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SAINT THOMAS MORE
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

2024-2025

Annual Report



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Saint 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

Saint 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 2024-2025



Dear Saint Thomas More Families, Community Members, and Friends:

“St. Thomas More is a very special place.” I often hear this phrase from parents and our graduates as they leave our halls and become the person God wants them to be. One of my greatest honors is to accompany your family and witness how your children grow from year to year and embody what it means to be a Summit Saint. Each morning our school day begins with prayer, pledge, and the student honor code. Students are asked to recite our honor code that outlines who they are called to be and do each day.

I am always amazed as I watch students stop outside the school office or in our hallways to participate in morning announcements. This behavior doesn’t happen by accident—it happens because students truly love being part of our school community. They are the ultimate beneficiary of all that happens in our school.

We had another very positive and successful year. Enrollment increased slightly with 337 students in preschool through eighth grade. Our preschool program had a record number of students while our K-8 program saw a slight decline due to a small kindergarten class. As we look ahead to the 2025-26 school year, we have a very large incoming kindergarten class and a larger number of transfer students. As such, we anticipate that our overall enrollment will increase slightly during the 2025-26 school year.

Thank you for continuing to be such amazing ambassadors for our school. Often when I meet with prospective families and ask them how they learned about us, they frequently say a current

family told them how much they love STM. During the past school year, we successfully achieved several strategic goals that were outlined in the strategic plan we implemented following our accreditation visit in the fall of 2023. In addition, there were additional projects that we were able to accomplish this past year. These successes are outlined in this Annual Report.

Thank you for sharing your children with us. Thank you for being awesome parents and outstanding partners with our dedicated and talented faculty and staff. We can’t do our job of forming and transforming your children’s hearts and minds without all of you and the heavy lifting you do each day as parents.

I often say to current and prospective families that we have a rich history and a promising future in the heart of Saint Paul because of the tremendous community that exists at St. Thomas More. Please take some time to review this year’s Annual Report. We had another blessed and successful year in so many wonderful ways, and we have much to look forward to during the 2025-26 school year.

With Deep Gratitude,

Pat Lofton



ACCREDITATION UPDATE

2024-2025

During the 2024-25 school year, St Thomas More Catholic School sought accreditation by MNSAA for its preschool program. Our preschool director, Barb Larkin successfully navigated the self study process and hosted an on-site visit with two representatives from MNSAA. We are pleased that our preschool program is now accredited by MNSAA just like our K-8 program. Our preschool had previously been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and we decided it would be simpler if our entire community was accredited by one entity.





Academic Year in Review
2024-2025

50%
of graduates receive high school scholarship offers

90%
of graduates test into honors level courses in high school

95%
parent participation in parent-teacher conferences

30%
of students are non-catholic

NWEA MAPS GROWTH TESTING

Our school administers the NWEA Maps Growth tests in math, reading, and language in the fall and spring to all students in grades 2-8. Test results and a letter were sent to parents at the end of the school year.

Many students met or exceeded their projected growth targets, while others showed smaller gains. No matter where a student falls, our teachers are committed to using assessment data to set focused learning goals in math, reading, and language. To support this work, we've introduced IXL, a personalized learning platform that allows students to practice targeted skills based on their individual needs. By using fall NWEA scores, teachers create customized plans that focus on areas where growth is needed most. Along with standardized tests, our teachers rely on formative and summative assessments to gain a complete picture of student learning. Their dedication ensures every child continues to grow and prepare for future success including the challenges of high school and beyond.



**BELIEVE
AND READ**

**GROVES ACADEMY:
BELIEVE AND READ PROGRAM**

Through the Believe and Read program, as well as the one-on-one support provided by Carol Kimlinger, our Coordinator of Student Support Services, we assisted students in grades K-3 in their reading fluency so that every student made improvement in reading fluency over the 2024-25 school year.

Some of the successes from this past year include:

- 100% of kindergartners improved their Letter Naming Fluency and Letter Sound Fluency.
- 47% of students in grades 1-3 at high risk for reading fluency in the fall were no longer at high risk in the spring.
- 86% of 2nd graders and 76% of 3rd grade students are reading fluently at or above grade level this spring

**OUR LITTLEST LEARNERS:
STM PRESCHOOL REVIEW**

Saint Thomas More Preschool had an amazing year with 64 students enrolled in 2024-2025—our largest group yet! This growth expanded our footprint to five classrooms on the lower level, the most in our 11-year history.

