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VISION

In the 2005-2006 school year, St. Thomas More School undertook a comprehensive process to strategically plan for the rest of this decade. In this process, several themes emerged to crystallize the parish's vision for the school.

The School's Catholicity

A strong tradition of Catholic education is a core value of St. Thomas More School's history. This tradition enables STM to educate students in a loving, caring, and supportive environment where God's love is prevalent.

STM will continue and strengthen this tradition: Jesus Christ is our model and the reason we embrace His values as we educate the whole child. We will continue to help our children build their moral character and provide opportunities to teach and live the love of Jesus.

High Academic Standards

St. Thomas More is blessed to have a tradition of outstanding academic achievement. Students graduate from STM ready for the more rigorous academic challenges of high school. STM must and will continue this tradition. Simultaneously, STM recognizes that each child has unique needs and must strive to assure that those needs are met. Each child at STM is gifted; it is vital that STM help each child recognize and utilize her/his unique gifts in order to reach the fullest potential as a child of God.

Technology Leadership

STM is a technology leader among area schools, both public and private. STM must continue to embrace technology and implement new technology both to fully prepare our children for the demands of the 21st century and to most efficiently educate our children.

Future Opportunities

St. Thomas More Parish is blessed with abundant resources and talents. We must continually evaluate our processes and actions to ensure we are using these resources and talents effectively. We must ask ourselves what we ask of our children – to take those actions necessary to ensure that growth and progress are constant. Respect for tradition must be balanced with a need for innovation. A blend of the new and traditional will allow the school to retain its engaging educational environment for our children.

Communication

A hallmark of all successful relationships is abundant and effective communication. While STM has many means of facilitating communication between and among students, parents, faculty, administration and the parish, current processes must be evaluated and enhanced on an ongoing basis. Future effective communication methods should include a rich blend of technology and personal interaction.

Stewardship

The STM community must continue to address the future financial challenges necessary to meet the Vision above and fund the necessary capital improvements and required building needs for a 40+ year old campus.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Thomas More School provides a safe learning environment in which I, as a unique child of God, strive to become the person God intends for me to be through academic achievement and acts of justice, love and service based in our Catholic religious beliefs.

School Board Mission Statement

The School Board will support Saint Thomas More Grade School as a sounding board for policies, budget and resources for school-sponsored activities and programs in support of the school mission statement.

SCHOOL PROFILE AND HISTORY

In the spring of 1964, a large sign reading "Future Site of St. Thomas More Catholic Church" was placed at the corner of 118th and Holmes. Today, a church and school continue the presence of this Red Bridge Catholic community.

Monsignor John Huhmann was appointed to establish the new parish with 250 families. Under his fine leadership, with Masses temporarily at Avila, the community grew. In July 1965, ground was broken for the church and school. By June 1966, the church was ready for use. In the fall of 1966, the school opened with 203 students in the first five grades. The first graduation was held in May, 1970.

When a building boom in Red Bridge, Verona Hills and the surrounding area happened, the membership grew to 1,400 families. Additional classrooms were added to the school and plans for a larger Church that would accommodate 650 persons became a reality. In 1983, the present church was completed. Monsignor William Blacet was the Pastor.

In 1984, a master plan for the continued growth of the parish was developed. This plan enlarged the school, preschool and enabled the music and art programs to be expanded. Fr. Patrick Rush was pastor.

Growth continued strong through the 90's. Fr. Bill Bauman became the 4th pastor in June of 1992. An eight-room addition to the school was built in 1996. The school grew to over 650 students in the 2000-2001 school year. Some 50 seats in school were made available to non-parishioners for the first time in 2003. This brought a new diversity to the school with a few non-Catholic students added to the enrollment.

St. Thomas More School is at the center of parish life for many of the families at St. Thomas More. The school serves children of parishioners and the community at large attending grades Kindergarten through 8 and has an enrollment of 597 students. The school also has a pre-school program that currently serves 46 children. The school and pre-school serve approximately 18 percent of the families in the parish.

The faculty includes a resource teacher who is available to students with assistance in specific areas. The school is not currently equipped to handle students with special needs.

In 2001, the school received the highest rating possible, having no deficiencies in its accreditation study. The administrative staff includes Sr. Helen Flemington, CSJ, the principal for the 2006 – 2007 school year. She is new to the school, replacing Brigid Flanagan, principal who retired after 20 years of service. Kathy O'Sullivan, the vice-principal, has served for 6 years.

