



ST. THOMAS MORE

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN

ONE FAMILY ♦ ONE MISSION ♦ ONE VISION



INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to announce that the St. Thomas More Catholic High School Strategic Planning Committee has completed a strategic plan for our school. This process included reviewing all aspects of our school: mission, Catholic identity, academics, athletics, co-curricular activities, operational vitality, advancement, leadership, and faculty support within our school. From this process, the following strategic plan document was produced. This document provides the “big picture” of where we are, where we are going, and how we plan to get there.

The work done on this strategic plan provides direction so that we are all focused on the same vision. It is a guide to help our school’s leadership make decisions that affect our students and our school community. This document provides an overview of the Strategic Plan, if you are interested in viewing the entire document please visit www.stmcougars.net/strategicplan.

Now that the initial work is complete, it is left up to all of us to see that this plan takes shape and influences the lives of our students. You, our STM community, are an important part of this plan. Your involvement and generous support create the shape of our school. Please enjoy perusing this plan and know that it contains the future of St. Thomas More Catholic High School.

We thank all of you who graciously gave of your time and talents to participate in this strategic planning process. A special thanks to the strategic planning committee for helping to make this plan a reality. We ask that you please pray for our school community and the success of **One Family One Mission One Vision**.

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SCHOOL HISTORY

The tradition of Catholic schools has been part of Lafayette and Acadiana since 1821. St. Thomas More Catholic High School opened its doors in 1982, after four years of hard work and planning by many who were dedicated to providing quality Catholic education in southwest Lafayette.

Beginning as a consolidation of two Catholic high schools, STM has expanded over the past years into an educational community serving the 12 owner church parishes – Holy Cross, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Wisdom, Sacred Heart-Broussard, St. Anne-Youngsville, St. Edmond, St. John’s Cathedral, St. Joseph-Milton, St. Mary, St. Jules, St. Joseph-Broussard, and St. Puis – and the surrounding churches and civil parishes. Located on a 45-acre tract with 3.5 acres under roof, STM provides a co-educational environment for academic, spiritual, athletic, and co-curricular pursuits.

By 1994, STM was described as a flagship. The school population had grown to more than 800 students. Over the years, the school became a center for ministry education, preparing young people to be Christian leaders in the Church and the community.

A forerunner in student accomplishments, 98 percent of STM’s graduates move on to higher education. Alumni have attended colleges and universities throughout the US and Europe, including Harvard University, Georgetown University, Boston College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, and Oxford University, to name a few.

In 1998, expansion of our facilities included the addition of a multi-purpose room, seven classrooms, and a second gym, which allows us to better serve our growing student enrollment. Additionally, an athletic complex including a stadium, football/soccer field, and a track was completed which allows St. Thomas More to host home athletic events.

The student population grew to more than 1,000 in the mid 2000s, with a surge in 2005 due to Katrina evacuees coming to Lafayette from the New Orleans area. Extensive infrastructure was placed in the facility to facilitate the increasing use of technology.

By 2010, more than 700 computers were available for use by students and faculty. In the Fall 2010, STM was re-accredited by SACS/AdvancED receiving 13 commendations and 3 recommendations.

At the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, STM began a 1:1 tablet program. The program was implemented to integrate technology into the curriculum in order to prepare our students for college and beyond. As technology continues to evolve, STM is committed to ensure that our students thrive both locally and globally.

Throughout this growth, STM has continued to uphold the strong moral Catholic values instilled by the religious orders of the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament, the Mount Carmel Sisters, and the Sisters of the Divine Providence. Currently, St. Thomas More has three alumni priests and six seminarians. Quality continuing education and formation of the theology faculty continues to be a top priority of the owner pastors.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning is an ongoing process that captures your mission, vision, and purpose.

Strategic Planning:

- Captures **strengths** such as programs and activities desired, so that they are recognized, maintained and nurtured.
- Captures **opportunities** to improve programs and activities and begin to identify specific initiatives and action steps to move those activities forward.
- Identifies **gaps** and the **action steps** required to close those gaps.
- Creates a **process** for the strategic plan to be measured, accountable, and to have continuous progress and adaptation to new challenges and opportunities.

STM has engaged in various planning phases over the last five or six years. Although that work never resulted in a published document that captured a comprehensive strategic plan, the work done was very beneficial in providing perspective for improvements in the day to day activities that deliver on STM's mission. That work also provided an important foundation for our current process.

Over that time, there have been numerous meetings, retreats and focus groups. There have been sessions moderated by local and national planning consultants. In addition, a local public relations firm, BBR Creative, conducted a significant research and branding project. The result was a significant body of valuable information, a new logo, and branding strategies that have already been implemented for STM.

The completion of a final strategic plan that would include a published document has been delayed by the transitions in our school leadership. However, for the school year 2013-2014, the school leadership and the Advisory Council has made it a priority to conclude the process and create a strategic plan. This includes publishing a document that would communicate the strategic priorities, initial action steps, and a framework to identify future priorities, make decisions, and take action.

Over the last 12 months, many individuals participated in the final stages of the process. This included parents, volunteers, faculty and staff, the chancellor, and members of the community. One of the more informative and stimulating parts of the process was working group discussions, including a cross-section of individuals that focused on each of the eight strategic planning priorities.

Finally, a review, understanding and discussion around a report titled the National Standards and Benchmarks for Catholic education was critical in the formation of the strategic planning document. This document is a great resource and provided great insight as to the strategic priorities of Catholic high schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement

St. Thomas More Catholic High School educates students to be seekers of truth, individuals of character, and “God’s servant first.”

