

ST. THOMAS MORE SCHOOL

# STRATEGIC TRANSITION PLAN

2025-2028



A Plan for Sustainability & Growth





“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

Proverbs 3:5-6



# FROM THE PASTOR

Dear St. Thomas More Parish Family,

I have delighted in my first year with you as pastor at St. Thomas More as part of our Partners in the Gospel Parish Family along with Holy Rosary. After the celebration of Mass and the sacraments, our parish school is the largest ministry of the parish. Serving both Catholic and non-Catholic children, St. Thomas More School provides an excellent education while forming students in human values grounded in our Catholic faith.

One year ago, Fr. Okumu and I addressed the St. Thomas More community about the financial challenges facing our school. Years of leadership transitions, declining enrollment—at that time we were at only 50% of capacity—and reduced tuition revenue created serious deficits that threatened the school's stability.

In response, we worked closely with the Archdiocesan Office for Catholic Schools to establish a Strategic Transition Team (STT). This team, made up of parish and school leaders, including our transitional school leader, principal emerita Ter was tasked with hiring a new principal, crafting a turnaround plan, engaging the wider parish community, and regularly reviewing progress toward restoring the school's vitality. Throughout the 2024-2025 school year, the STT has faithfully carried out this mission.

Working hand in hand with the Schools Office, the Strategic Transition Team has guided us through the first stage of renewal. Monthly reviews of finances and enrollment, along with stronger parish engagement, have helped us take significant steps forward. This collaboration has fostered a deeper sense of shared ownership for the mission of our parish school and strengthened the community spirit that sustains us.

I am pleased now to share with you the Strategic Transition Team Report for St. Thomas More School. This report represents the dedicated efforts of our school leadership, the commitment of parish members, and the hope we hold for a vibrant future. It is our road map toward excellence in education and faith formation as part of the mission of our Holy Rosary-St. Thomas More Parish Family.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Strategic Transition Team and to the entire parish for your prayerful support, generosity, and love for our school. Let us continue to call upon the Holy Spirit, remaining faithful in prayer and ready to serve as we walk together toward a stronger, more vibrant parish and school community.



*Rev. Matthew Looney*



“

I have called you by  
name; you are mine.  
Isaiah 43:1

”





# FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear St. Thomas More families, staff, students and community,

At St. Thomas More School we promise to know, love, and prepare your child. This promise is rooted in Scripture and guides everything we do as we prepare your child for life while striving for Heaven.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

## **Our Vision**

St. Thomas More is a place where faith and learning grow together. We don't just educate; we form saints, scholars, and student-athletes who live their faith boldly, think critically, and compete with integrity.

## **Why This Plan Matters**

Over the past months, our Strategic Transition Team, representing the whole community, has been prayerfully discerning and working on a road map for the next three years. Their focus has been clear: to guide our school toward sustainability and growth. This work is not abstract; it is rooted in four key areas (Engagement, Finance, Enrollment, and Marketing) that will strengthen our school now and for the future. I want to acknowledge and thank this team for their dedication and wisdom. Their work reflects the very best of what happens when parishioners, parents, staff, and leaders come together with a shared purpose.

## **Our Strength is Teamwork**

This vision depends on all of us: teachers, staff, families, parishioners, and students, working together. The team has provided us with direction, but it is up to all of us to bring the plan to life. The plan lays out clear priorities to strengthen our future.

Together, we will:

- Deepen our Catholic identity through daily faith and action
- Raise academic standards using data-driven instruction
- Foster an inclusive environment where every student is valued
- Strengthen communication and partnerships with families and the parish
- Build sustainability through strong engagement, stewardship, and growth in enrollment

## **Your Role**

This vision calls for your active participation. I wholeheartedly endorse this three-year plan and the work it represents. Please join me in supporting these goals by engaging in every child's education and helping us build a community shaped by faith and excellence.

Together, with God's grace, let's raise saints, scholars, and student-athletes ready to live with faith, knowledge, and heart.

With gratitude and hope,



*Richard Hernandez*



# FROM THE STRATEGIC TRANSITION TEAM CO-CHAIRS

Dear St. Thomas More Parish and School Families,

The 2024-25 school year has been one of change- from launching the Strategic Transition Team (STT) to hiring a new principal, and from record-low enrollment to being on track to meet 2025-26 projections. Formed in July 2024 under Fr. O'Leary's leadership, the STT is now ready to share its findings and goals through the **Strategic Transitional Plan: A Process for Sustainability and Growth 2025-2028**.