Parental support of the school is very strong and is provided in a number of different ways including Home and School (a Parent-Teacher Organization), the Booster Club (an Athletic Organization), Room Parents, and numerous volunteer opportunities.

The School Board serves as the principal advisor to the school administration and parish Pastor with regard to matters that affect the school. There are 11 members plus ex officio representatives of the Home and School organization, the Booster Club, and the Athletic Committee.

For the school year that began in September 2003, the school's admission policies were revised to provide for the admission of non-parishioners. Non-parishioners who send their children to St. Thomas More School pay tuition of \$4,280 if paid monthly (if paid in one payment \$4,060 and bi-annual payments \$4,175). For the 2006-2007 school year the number of children attending St. Thomas More School under the non-parishioner plan is 20.

The school's co-curricular activities include athletic, musical, drama and science programs. St. Thomas More has a rich tradition of excellent athletic teams, and sponsors teams for 5th through 8th graders in football, volleyball, basketball and track. In addition to the music classes taught as part of the regular school curriculum, the school offers a co-curricular band program for students. The school's drama program offers presentations in December and May.

The school receives the majority of its financial support from the parish through the regular tithes of the parishioners. Other sources of income for the school are registration and book fees, tuition from students whose families are not members of the parish, special one time gifts and fees for the pre-school program. A Dinner Auction Fundraising event is held every December and is the only fund raiser for the school. The proceeds from the fundraiser support the academic and athletic programs at the school. The 2005 auction raised over \$194,500; in the past three years, the annual auction has raised over \$451,000.

The school's budget for the 2006-2007 school year is approximately \$2.6 million, with 78% dedicated to teacher and administration personnel costs. St. Thomas More completed a major addition to the school infrastructure in 1997, the cost of which has been paid.

PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The School's Catholicity

Maintain a high level of active religious instruction which will emphasize the different levels of the child's moral and social development.

Ideas for consideration:

1. Maintain focus on community service and stewardship at the children's level of capability.
2. Identify and/or develop programs that emphasize Christian values and education.
3. Continue and enhance regular meaningful children's school liturgies.
4. Create programs that provide interaction between seniors in the parish and the students.
5. Create a guest lecturer program that will enhance religious instruction.
6. Continue a priest presence to the students in the school.
7. Continue to emphasize and teach the social justice principles of the Catholic Church.

High Academic Standards

Provide rigorous and challenging academic programs which will prepare children to be contributing participants in a global society.

Ideas for consideration:

Student Focus:

1. Expand programs that will entice children to read.
2. Expand usage of United Streaming by faculty, ensuring its broad availability.
3. Expand resources available to resource room (space and instructors).
4. Continue to upgrade textbooks.
5. Consider incorporating Algebra and Spanish into the regular curriculum.

Faculty Focus:

1. Maintain availability of continuing education programs for faculty.
2. Consider reimbursement policies to pay for continuing education classes.
3. Use the local Catholic universities for assistance where possible.
4. Continue to utilize curriculum mapping process to achieve academic excellence.

Technology Leader

Maintain our leadership in the use of technology.

Ideas for consideration:

1. Follow and enhance the Technology Plan created and documented as Appendix e. This addresses both student and faculty needs.

Future Opportunities

St. Thomas More Parish is blessed with abundant resources and talents. We must continually evaluate our processes and actions to ensure we are using these resources and talents effectively in order to meet the future needs of the school with excellence.

Ideas for consideration:

1. Add a school counselor.
2. Look at alternative methods for raising funds.
3. Create a 'rallying cry'/marketing theme/identity and market it.
4. Pursue the Blue Ribbon School designation.
5. Science Fair
6. Investigate possibility of summer programs at St. Thomas More
7. Investigate feasibility of password protected classroom websites
8. Enhance the safety plan to assure it provides a safe environment and adequate communication in today's society.

Improve Communication

Communication between parents and staff is key to the success of the child's education. Communication will also be used to tell the story of the school for community building within the parish and the larger south Kansas City area.

Ideas for consideration:

External and Internal

1. Increase use of the classroom's websites and email communication between parents and staff.
2. Have the principal speak at all Masses on the Sunday that begins Catholic Schools' week.
3. Share the story of the accomplishments and events of the school to the parish and community at large.
4. Increase the number of parent/teacher conferences.
5. Improve school voice mail system.
6. Involvement of students within the parish life.
7. Consider online report of academic progress.

Stewardship

The STM community must continue to address the future financial challenges necessary to meet the Vision above and fund the necessary capital improvements and required building needs for a 40+ year old campus.

APPENDICES