We were proud to graduate 40 students from the More's 4s program, and even more excited that 25 of those children will continue with us for kindergarten this fall. Looking ahead, the 2025-2026 school year is off to an incredible start. We already have 31 preschoolers enrolled—the most ever—and our More's 4s class is full!

We are grateful to retain all of our experienced lead teachers, ensuring consistency and care for our students. Their dedication and creativity make STM Preschool a special place.

Words cannot express our gratitude to our families. Thank you for sharing your children with us each day—we are honored to be part of their early learning journey!





Notable Achievements THIS YEAR

CURRICULUM UPDATES

Implemented new social studies curriculum resources after a comprehensive review and introduced the Fly Five social emotional learning curriculum in kindergarten–eighth grade.

SENSE OF WELCOME

Developed materials to support new families and revamped our fall parent nights to meet the developmental needs of today’s students.

ADULT SUPPORT

Offered parent education and formation centered around Jonathan Haidt’s book, *The Anxious Generation*, and held our faculty and staff retreats focused on the Year of Hope.

MASTER PLAN

Engaged in a comprehensive master planning process for both our parish and school with OPN Architects.



AUDITORIUM IMPROVEMENTS

We have upgraded the sound system and lighting equipment in our school’s auditorium. These upgrades significantly enhance the experience for our student performers and audiences, and creates a more professional and modern control system.

DIGITAL DISPLAYS

We installed new digital signage in the cafeteria and school hallways that display real-time school news, announcements, updates, and event information. These displays offer our community more ways to celebrate our achievements and showcase our school through photos and info graphics.

CAMERAS AND BUZZER SYSTEM

We made enhancements to our school security by installing a new camera and a buzzer system on the three primary entrances to our school building. These upgrades ensure our staff know who is gaining access to our buildings and creates a better experience for our visitors.




**Welcoming hearts.
Inspiring minds.**
*Igniting
excellence.*

MORE MILESTONES

- Completed work on the school chapel with the installation of stained glass window inserts
- Led professional learning communities on neurodiversity, Year of Hope, anti-racist pedagogy, and Responsive Classroom
- Implemented IXL in grades K–8 to improve NWEA Maps Growth test scores.
- PreK–8 teachers received professional development to effectively work with students experiencing mental health challenges and trauma
- Enrollment reached 337 students in preschool through grade 8!
- Beauty and the Beast—Cast and Crew of 150+ students. The show was simply amazing!
- Our seventh grade girl’s volleyball team went undefeated and won the CAA championship.
- Eighth Grader Morgan Houser earned a silver medal at National History Day in Washington, D.C. Bravo, Morgan!



School Finances
2024-2025

Saint Thomas More is grateful for the generosity of our parish, parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends that ensure our financial health. Your sharing of time, talent, and treasure helps to advance our mission and ministry. Your financial generosity directly impacts our families and students by helping to keep tuition affordable, attracting and retaining highly qualified faculty and staff, providing necessary resources to offer the highest academic and faith-centered learning environment for our students, and making our education available to anyone who desires it regardless of financial position. Below you will find a summary of our fundraising and school initiatives from the 2024-25 academic year:

SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The School Advisory Committee (SAC) serves as an advisory body to the principal and pastor. Their responsibilities include: 1) Supporting the administration in obtaining necessary staff and assets for the school's long-term viability; 2) Support the implementation of a school strategic plan; and 3) Recommend 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 SAC was chaired by parent, Brian Bergson and members, Patrick Felicetta, President DeLaSalle High School; Ken Goodpaster, former STM trustee; and alumni parent and parishioner, Katherine Gernes and current parents, Julie Blaskowski, Eric Branson, Katie Campbell, Colby Dixon, Patty Houser, and Jill Peterson.

AIM HIGHER & CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

The Aim Higher Foundation and the Catholic Community Foundation helps children access the proven benefits of a Catholic education by making tuition more affordable at K-8 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis by providing \$1,000 scholarships to children for families with demonstrated financial need. This year, 23 students at Saint Thomas More received an Aim Higher Scholarship and 6 students received a scholarship administered through the Catholic Community Foundation!



NEW GYM FLOOR AND MATTING

Thanks to the generosity of our community at this spring's Blue & Gold Auction, our school gymnasium will be receiving a much needed face lift! The updates will include a beautifully refinished floor showcasing our school colors and logos and new matting along the perimeter to replace the old mats that are past their life. We are most grateful for STM parent Megan Junius and her creative team at Eight Moon for the floor and mat designs they developed for this space used by so many people in our community. Work on project will occur during the summer of 2025.



