

ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH SCHOOL



2015 LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN

St. Thomas More Parish School
5927 Wigton Dr.
Houston, Texas 77096

**Updated August, 2016*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Administration and members of the School Board revised the 2010 Long-Range Strategic Plan to provide a common roadmap to guide the future success of our school and community. The Strategic Plan identifies goals and objectives in each of the following areas: Catholic Identity; Enrollment; Marketing and Public Relations; Educational Programs; Staffing; Finances; Advancement; Facilities; Community Relations; and, Technology. The 2015 Plan is a living document that includes the school's Mission, Vision, Philosophy, and Goals, and can evolve to address and reflect our successes and our opportunities for growth.

Throughout the history of the school, by mission and by practice, the school has provided an environment of diligence and academic excellence within the framework of Catholic teachings. The goals related to Catholic identity, academics, and extracurricular activities seek to continue this tradition and open new portals of experience to further broaden and enrich the lives of our students.

This plan seeks to address critical areas we see currently and in the near future. Enrollment remains an area for growth. While several grade levels are currently at capacity, we continue to see underenrollment at some levels. When the school opened in 1965, students were from surrounding neighborhoods of primarily middle to upper middle class families. As time passed, more students commuted from a variety of zip codes around Houston, Pearland, and Sugar Land. Our marketing efforts must be spread more widely and we must constantly find ways to capture the attention of the public and make the school and its programs known. Additionally, the plan addresses the need for an updated cafeteria and kitchen for both school and parish use.

With this Strategic Plan, we endeavor to build on the work of our predecessors and to carry St. Thomas More Parish School successfully into the future.

MISSION STATEMENT

Alive with our Mission...We, the pastor, staff, and parents of St. Thomas More Parish School, are committed to developing the minds, hearts, and souls of our students. By planting faith-filled seeds of good habits, we open our students' minds to knowledge, their hearts to service, and their souls to the beauty of God's Creation.

PHILOSOPHY

The faculty, staff, and parents of St. Thomas More Parish School believe that through our combined efforts each child can be formed into a responsible individual with the ability to make right judgments based on Christian values. To this end, we strive to fulfill a shared goal—to build within each student a deep respect for God, self, and others. A safe, loving environment which encourages Christ-like love offers students the opportunity to practice kindness, offer moral support, and develop lasting friendships based upon God's Word. We believe that by providing a rigorous academic program within a learning environment which emphasizes the importance of self-confidence, self-discipline, respect, and responsibility, we will successfully guide our students to open their minds to knowledge, their hearts to service, and their souls to God's presence in creation.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision for the future of St. Thomas More Parish School is to continue to offer an exceptional Catholic education. Academic excellence, quality extra-curricular programs, and a strong Catholic spiritual program remain the focus for the future of the school.

Our vision for the future is to further integrate technology into our academic programs, by purchasing and maintaining state-of-the-art equipment, and by incorporating the use of technology in core subjects. Our goal of keeping up with current trends in technology will further prepare our students to succeed academically after they leave St. Thomas More Parish School.

We seek to assure financial security for the school by significantly increasing our endowment fund. Our long-term goal is to grow our endowment to the point that the interest earned will allow us to maintain a tuition that is affordable as possible, and allow for a generous tuition assistance program.

Finally, we seek to maintain full enrollment in the school by continuing to provide an academically superior education in a nurturing, Catholic setting. We will further this goal by maintaining and enhancing our programs and facilities, and by continuing sound financial practices and marketing.

SCHOOL PROFILE AND HISTORY

Since St. Thomas More Parish School began educating students, the school has been faithful to its mission of providing educational excellence in a Christian atmosphere. The doors of St. Thomas More Parish School opened to the first student body, grades 1 through 8, with of a population of 513, on September 7, 1965. In 1965, the majority of the student body came from within a ten mile radius. With the growth of the Houston metropolitan area, students now come from a much wider geographic area including Harris, Fort Bend, and Brazoria counties. Enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year stands at 502 students, thus establishing St. Thomas More Parish School as one of the larger Catholic elementary schools in the Houston area.

In 1981, kindergarten was first offered increasing the student body by 60 students. In 1986, the school community responded to the plight of working/single parent families and the Extended Day program began. The following year, an Early Childhood Education Program was started with a class of sixteen Pre-K students. By the third year of operation, the enrollment in the preschool program exceeded ninety, three and four year olds.

In 1989, an Endowment was established for the school to ensure future financial viability. On October 6, 1994, St. Thomas More Parish School was honored in Washington, D.C. by the U.S. Department of Education as one of 276 schools designated as Blue Ribbon Schools. This award identified St. Thomas More Parish School as one of America's outstanding schools to which other schools and communities look to for ideas and inspiration.