Rooted in reflection, community input, and prayerful discernment, the plan outlines a vision for intentional growth while remaining firmly grounded in our Catholic identity.

It focuses on four core areas:

1. **Engagement:** Strengthening academics, faith formation, and leadership development.
2. **Marketing:** Building community partnerships, improving communication, and fostering a welcoming culture.
3. **Finance:** Ensuring sustainability through sound planning, fundraising, facilities, and enrollment management.
4. **Enrollment:** Using data-driven strategies to retain families, attract new students, and enrich the STMS experience.

Each area includes clear goals and action steps to guide us over the next three years, with a commitment to transparency, collaboration, and consistent information sharing.

Your voice shaped this process- 225 surveys returned, 88 people attending community meetings, and 42 serving on focus groups. We are deeply grateful for your engagement, trust, and partnership as we move forward together.

With gratitude and hope,

**Terri Fewel**

**John Miketinas**

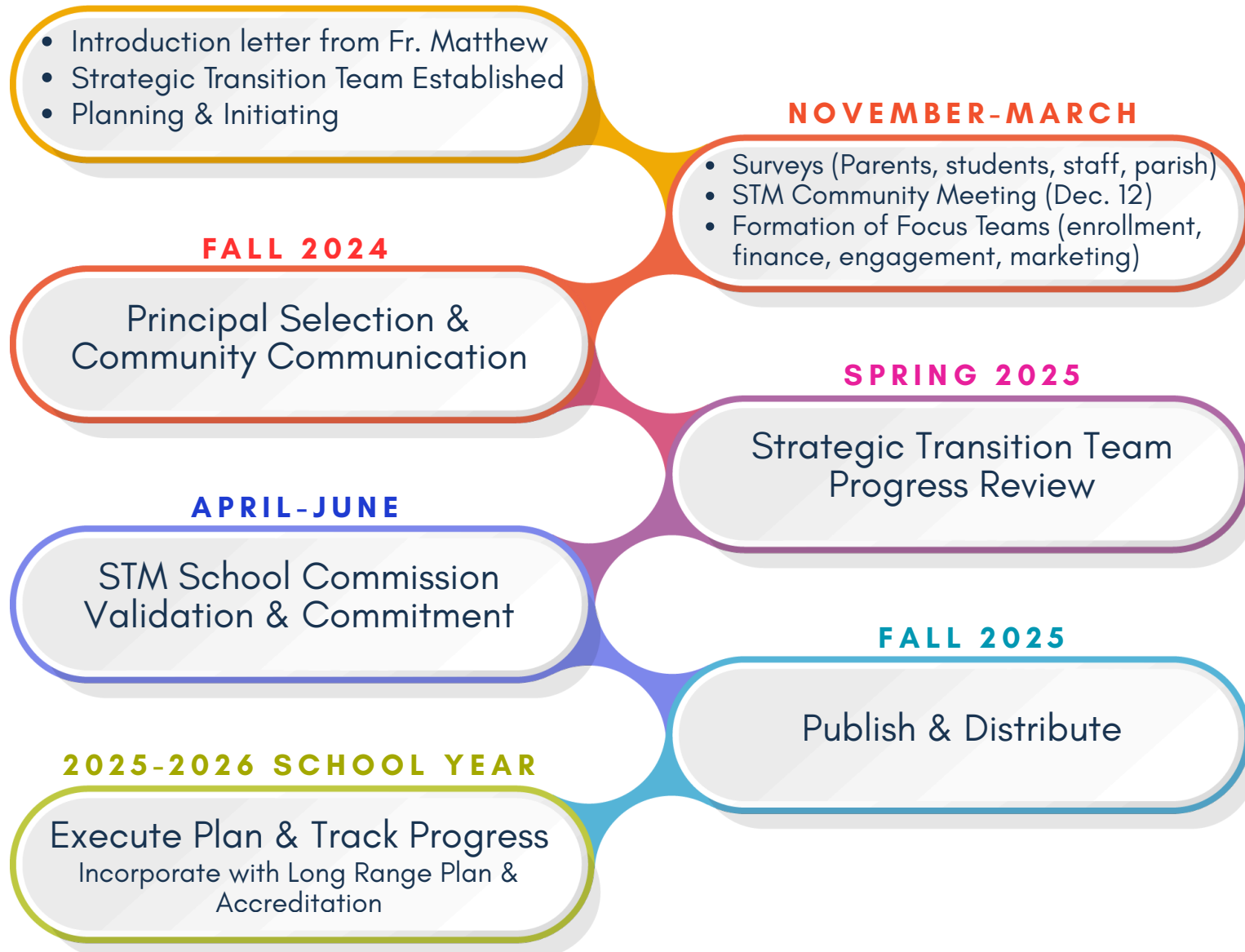




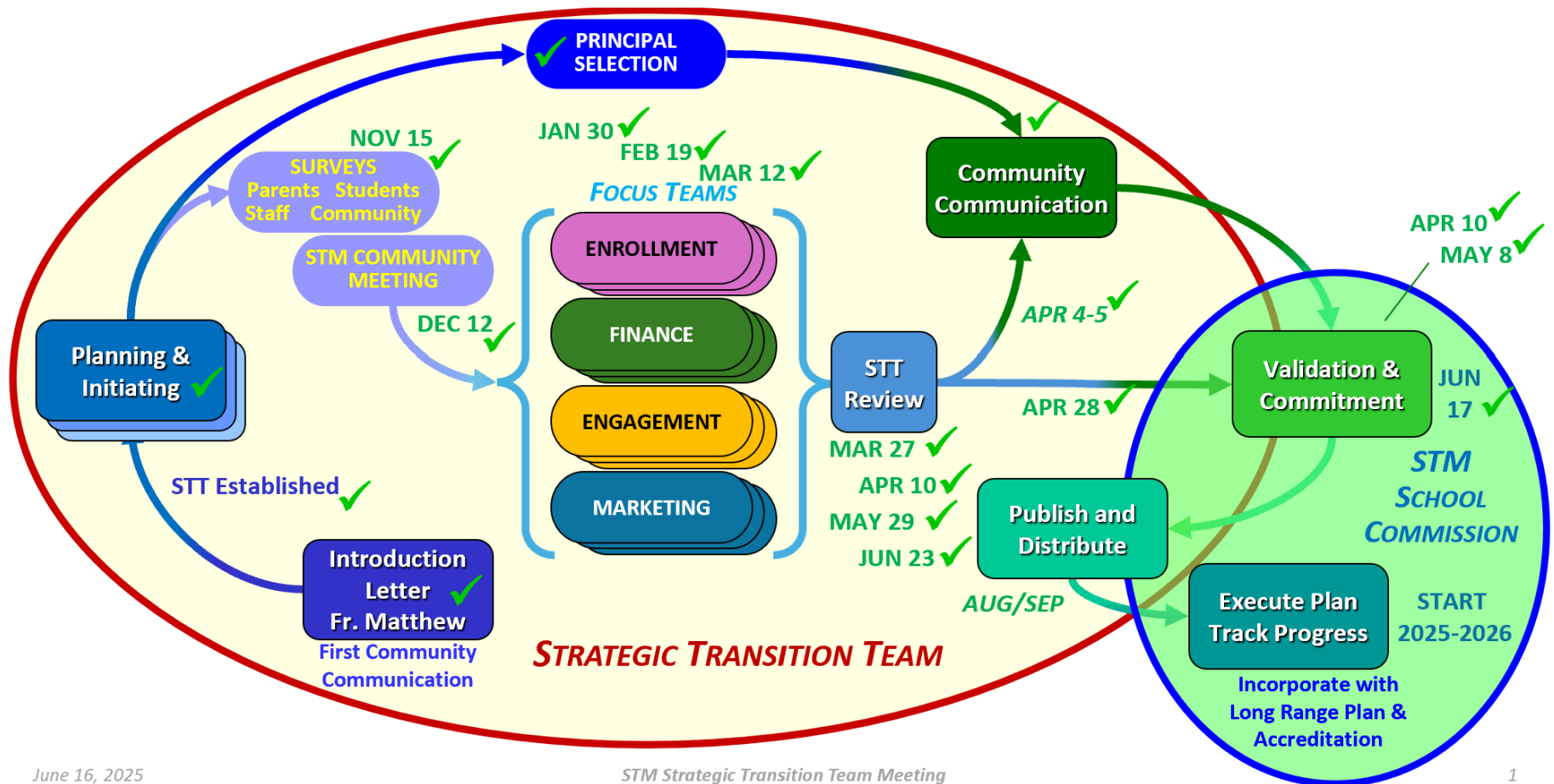
“ But by the grace of God I  
am what I am and his  
grace toward me was not  
in vain. Corinthians 15:10 ”