BLUE & GOLD AUCTION

Igniting Hope, Inspiring Futures

SCHOOL AUCTION

This year's auction grossed over \$109,000! Over \$47,000 was raised to partially cover the cost of refinishing and updating our gymnasium floor and purchasing new wall mats

FALL RAFFLE

This year's fall raffle raised over \$60,000! These funds help offset operating expenses.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Parent Partnership Program and the Annual Fund raised over \$57,100 from alumni families, and school supporters—bridging the tuition gap of educating students at our school.



OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE MORE



**THANK YOU
for supporting
the mission of
Saint Thomas
More School!**

**Scan the QR code
to donate online.**

This past school year, we have received unsolicited donation 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.
- Many corporations 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.
- Saint Thomas More accepts gifts of securities, stocks, and bonds.
- Including Saint Thomas More Catholic School in your estate planning is a simple way to ensure your giving will continue for future generations.

Please contact Bridget Her, Director of Admissions and Advancement for more information. (bher@morecommunity.org)



Strategic Goals 2025-2026

- Review religious education and faith formation at STM to address redundancies and identify opportunities for growth
- Develop & write religious education goals and benchmarks by grade that are rooted in Catholic-Jesuit tradition
- Expose all students to diverse texts, perspectives, and experiences to develop their global knowledge, cultural competence, and awareness of the world
- Revise technology curriculum to adopt 21st century standards that align with school philosophy
- Provide teachers opportunities to work together to evaluate lesson plans, approaches, and outcomes as well as engage in more cross curricular learning opportunities
- Provide teachers with professional development related to effectively work with students with mental health challenges and trauma
- Review documenting process for inappropriate behavior (Fix It Tickets, STPs, Detentions) and how to more effectively acknowledge positive student behaviors (Summit Saint Slips)
- Celebrate our history (IHM, St. Luke's, IHM-St. Luke's, prominent alums, etc.)



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



Our Story IS UNIQUE



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

Our parish school has a long and proud history dating back to Saint 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 have been blessed by the pastoral leadership of the Jesuits for 34 years. The visionary leadership and joy of our pastor, Father R.J. Fichtinger, S.J., and our associate pastor, Father Peter Etzel, S.J., this past year has helped us continue to grow.

As a school rooted in Jesuit tradition, we intentionally teach children at St. Thomas More to be loving, open to growth, committed to excellence, religious, and to become young men and women who stand with and for others, especially those who are poor and marginalized

This year, our parish community finished a master planning initiative with OPN Architects entitled "A Light That Guides Us". This comprehensive facilities assessment and master planning process will guide our parish—church and school—over the next decade.

This process involved evaluating our current infrastructure, determining areas for improvement, prioritizing needs and desires, and producing a conceptual layout to guide future growth and development. Master planning is about making the connection between our facilities, our people, and the surrounding environment.

We are blessed that our parish is energized and experiencing growth. As stewards of this vibrant parish and historic campus, we must continue to care for our buildings and grounds and work to be a bright light in the community through worship, fellowship, education, and outreach.

The master plan allows us to discern what our facilities need to meet the needs of our growing community and its many ministries. This process will lead our community into the next 100 years as we continue to evolve with our families.

Our parish celebrated 6 catechumens and 10 candidates in OCIA this year—including 3 STM seventh graders! We are encouraged by the continued growth and positive energy in our parish community.

We hosted three Lenten Fish Frys this spring in our school's auditorium. Fish Frys are a wonderful representation of our school and church communities coming together in shared joy and hospitality.

Fr. R.J. and the entire parish staff continue to find ways to serve our school community and bring Jesuit values into each day. We are fortunate to have the Society of Jesus' kind and welcoming presence to support our community.

Our school community will publish a financial statement for this fiscal year in the fall. Our parish continues to improve its financial position through increased stewardship on the church side, and increased enrollment in our parish school.

Our community's financial health is dependent on continuing to increase school enrollment, increased parish stewardship, and successful advancement efforts in the years ahead. If you haven't made a commitment to share your time, talent, and treasure, please do so. Any financial gift helps strengthen our mission and ministry. In addition, your good word about our parish school helps us continue to grow. Keep spreading the good news about St. Thomas More Catholic School!