Several improvements were made to the school campus in the 1990's. The parish hall became the school cafeteria. The entire property was fenced and an electronic key system was added to further secure the school facility. The primary playground gained a cover so that the younger students could play in the shade. A Science Lab was constructed in 1999 for use by students in grades 5 through 8. The sports field was sodded and a sprinkler system added. The second gym was dedicated in September of 2009 and the students began enjoying a newly renovated music room. Security was enhanced in 2014 with the installation of bullet-proof glass to the main building and a second door, also with bullet-proof glass, was added to the prekindergarten building.

The continuing commitment of the school community (administration, faculty, staff, parents, and the extended church membership) to academics makes St. Thomas More Parish School one of the most sought-after schools in the area. Over 75% of the students enrolled in kindergarten are expected to graduate from this institution, reflecting the stability of

the population. Sixty-four current students have parents who graduated from St. Thomas More School, and four of our students are 3rd generation families. We are also very proud of the fact that seven staff members are STM graduates.

The families who sacrifice to send their children to St. Thomas More Parish School fit within the broad socioeconomic spectrum of “middle class.” The student population is predominately Catholic, although several religions are represented in small numbers. The ethnic mix of the student population reflects the diversity of St. Thomas More Parish; we take pride in our rich heritage of inclusion of all and affordability for those who seek admission.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

St. Thomas More strives to nurture a strong, joyful Catholic identity among our students, faculty, and staff, and to share this with our families through an active faith formation program that engages both parents and children.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
|--|--|---|---|----------------|
| <p>1. Continue to support a strong religion program that gives the students a solid foundation in the teachings of the Church and includes a family catechesis program that will nurture the faith life of the family.</p> | <p>Communicate the mission and vision to members of the school and parish communities.</p> | <p>Published in Family Handbook, on school website, and parish bulletin</p> | <p>Principal works with Technology Team and parish administrator to publish mission, vision, and philosophy.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| | <p>Promote active participation in daily school life for priests and religious.</p> | <p>Students will see the role of religious outside of Mass.</p> | <p>Religion Coordinator and team plan classroom visits and yearly vocations day.</p> | <p>Yearly</p> |
| | <p>Teach and encourage full participation of the school community in the liturgy.</p> | <p>Celebration of the Eucharist as a community</p> | <p>Religion Coordinator plans weekly all-school Masses, including full participation of students in readings, intentions,</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| | | | <p>ushering, presentation of gifts, and altar serving.</p> <p>Weekend Masses are planned throughout the school-year which include student and faculty participation.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| | <p>Provide opportunities for prayer throughout the day.</p> | <p>Children will develop habit of daily prayer.</p> | <p>School-wide prayer over P.A. in morning, beginning or end of every class, noon (Angelus) and dismissal.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| | <p>Provide opportunities for staff and student retreats.</p> | <p>Increased spiritual development through self-reflection</p> | <p>Administration will work with religion coordinator and campus ministry to plan age appropriate retreats for students and all staff retreats a minimum of two times per year.</p> | <p>Twice Yearly</p> |
| | <p>Support teachers in their catechetical goals.</p> | <p>Increased spiritual development and appreciation of the Catholic faith.</p> | <p>Religion Coordinator and Principal will guide teachers in selection of courses.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

ENROLLMENT

St. Thomas More is committed to providing a quality Catholic education to any qualified applicant, regardless of finances, in classrooms at or below mandated levels .

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME & COMPLETION DATE | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| 1. Enroll qualified candidates regardless of finances. | Administration will work with the Admissions Committee to enroll qualified students; providing financial aid for those in need. | Families will be able to afford a quality Catholic education for their children. | Administration will work with School Board to minimize tuition increases and increase amount of Financial Aid available. | Yearly |
| 2. Maintain a consistent instructor-student ratio. | Administration will maintain enrollment reflecting \geq 93% capacity. | Students will gain benefits of group learning, while maintaining individual attention. | Principal and Admissions Committee make enrollment decisions each year to maintain a stable class size. | Yearly |
| 3. Provide the highest quality pre-kindergarten program. | Administration will seek qualified teacher candidates and provide ongoing professional development to ensure best practices. | Top teachers will receive the support necessary to maintain the highest standards. | Teachers will attend a series of trainings on early literacy held at Neuhaus. | Summer 2016 and 2017 |