# STRATEGIC TRANSITION PROCESS



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June 16, 2025

STM Strategic Transition Team Meeting

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# PARTICIPATION

## STRATEGIC TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS

Fr. Matthew O'Leary

Pastor, HR/STM Parish Family

Terri Fewel

Co-Chair, STMS Staff

John Miketinas

Co-Chair, Parishioner

Ale Del Rio

STMS Staff

Nick Golla

Pastoral Council, Parent

Rich Hernandez

Principal, STMS

Margo McLaughlin

Liaison, STMS Staff

Tony Pehanich

School Commission, Parent, Parishioner

Dave Rehberger

STMS Staff

John Sullivan

Office for Catholic Schools

Larkin Temme

Principal, Holy Rosary

# FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS

## ENGAGEMENT

Elizabeth Badley Co Chair, Staff  
Vicki Jarmen Co-Chair, SC, Parent  
Ellen Abellera (P)  
Nick Golla (SC)  
Violeta Juzon (P)  
Laurel Pehanich (S, A)  
Chris Stevenson (SC, P)  
Jeanne Stevenson (P)  
Larkin Temme (STT)

## FINANCE

Denise Mullins Co-Chair, Staff  
Jackie Meucci Co-Chair, Parent  
Emma Ardiente (SP)  
Brian Duffy (P)  
Rhonda Miketinas (P)  
Tony Pehanich (SC, SP, STT)  
Dave Rehberger (S, STT)  
John Rhodes (P)  
Rick Spehar (P)  
John Sullivan (Office for Catholic Schools, STT)

## ENROLLMENT

Sharon Geyer Co-Chair, SC, Parent  
Francesca Abellera Co-Chair, PC, Parent  
Melanie Abigania (P)  
Ale Del Rio (S, STT)  
Debra Dodge (P)  
Bev Hickel (P)  
Stephen Miketinas (A, P)  
Margot McLaughlin (S)  
Tessa Watters (S)  
Amy Winters (SP)

## MARKETING

Heather Fairbank Co-Chair, Parishioner  
Lan VoBa Co-Chair, CYO, Parent  
Kyle Dodge (P)  
Anna Golla (SP)  
Kari Hopper (S)  
John Kennedy (P)  
Jessica Lang (SP)  
Melissa Roth (A)  
Paul Roth (P)  
Silvia Spehar (P)

**KEY:** P- Parish      SP- School Parent      STT- Strategic Transition Team  
SC- School Commission      PC- Parent Club      S- STM School Staff      A- Alumni



# PARTICIPATION

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION

Tony Pehanich	President, Parent
Elizabeth Badley	Teacher Rep
Jason Chaney	Parent
Sharon Geyer	Parent
Nick Golla	Pastoral Council Rep, Parent
Maria Hauser	Parent
Vicki Jarmen	Parent
Angelica Mora Jimenez	Parent
Jackie Meucci	Parent, Pastoral Finance Council
Christopher Stevenson	Parishioner
Dorrian Wanjiru	Parent





“ Out of his fullness we  
have received, grace  
upon grace. John 1:16 ”



# ENGAGEMENT



To attract new families and retain current students and families, St. Thomas More School will cultivate a vibrant, faith-filled school community where parents, families, and students actively participate in meaningful service through strengthening school operations and fostering a deep sense of shared mission and belonging.

**Our efforts to improve community engagement in our parish school over the next three years will focus on:**

Developing and implementing a structured engagement strategy encompassing communications, event planning, role definitions, and recognition practices.

- Accessible & current online calendar
- Investigate childcare availability
- Create & distribute volunteer needs & opportunities catalog
- Document volunteer descriptions & expectations
- Incentivize major event leadership
- Clarify donation & reimbursement practices
- Establish volunteer recognition policy
- Testimonials regarding the benefits of engaged parents to post on social media

## **Expected Outcome**

Increased volunteer participation, improved activities/events, and stronger parish-school community

Establishing and maintaining an improved calendar of educational and community-focused event, accessible communication tools, and targeted outreach programs.

