



ST. THOMAS
AQUINAS
MIDDLE SCHOOL

St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School

2020-2021

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Principles of Practice

We honour our children.

We provide a safe and secure environment.

We live and proudly proclaim our Catholic Christian faith.

We provide quality education in a Catholic environment.

We pray as an educational community.

We practice servant-leadership.

We focus on our mission through clarity of purpose.

We value our staff.

Vision:

Learning, Loving and Growing With Christ

Mission:

Inspiring, through Christ, passionate citizens by empowering learners with authentic experiences.

School Profile:

At St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School, our priority is student growth and success. We proudly profess our Catholic faith by permeating faith into all aspects of our school community. We encourage and support our students as they grow in their sacramental journey, from Baptism to Confirmation. Our school community actively participates in citizenship activities through our focus on the Circle of Courage and social justice projects. We believe that educating our students is a collective responsibility. Through a collaborative approach with our stakeholders as partners, we will maximize the potential of all students. These stakeholders include our parents, students, staff and the community as a whole. Our team focuses on creating an inviting and inclusive school community where diversity is celebrated and valued. Emphasis is placed on creating an environment where students feel connected and cared for as contributing members of our school community. In an effort to ensure all students are successful, our team utilizes a differentiated approach to teaching. As a faculty, we provide challenging and engaging curricular learning within and across subject disciplines. As a school, we design and embrace project based learning that allows students to engage in in-depth study of authentic problems that they care about and are interested in. Such opportunities to harness students' passion to explore problems or projects that affect their lives and the lives of their friends and family, enable our students to become experts across subjects, use 21st century skills, and to collaborate with others at school and beyond to devise innovative solutions. Students will be provided with multiple opportunities to make sense of ideas and information, practice new skills, and to demonstrate what they have learned in a variety of ways. At St. Thomas Aquinas, we have access to new technologies that will serve as powerful tools for students to access, search, analyze, store, manage, create and communicate information and knowledge. These technologies support our focus on learning, thinking, communicating, collaborating,

and working in much more powerful, personalized, integrated, connected and efficient ways. We believe that success is best achieved in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. This will allow for a climate that supports relationship building and authentic partnerships among students, faculty, parents and community members. We believe that these relationships are integral to supporting students' academic learning, fostering students' citizenship skills, and ensuring student responsibility.

Assurance Framework Report Card

| Assurance Framework | Current Result | Prev Year Result | Prev 3 Year Average | Current Result (Alberta) | Prev Year Result (Alberta) | Prev 3 Year Average (Alberta) | Achievement | Improvement | Overall |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Program of Studies | 88.25% | 92.96% | 87.89% | 82.42% | 82.19% | 81.99% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Education Quality | 90.61% | 93.18% | 92.48% | 90.31% | 90.20% | 90.12% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Citizenship | 85.31% | 86.22% | 84.42% | 83.27% | 82.85% | 83.17% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Life Long Learning | 82.22% | 78.50% | 77.22% | | | | | Maintained | |
| Work Preparation | 87.24% | 91.03% | 86.68% | 84.10% | 82.99% | 82.72% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Satisfaction with Program Access | 84.94% | 86.82% | 84.95% | | | | | Maintained | |
| Program of Studies - At Risk Students | 92.96% | 93.01% | 90.80% | | | | | Maintained | |
| Safe and Caring | 92.40% | 93.36% | 91.30% | 89.40% | 89.01% | 89.17% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Parental Involvement | 82.29% | 87.62% | 87.80% | 81.75% | 81.31% | 81.23% | High | Maintained | Good |
| In-service jurisdiction Needs | 89.52% | 95.35% | 94.55% | | | | | Maintained | |
| School Improvement | 87.95% | 94.08% | 89.94% | 81.55% | 81.04% | 80.91% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |

Faith Outcome FO.1: Nourished by grace and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we joyfully embrace, live, and teach the Gospel spirit.

| Nourished by grace and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we joyfully embrace, live, and teach the Gospel spirit. | 2019/20 | 2018/19 | 2017/18 | 3 Year Average |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| I learn about the Catholic Faith at my school. | 97.90% | 99.77% | 97.51% | 98.40% |
| Prayer helps me feel closer to God. | 90.29% | 91.60% | 91.81% | 91.23% |
| I believe that God created me. | 85.18% | 85.40% | 91.30% | 87.29% |
| I believe that the Catholic Faith teaches me a good way to live. | 91.97% | 93.66% | 93.33% | 92.98% |
| I learn about God in all my classes. | 80.95% | 83.80% | 83.11% | 82.62% |
| (Grade 7&10) My teachers show me what it is like to develop a relationship with Jesus. | 92.96% | 86.30% | 84.75% | 88.00% |
| We pray regularly at my school. | 93.72% | | | 93.72% |
| I learn about the 3 persons of God - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. | 89.97% | | | 89.97% |
| At my school, staff and students talk about God. | 86.58% | | | 86.58% |
| I believe that I should use my knowledge (what I learn) to serve others and help those in need. | 93.36% | | | 93.36% |
| My teacher explains how our faith connects with the topics I am learning in my classes. | 89.36% | | | 89.36% |
| I believe that God created the world and He wants us to explore His creation. | 80.14% | | | 80.14% |