MARKETING and PUBLIC RELATIONS

St. Thomas More is committed to fostering and maintaining meaningful relationships within our school and parish, and increasing our visibility in the community at large.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| <p>1. Increase the visibility of our school within the parish and the community at large.</p> | <p>Continue to market to prospective families in local area and nearby zip codes.</p> | <p>Elevated awareness of STM in the community.</p> | <p>Director of Advancement will place advertisements/articles in local papers, relocation guides, and church bulletins.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| | <p>Highlight school academic, sport and community-effort successes in published literature of the school</p> | <p>Maintained exposure of student accomplishments and activities.</p> | <p>Administration will oversee all articles/publication to ensure all components of the school program are highlighted appropriately.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| | <p>Design and maintain a user-friendly, inviting and reliable website.</p> | <p>Events and accomplishments will be published in a timely manner.</p> | <p>Administration will oversee appropriate development and maintenance of site.</p> | <p>Development and creation in July 2015; ongoing maintenance.</p> |

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| | <p>Create an official branding guide to ensure cohesive, consistently designed messages communicating our mission.</p> | <p>The STM brand will be easily recognized by school and local community.</p> | <p>Marketing Committee will work with special advisor to create a branding guide for use with all school publications, articles of clothing, and spirit items.</p> <p>Marketing Committee will design business cards to better reflect the mission of the school.</p> <p>Administration will approve all communications and articles of clothing/spirit items to ensure they meet the guidelines outlined.</p> <p>The school board will work with administration to approve and construct an electronic sign on the corner of Hilcroft and Wigton.</p> | <p>Developed by September 2015.</p> <p>Developed by August 2016.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Fall 2016</p> |
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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

St. Thomas More is committed to providing a strong academic program with enriching extracurricular activities, which challenges students and supports the school’s mission, vision, and philosophy.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
|---|--|--|---|----------------|
| 1. Provide an academically superior curriculum. | Compare and confirm that academics are meeting and exceeding both Archdiocesan and state requirements. | Students challenged by learner-centered courses. | Administration, in partnership with the Catholic School Office Curriculum and Instruction specialists, will review curriculum on an annual basis to ensure rigorous standards are maintained. | Ongoing |
| | Focus efforts to provide an exceptional STREAM (science, technology, religion, engineering, arts, math) curriculum | | Science teachers, working with both math and ELA teachers, will integrate science fair into the intermediate and lower school. | Ongoing |
| | | | Increase scope of Robotics to include lower school. Continue to host Astronomy/STEM night for students and parents. | Annually |

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| | Continue and encourage participation in Archdiocesan and local academic competitions. | Students will be challenged and encouraged to meet and exceed their own personal best. | Administration and teachers will provide opportunities for students to enter and compete in a variety of competitions. | Ongoing |
| | Administer Standardized testing. | Realistic snapshots of student abilities in relation to curriculum and instruction provided. | Teachers will administer testing and analyze results to help guide lessons and yearly plans. | Yearly |
| | Research and provide professional development opportunities for teachers. | Teachers will grow and enhance their skills, teaching methods, and best practices. | Administration will work with Title II representatives and teachers to determine priorities and select courses. | Annually |

STAFFING

St. Thomas More is committed to recruiting highly dedicated, effective, competitively compensated faculty and staff who are committed to Catholic education and to the particular mission of our school.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME & COMPLETION DATE | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| <p>1. Recruit, train, and retain highly qualified and dedicated teachers committed to the mission, vision, and philosophy of the school.</p> | <p>Provide competitive salaries and benefits.</p> <p>Create an annual staff development program that is robust and inclusive of all academic, spiritual, and formative elements.</p> <p>Promote a staff culture where staff feels valued and included in the life of the school.</p> | <p>An educated staff who makes a difference and are satisfied with their chosen occupation.</p> | <p>Staff members attend conferences annually and participate in professional development.</p> <p>Staff members will complete annual Letter of Intent indicating their desire to remain in their current position or explore other grade levels/subject areas.</p> <p>School Board members attend all training seminars offered by the Catholic School's Office.</p> <p>Increase the scope of the role of level coordinators to increase the level of communication between all faculty and staff.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 2016</p> |

FINANCES

St. Thomas More is committed to preserving the financial well-being of the school.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME & COMPLETION DATE | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| 1. Provide sound financial practices to ensure the success of the school. | <p>The Board, Business Manager and Principal will operate from a balanced budget every year.</p> <p>The Admissions Director, Principal, and Advancement Director will work together to maintain full enrollment.</p> | <p>STM will remain financially solvent from year to year.</p> <p>School will maintain an 85-90% rate of capacity each year.</p> | <p>Maintain a tuition that is the major component of the overall cost to attending school.</p> <p>Explore, identify, and implement means to provide additional revenue growth.</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of a family fundraising commitment fee.</p> <p>Faculty and staff will work together to publicize student and school successes, hold regular open houses and tours, maintain school website and social media pages, and continue to provide a top academic, athletic, and spiritual education.</p> | <p>Yearly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Winter 2016</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| | Administration and School Board will maintain regular contributions to the Endowment Fund | Endowment fund will continuously grow to keep tuition affordable and | Proceeds from annual Oktoberfest will continue to be put into the Endowment Fund. Other sources for funds will be explored by the board and Advancement Committee. | Ongoing |
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ADVANCEMENT