- Provide an accurate calendar of events with electronic notifications
- Use an online time and talent survey
- Give concrete evidence of how it adds value to their children's academic experiences and development
- Set meeting times for the majority of attendees and rotating schedules
- Assign a social media coordinator
- Meeting invitations and reminders provided for volunteers (linked to an online calendar)

## **Expected Outcome**

Increased parental presence and active participation in their child's educational success and school activities

Increasing parishioner involvement in school life through shared events, volunteer opportunities, and mission driven initiatives.

- Establish measurement baseline (e.g., school families participating in Parish events/ministries, Parishioners participating in school events)
- Make VIRTUS easily accessible
- Communication with parish families
- Increase student visibility in the parish through new and current events

## **Expected Outcome**

Strengthened partnership between our parish and school, deepening our sense of community and mutual support

**But those who hope in the Lord, will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.** Isaiah 40:31

# ENROLLMENT



St. Thomas More School will foster a vibrant, Catholic community that welcomes, supports, and retains families through a commitment to Gospel values, purposeful communication, and thoughtful campus improvements. Families will feel a true sense of belonging and purpose by creating safe spaces, embracing digital innovation, and celebrating the uniqueness of each member.

**Our efforts to increase and retain families over the next three years will focus on:**

Developing and implementing a comprehensive digital initiative to enhance student recruitment and retention.

- Create a virtual tour showcasing facilities, classrooms, extracurricular space through website, social media, email
- Develop an alumni database & showcase success stories
- Continual website & media refresh ensuring online content remains current
- Market STMS program strengths, publish test scores & curriculum highlights
- Utilize parish website to extend STMS visibility by leveraging testimonials & community engagement

### **Expected Outcome**

Easier access to information promoting & ensuring participation for school, parish & alumni families in events & activities increasing enrollment & reducing attrition

Enhance and modernizing the campus and facilities to ensure a safe, secure, and aesthetically welcoming environment.

- Upgrade STM security systems throughout the parish and school campus
- Improved lighting for enhanced visibility for the entire campus
- Exterior refresh of landscape and buildings
- Enhance and improve outdoor playground, learning spaces, and sports field
- Modernized classrooms with functional spaces and equipment

### **Expected Outcome**

Creating a safe, positive and engaging environment where students, families and parishioners feel welcomed and thrive

Establishing and monitoring a comprehensive welcome program fostering inclusion, Gospel values, and family relationships.

- Establish a new family/student Peer mentor program
- Summer meet and greet event
- Organize event before the start of school year
- Educate STMS staff and school families of school procedures, processes, and support opportunities

### **Expected Outcome**

Families will be connected to one another through active participation in events and information sharing



# FINANCE



Through monitoring of the Long-Range Plan, St. Thomas More School will ensure affordable and accessible Catholic education by implementing sustainable funding models, increasing transparency in tuition pricing, growing revenue sources, expanding financial assistance opportunities.

## Our financial efforts over the next three years will focus on:

Developing and implementing a comprehensive five-year plan aligned with strategic priorities and responsive to changing needs of the school

- Develop a condensed, summarized multi-year forecast file
  - Joint project between parish (Pastoral Associate) and school (Budget/Finance Volunteer + Principal)
  - Integrate into the regular budgeting process and timing
- Develop a succession plan to ensure continued, competent financial support (i.e., budgeting, forecasting, school + parish liaison)
- Address maintenance/ capital improvements/ depreciating equipment
- Replenish the endowment fund via a focused campaign

### Expected Outcome

Ensure the long-term financial viability of the school

Enhance and modernizing the campus and facilities to ensure a safe, secure, and aesthetically welcoming environment.

- Create an organizational structure with additional committee(s) to the school commission with specific responsibility for implementing 5-year financial goals
- Develop and utilize marketing materials to educate STM parishioners on finances, fundraising, and endowment information and opportunities
- Continue to explore flexible tuition strategies that allow families access to affordable Catholic education through a combination of tuition payments, fundraising, company gift matching, and volunteer hours

### Expected Outcome

Better control of tuition changes and strengthening the financial sustainability of the school

Conducting a collaborative financial practices audit jointly with Holy Rosary School to identify and align both schools within our parish family governance structure.