The final 6 survey questions are not longitudinal, these are revised each year to measure current themes and as a result there is no previous years' data.

| AERR Comments |
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| <p>Our overarching goal for the year was to ensure that our curricular delivery was fully infused in our Catholic Faith. Our first goal was to increase the understanding of Spirituality and Rationality with our staff and students. To deepen our understanding and comfort level of these two Characteristics of Catholic Identity, teachers and administrators, along with the assistance of the school's faith coach, provided authentic learning opportunities through various classroom lessons and multiple school-based events/activities. 90% of students surveyed indicated that they learned about the three persons of God on the Schollie survey which is a direct connection to the focus on Spirituality. Additionally, we worked to develop an ecological consciousness in our community to protect the beauty of God's world with intentional teaching on stewardship related to the Catholic characteristic of Rationality. This took place through our Science, Religion and Options courses. Our school also built an aquaponics greenhouse to further this goal in an authentic learning setting. Student feedback on the Schollie</p> |

Survey indicated that 94% of students believe they should use their knowledge (what they learn) to serve others and help those in need. Further, 80% of students indicated that they believe God created the world and wants us to explore his creation. This data demonstrated that our targeted focus on spirituality achieved the desired result of helping students develop an understanding of Rationality and Spirituality.

Our team continued to expand our focus on permeation throughout the 2019/20 school year. As a staff we continued to develop connections, to infuse our faith, within curricular areas. Schollie Survey data indicated success in this focus area. 95% of students felt that we prayed regularly as a school community. 76% of the students indicated that their teacher explained how our faith connected with the topics that they were learning about in their classes. However, only 58% of students indicated that they learned about God in all their classes. This data indicated that while there has been some success in increasing permeation, this must continue to be an ongoing focus area for our team into the 2020/21 school year.

Comment on School Goals

Our overarching goal continues to be to ensure that our curricular delivery is fully infused with our Catholic Faith. Our first goal is to increase the understanding of Hospitality and Justice with our staff and students. As a result of growing our understanding and comfort level of these two Characteristics of Catholic Identity, teachers and administrators, along with the assistance of the school's Faith Coach, will provide authentic opportunities to put their learning into action through various classroom lessons and multiple school based events/activities. As we continue to work on permeation, we have worked alongside our Faith Coach to plan professional development for our teachers that includes time to collaborate and share best practices. After evaluating our progress from last year with regards to this goal, our team is pleased that the Schollie survey results indicate our efforts for improving permeation have yielded a 10% increase from our previous year related to permeation on the student Schollie Survey. While we have experienced growth, our team has decided to continue to expand our focus on permeation into the 2020/21 school year in an effort to continue this positive growth.

Division Goals

Enrich our division Catholicity by focusing on the two chosen characteristics of Catholic identity. (2020-2021 - Hospitality and Justice)

Lessons are permeated in process or content to teach students how to develop their worldview by mastering provincial outcomes in a Catholic context.

School Goals

Develop an understanding among staff and students of Justice and Hospitality through focused professional development, direct teaching and social justice initiatives.

Enhance the capacity of teachers to permeate their lessons and daily routines with their Catholic Faith through the use of content and process based learning activities.

Outcome 1: Alberta's students are successful.

| Alberta's students are successful. | Current Result | Prev Year Result | Prev 3 Year Average | Current Result (Alberta) | Prev Year Result (Alberta) | Prev 3 Year Average (Alberta) | Achievement | Improvement | Overall |
|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| PAT Exam Measures | | | | | | | | | |
| PAT: Acceptable | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** |
| PAT: Excellence | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** |
| Assurance Framework | | | | | | | | | |
| Citizenship | 85.31% | 86.22% | 84.42% | 83.27% | 82.85% | 83.17% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |

AERR Comments

We continued to target results on Provincial Achievement Exams as a key focus for school improvement at St. Thomas. While examining the data, we saw a slight decline in the number of students who achieved the acceptable and excellence standards. However, this decline did not fall below the "maintained" range as outlined by Alberta Education. We continued to have teachers meet with grade and curricular teams to analyze previous exam data, identify essential outcomes, and develop learning activities that encourage higher level thinking skills. We further enhanced this by targeting formative assessment strategies as a means to continue to improve instruction and results in our school. We were encouraged that our results for active citizenship and work preparation both increased from the previous year and were classified as "very high" on the accountability pillar. This support from our parents validates the improvement work undertaken by our staff.