St. Thomas More is committed to maintaining a development program centered around events that build the school and parish community.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME & COMPLETION DATE | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| <p>1. To develop and maintain an advancement committee to promote the mission of the school; thereby creating a spirit of philanthropy to help our school grow and be vibrant and successful.</p> | <p>Identify Advancement Office roles and write job descriptions for evolving needs.</p> <p>Identify and focus on the greatest need of school advancement.</p> <p>Monitor, manage, and adjust advancement time line and program as needed.</p> <p>Develop a donor base to increase contributions.</p> | <p>Advancement committee will include director, board member, administration, and parent volunteers.</p> <p>Continually increase the level of participation among school families in the fundraising process.</p> | <p>Administration will select members for committee whose experiences will add to the efficiency of efforts.</p> <p>Advancement Committee will select a program for donor database and populate with current and past families/alumni.</p> | <p>Committee will be developed in Fall 2015; ongoing meetings will take place to ensure continuation of goals and growth.</p> <p>Fall 2016</p> |

FACILITIES

St. Thomas More is committed to developing school facilities that support our enrollment goals and enable enriched academic opportunities for our students.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME & COMPLETION DATE | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| 1. STM will make the best use of the existing space available in the school facilities. | The administration, along with faculty members, will work with the parish to coordinate sharing of space with other parish ministries. | Cooperative relationship between all members of the STM community will ensure space is maximized. | Office staff will work with church office and office of religious education to coordinate schedules and events. | Ongoing |
| 2. STM will maintain an safe and attractive campus. | Continually assess safety of campus. | A safe environment will be provided for students and staff. | <p>Facilities manager will make regular checks of the school buildings and grounds and provide monthly facilities report.</p> <p>Refresh cafeteria with new carpeting and paint.</p> <p>Replace flooring in cafeteria.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Summer 2016</p> <p>Summer 2017</p> |

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

St. Thomas More is committed to building a positive sense of community with our parish, neighborhood, Archdiocese, and extended Houston area.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME & COMPLETION DATE | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| STM will seek opportunities to build amicable relationships with the diverse religious and civic communities in the immediate area. | Administration will work with faculty, PTO, and parish to provide opportunities for the school to build community. | Deeper sense of community within the school community and as members of the larger community. | <p>The school and parish will plan annual Oktoberfest celebration.</p> <p>Faculty and staff will participate in parish choir throughout the year.</p> <p>Advertise school events in church bulletin.</p> <p>Submit articles to local newspapers and magazines.</p> | <p>Annualy</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

TECHNOLOGY

St. Thomas More is committed to seamlessly integrating technology throughout the curriculum in a way that is educationally sound and appropriate.

| OBJECTIVE | ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ANTICIPATED OUTCOME & COMPLETION DATE | ACTION TAKEN (What, Who, When) | ACTUAL OUTCOME |
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| <p>1. Ensure students and teachers have necessary technological tools and training, in the computer lab as well as other appropriate venues throughout the school.</p> | <p>Administration will continue to invest in technology as an additional resource tool in the classroom.</p> <p>Administration will work with School Board and IT Committee to enhance infrastructure and increase resources to support our technology program.</p> | <p>Graduates will be better prepared to enter technology-enriched high schools and beyond into the modern day workplace.</p> <p>Students will have better access to on-line textbooks and other programs that enrich their curriculum.</p> | <p>Touch-screen, interactive televisions will be placed in four classrooms.</p> <p>A classroom set of iPads will be placed in a charging station that can be shared with all PK3-4th grade students.</p> <p>Administration will work with Full Dimension IT to conduct an audit and proceed with updates.</p> | <p>Fall 2016 initially, with additional four each school year.</p> <p>Fall 2016</p> <p>Summer 2016</p> |

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| | Adminstration and technology director will work with faculty and ARCHGH technology group to explore options to use technology for innovative ways to enhance instruction. | Teachers will be kept abreast of the most current technology to enhance their instruction in the classroom. | Two teachers will attend ISTE each summer and follow-up as needed to train faculty on the latest in technology. | Annually |
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