff continue to find ways to serve our school community and bring Jesuit values into each day. Our students attend weekly Mass and have opportunities to experience new forms of prayer, including Adoration. The hiring of a youth faith formation director has brought several exciting, new opportunities for our students to grow in their faith—both in and out of school.

To learn more about our parish, please visit their website: www.morecommunity.org





Thank You!

1065 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105
651.224.4836

info@morecommunity.org



SAINTTHOMASMORE.ORG