Comment on School Goals

Due in part to the realities of the interrupted school year and the absence of Provincial Achievement Test data we have identified that there is the potential for significant learning gaps for students. As we look to meet the needs of all learners and identify each student's measure of success a strong focus has been placed on identifying individual student learning progressions. This process involves a collaborative approach to identifying class profiles, tiering student needs and supports as well as utilizing transition meetings regarding best practices and effective strategies previously used to meet the needs of students. In conjunction with teacher data identification, school-based ILT, counsellors, FSEC, EAs as well as our Division MS2 Team have helped to support identified student gaps and needs. In order to ensure that there are limited learning gaps in content and skills, due to the transient reality of this school year, grade teams have aligned their planning and Google Classroom platforms to the new Division Curriculum Expectations and timelines. Aligning instruction enables our teachers to be adaptive and flexible to the needs of the students both in the classroom and at home (AHL).

Division Goals

Create and maintain optimal student learning experiences

Utilize timely, targeted, and flexible formative and summative assessment to enhance student learning

School Goals

Create and maintain student success by utilizing tools to identify and enhance optimal learning opportunities.

Outcome 2: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in Alberta are successful.

| First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in Alberta are successful. | Current Result | Prev Year Result | Prev 3 Year Average | Current Result (Alberta) | Prev Year Result (Alberta) | Prev 3 Year Average (Alberta) | Achievement | Improvement | Overall |
|---|----------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| PAT Exam Measures (FNMI) | | | | | | | | | |
| PAT: Acceptable (FNMI) | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** |
| PAT: Excellence (FNMI) | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** |

| AERR Comments |
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| A large portion of our professional learning was targeted to expand our focus on restorative practices, indigenous teachings and reconciliation. Based on school-based survey data, we were able to determine that 94.5% of staff indicated an increased comfort with the requirements of the Teacher Quality Standard as it related to First Nations, Metis and Inuit education. Further, 97% of staff expressed that the focus on reconciliation and restorative practices at St. Thomas has helped shift their beliefs, knowledge and attitudes towards Indigenous education. |

| Comment on School Goals |
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| Our school goal is rooted in honouring traditional teachings and exposing students to multiple learning opportunities and resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture and history. By offering support from the First Nations, Métis and Inuit team as well as invited community members, staff will continue to build capacity by engaging in authentic learning opportunities that will in turn provide students with unique learning experiences tied to Indigenous culture. Our data indicates that 92% of our community feel that our school is safe and caring. Exploring this number further shows that 78% of students feel other “students treat them well”. Our student recognition strategy reinforces students' feeling of connectedness. This plan centers on students being commended weekly, monthly, and yearly for their individual displays of the Circle of Courage Pillars. Students are recognized for demonstrating acts of Generosity, Independence, Mastery, and Belonging thus strengthening connection and community. |

| Division Goals |
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| Develop and provide authentic, professional learning opportunities connected to local Indigenous stakeholders to build foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students. |
| Initiate programs designed to support Indigenous ways of knowing that include cultural perspectives, student connection, Indigenous community connection and building capacity in schools. |

| School Goals |
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| Teachers will share a deeper understanding of the beauty, value, and wisdom of Indigenous Culture with our |

school community.

Outcome 3: Alberta has excellent teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders.

| Alberta has excellent teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders. | Current Result | Prev Year Result | Prev 3 Year Average | Current Result (Alberta) | Prev Year Result (Alberta) | Prev 3 Year Average (Alberta) | Achievement | Improvement | Overall |
|---|----------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Assurance Framework | | | | | | | | | |
| Program of Studies | 88.25% | 92.96% | 87.89% | 82.42% | 82.19% | 81.99% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |

| AERR Comments |
|---|
| <p>Professional development at St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School provided teachers with significant opportunities to reflect on their practice, engage in focused pedagogical improvement, and collaborate with colleagues to achieve optimal learning for themselves and in turn, for their students. Our team targeted this growth around the Teacher and Leadership Quality Standards as parallel collaborative professional learning opportunities.</p> <p>Each teacher and administrator developed Micro Learning Goals targeting specific areas of the standards they identified as growth areas. These goals were revisited during collaborative professional development monthly. As instructional leaders, our administration team scheduled purposeful walkthroughs and reflective conversations with teachers based on their micro-learning goals to continue ongoing reflection and growth. Overall, 241 walkthroughs took place prior to the shutdown of schools with 87 virtual walkthroughs taking place since March 13.</p> <p>Our Schollie results showed 96% satisfaction with the support given to create and implement teachers' own personal professional growth plan as well as 96 percent satisfaction with the opportunity to share expertise and skills. Further, 93 percent were satisfied with relation to how school Professional Development events are assisting them in improving instructional practice. In addition to the Schollie survey, staff were also provided an opportunity to provide feedback specific to the Micro Learning Goals Model. 83% of staff indicated that the Micro Learning Goals and collaboration that occurred this year as part of the school professional development plan helped to improve the instruction in their classroom. Further, 80% of staff indicated that continuing the Micro Learning Goal Model would be valuable at St. Thomas.</p> |