- Convene a joint finance committee with representatives from both schools to focus initially on finding opportunities for cost savings and resource sharing
- Conduct a comprehensive review of both schools' finances and methodologies, as well as how the budgeting process is conducted
- Determine what steps can be taken to keep STM's education accessible, be it through scholarships, fundraisers, or tuition incentives
- Establish clear financial communication and transparency for families of both schools, offering regular updates to school families

### Expected Outcome

Identification of best practices and consistency within the Parish Family

**Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we don't give up.**

Galatians 6:9

# MARKETING

St. Thomas More School will increase and improve communication of the school's faith-based values, academic excellence, and engaged community by promoting its strengths and offerings through verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual messaging strengthening families' sense of belonging and awareness of school offerings.

**Our efforts to increase and retain families over the next three years will focus on:**

Implementing a comprehensive marketing campaign that highlights the school's Catholic identity, academic excellence, and community involvement.

- Growing the parish social media and sharing school activities
- Provide an opportunity for interaction(s) after Mass
- Work collaboratively with Pastoral Council to advance marketing of STMS
- Provide regular updates highlighting the school from the pulpit, in the bulletin, and on the parish website

#### **Expected Outcome**

Consistent and targeted marketing is expected to increase interest, inquiries, and applications

**For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**

2 Timothy 1:7

Implementing a mobile friendly communication plan that provides social media updates, expanded volunteer opportunities, and improved community events.

- Establish a measurement baseline of families and social media update frequency and effectiveness
- Mobile-friendly social media
- Offering and hosting more school and extracurricular activities that foster community
- Personal invitations to volunteer in the classrooms, lunchroom, before/after school, etc.
- Personal invites to get involved in school outreach events and other community service opportunities
- Open, honest, transparent, and clear communication about finances, leadership changes, and other important school happenings

#### **Expected Outcome**

Increased parental presence and active participation in their child's educational success and school activities

Implementing a strategic marketing plan showcasing the school's strength of leadership, faith-based community, and academic excellence.

- Build a more robust and interactive social media presence for STM School
- Building community with the city of Lynnwood by increasing STMS event participation in the greater Lynnwood and Edmonds area/community
- Increase signage and swag to create visibility. Creating consistent visibility opportunities using branding strategies (school name and logo) to the local community
- Increase social media engagement through the strategic marketing plan

#### **Expected Outcome**

Strengthened partnership between our parish and school, deepening our sense of community and mutual support



# HISTORY

Founded on October 2, 1962, by a formal decree from Archbishop Thomas Connelly of the Archdiocese of Seattle, St. Thomas More Parish began a legacy of faith and education. By the summer of 1966, the parish church and school were completed, and the first Mass was celebrated on July 31. That same year, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur moved into the convent and began teaching at St. Thomas More School, which opened in September with 120 students in 1st through 3rd grade. Initially dressed in green uniforms, the students now proudly wear blue. Over the years, additional grades were added, expanding the school to include Kindergarten through 8th grade.

In 1995, the school facility grew to include a full-size library, science lab, computer lab, music room, and counseling space. By 1998, an Extended Care Enrichment Program was launched, offering before and after-school care, and in 1999, the school achieved full accreditation from both the Northwestern Association of Schools and Colleges and the Western Catholic Education Association.

Today, St. Thomas More School has a dedicated team of classroom teachers, specialists in music and physical education, a librarian, a multi-sensory learning specialist, preschool and remediation teachers, and a school counselor. Our vibrant extracurricular programs include Drama, Speech Teams, Chess, Choir, Band, and Lego League and STEM.

The school's vision for the future is guided by long-range plans that have brought new programs and enhancements, such as a new playground, basketball hoops, and a grass athletic field. In 2006, Preschool became part of the school's offerings, and in 2015 it moved into a new, spacious facility in Dalton Hall. Upgraded technology and digital access now support both students and staff, and our curriculum includes World Language instruction for students in grades 3-8. Public speaking and speech presentations remain a key component of our students' education, preparing them to excel in their future endeavors.

At St. Thomas More School, we remain committed to nurturing a strong Catholic identity while equipping students with the skills and values to be active, faith-filled citizens in the 21st century.

“

**Therefore my brothers and sisters, be  
steadfast, immovable, always abounding  
in the world of the Lord, knowing that in  
the Lord your labor is not in vain.**

1 Corinthians 15:58

”



You belong.