Vision Statement

St. Thomas More Catholic High School is an exemplary Catholic High School that is mission focused and serves primarily the registered parishioners of the 12 owner parishes. St. Thomas More Catholic High School seeks to help students reach their individual potential and is committed to the development of the whole person.

St. Thomas More Catholic High School is grounded in Catholicism and integrates Christian values in all aspects of the student’s education.

St. Thomas More Catholic High School offers a rigorous academic program. The school prepares students to be global leaders and 21st century thinkers. St. Thomas More Catholic High School supports its students with a dedicated faculty, technology, facilities, and resources that create the very best opportunities for success in life beyond high school.

St. Thomas More Catholic High School engages with its stakeholders, including owner parishes, parents, families, schools within the owner parishes, alumni and the community. The school is a good steward of its resources.

St. Thomas More Catholic High School graduates are community-minded servant leaders who make decisions based on Catholic values and teachings.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Fostering a Mission and Student Centered School

Goal 2: Creating a Strong Catholic Identity

Goal 3: Offering Academic Excellence for All Students

Goal 4: Educating the Whole Student

Goal 5: Providing Strong Governance and Leadership

Goal 6: Ensuring Operational Vitality

Goal 7: Utilizing Comprehensive Advancement Initiatives

Goal 8: Supporting and Attracting a Superior Faculty Who are Mission Focused

Overview

STM shall strive to make an excellent academic program in a faith filled environment accessible to families in our owner parishes. The Strategic Plan identifies many opportunities to advance efforts in academic excellence for all, Catholic identity, educating the whole student, and attracting and supporting a superior faculty who are mission focused. These areas are supported by creating the right facilities and resources which are achieved by an effective financial plan supported by a comprehensive advancement strategy. Finally, this is all tied together with outstanding leadership and a governance structure that is not only effective but creates clarity and a cohesive effort.

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STRATEGIC PLAN DELIVERABLES

Now that the Strategic Plan is complete, you probably wonder what impact this plan will really have on our school? How will the students be impacted? When will this all happen? This document provides a road map to take St. Thomas More Catholic High School forward. By having this plan, leadership, parents and faculty will have the same vision – the same destination. This plan will be implemented over the next five years. Just as any strategic plan, this one is flexible and may change depending on economic and academic variables.

The Strategic Plan identifies many opportunities for our school. In creating this plan, the committee and focus groups were guided by the school’s mission to educate students to be seekers of truth, individuals of character, and “God’s servant first.”

This mission sets the foundation on which STM was built. For this reason, it is important that we continue to communicate and engage our owner parishes in our school. Whether this happens via invitations to our school Masses or through the STM Revival, we are continually committed to our owner parishes. Weekly Mass and bi-weekly confession opportunities are so important to STM that this plan acknowledges the importance of developing a long-term plan to sustain clergy engagement in our school. Improvement in our chapel facilities and resources is a high priority in this vision.

Another driving force in our school is academic excellence. By tracking the academic success of our graduates within their first three semesters of college, we will identify the success of our existing curriculum and determine the areas of the curriculum that need improvement. We will provide real world experiences that will create graduates that are college and career ready.

The knowledge of our professional faculty will be enhanced by a dedicated professional development workspace, allowing teachers to increase their knowledge of technology integration and address new instructional approaches. Our new teachers will benefit from a support system that will strengthen their academic instruction and create confidence in them that will exude into the classroom.

Additional classroom space will decrease class size, increase the number of electives offered, decrease the number of roaming teachers, and in conjunction with our existing curriculum, provide an opportunity to offer dual enrollment courses for juniors and seniors to garner college credit.

Increased space will allow the opportunity to increase student enrollment in our Options Program, which in turn will allow us to service the needs of our feeder schools special needs programs. Our Option Program will then have the necessary space for transition and life skills training.

Our Art Department will have additional space for teaching and storage. Art supplies and materials will be removed from plant maintenance areas, decreasing fire hazard and increasing the safety of our school. Additional storage space throughout the school will remove equipment from halls, classrooms, gyms, book room and the chair closet. With additional storage space, the school will be able to purchase equipment that is typically rented reducing the school's operational expenses.

The cafeteria will increase in size, providing seating for additional students. This will remove students from the floor in the canteen and still allow the school to maintain two lunch periods. The plan encourages the addition of an outside dining patio and green space.

Multipurpose facilities will provide a new stage area, meeting space and increase co-curricular practice areas. This facility also allows the opportunity to increase co-curricular activities offered to the students. The facility will provide a separate after-hour entrance into the school increasing building security and reducing electrical usage.

Additional multipurpose facilities will increase classroom and weight room space to meet the needs of the physical education classes and athletics. Additional locker rooms will allow boy and girl athletes participating in outdoor sports to have a place to change and store their personal items and equipment. Through the creation of the multipurpose facility, more space will become available for indoor sports and other activities.

The girls' softball field will be moved to school owned property providing access to restrooms and concessions. A ticket booth will be added creating an entrance into sporting events. While increasing facility space, the plan also allows for much needed additional parking with a covered walkway and easy access to and from the student parking lot.

As a result of this plan, we will create an environment that provides for more effective movement on campus and a more effective manner of moving vehicles on and off the grounds, which will create a safer campus for all.

The implementation of this plan will most certainly enhance our role as an institution to provide an excellent Catholic education in a faith filled environment and achieve our mission of educating students to be seekers of truth, individuals of character, and "God's servant first."