| Comment on School Goals |
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| <p>Our teaching staff is engaged in professional work specifically targeted on creating instructional learning goals. This process involves collecting data (video, peer feedback), reflection on current practice, identifying an instructional goal and purposeful implementation of strategies based on research to ultimately become an ongoing part of their professional practice. As a central part of our professional development, this focus area is centred on demonstrating a professional body of knowledge through the Teaching Quality Standard. This process will provide our team an opportunity to improve classroom instruction while also permitting staff the professional autonomy to target key learning goals for their individual classrooms. As indicated on our ACOL survey results, over 90% of students, parents, and teachers are satisfied with the quality of teaching at our school. This data demonstrates a significant strength of our instructional practices. The goal established will work to ensure that</p> |

with the implementation of the new standards, this high level of teaching quality will be maintained and potentially improved upon.

Division Goals

Enhance instructional leadership practices through the implementation of the Four Pillars of Instructional Leadership

School Goals

Teachers and Administrators will engage in reflective practice based on the Teacher Quality Standard and Leadership Quality Standard to improve personal professional practice, develop an instructional focus, and enhance student learning.

Create opportunities to ensure that every student and staff member experiences individual expressions of gratitude, connection and care via a full school focus on being a safe, caring and welcoming community.

Outcome 4: Alberta's education system is well governed and managed.

| Alberta's education system is well governed and managed. | Current Result | Prev Year Result | Prev 3 Year Average | Current Result (Alberta) | Prev Year Result (Alberta) | Prev 3 Year Average (Alberta) | Achievement | Improvement | Overall |
|--|----------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Assurance Framework | | | | | | | | | |
| Education Quality | 90.61% | 93.18% | 92.48% | 90.31% | 90.20% | 90.12% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Life Long Learning | 82.22% | 78.50% | 77.22% | | | | | Maintained | |
| Work Preparation | 87.24% | 91.03% | 86.68% | 84.10% | 82.99% | 82.72% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Safe and Caring | 92.40% | 93.36% | 91.30% | 89.40% | 89.01% | 89.17% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |
| Parental Involvement | 82.29% | 87.62% | 87.80% | 81.75% | 81.31% | 81.23% | High | Maintained | Good |
| School Improvement | 87.95% | 94.08% | 89.94% | 81.55% | 81.04% | 80.91% | Very High | Maintained | Excellent |

AERR Comments

Engaging stakeholders to inform practice continues to be a focus at St. Thomas. We have implemented a variety of opportunities for all stakeholders to be informed about the events in our school community utilizing social media and parent events. We continue to explore new ways to provide parents an opportunity to have meaningful engagement in the education of their children. This year we endeavored to promote more events using our social media including our celebrations and school council meetings, both of which had increased parent attendance over last year. We are excited that 75 parents returned our Schollie Survey giving us meaningful data to keep moving our school forward.

Comment on School Goals

Engaging our stakeholders, especially our parent community in meaningful opportunities for collaboration remains a priority at St Thomas. Results from the Accountability Pillar indicated that only 71.4% of parents felt they had input into decisions being made at the school. This result is trending downward and has been identified as a vital focus area for improvement. With purposeful strategies put in place, such as a weekly communication tool (SMORE) as well as a pre-school council survey and invitation resulted in encouraging data. Specifically, our SMORE has resulted in an average of 600 views a week with many of those utilizing our website and social media platforms. Regular principal messages will be distributed to parents and students on an ongoing basis as COVID protocols continue to require significant changes to school operational procedures. Decisions made relative to these procedures will continue to be based on student, parent and teacher feedback. We will continue to encourage parents to complete feedback surveys via proactive communication and student contests. Additionally, staff feedback and engagement remains a priority. To connect staff and keep them informed on a

regular basis it has been pivotal to provide daily and weekly question and answer information, in relation to COVID protocols and operational questions. In addition, numerous scheduled weekly and monthly meetings have been scheduled and are occurring with key school-based teams which have been met with positive feedback. Staff wellness has also been targeted throughout the school year in an effort to continue to empower teachers to deliver effective instruction and to create optimal learning experiences for their students.

Division Goals

Know, understand and respond to students' individual learning, through authentic, developmentally appropriate programming.

Create opportunities for relevant stakeholders to provide input and collaborate into how well the school and/or school division is governed and managed.

Develop an understanding of mental wellness and create the capacity to respond to identified needs.

School Goals

Create opportunities for stakeholders to engage in meaningful collaborative opportunities and to provide input on school governance and management.

Create opportunities for staff to engage in meaningful professional development opportunities focused on staff wellness.