



2020-21 Annual Report/ Accreditation Self-Study

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School 2020-21 Annual Report/Accreditation Self-Study

This year we completed our self-study in the NCEA accreditation process, which correlates to the rigorous National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary schools. In the spirit of transparency and accountability, we are offering our self-study as well as the visiting accreditation team's summary comments, for your review.

This document represents all of the initiatives and programs that we have implemented towards achieving excellence in Catholic education, as well as future endeavors necessary to continue the tradition of a dynamic education centered in Christ.

We invite you to read our report and we welcome your comments and suggestions for growth.

Yours in Christ,



Ryan Corcoran
Principal
Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School

Saint Thomas the Apostle Accreditation Site Team Report

Overall Comments:

Mission and Catholic Identity

1. Upon entering the building, it is evident that Saint Thomas is a Catholic school. One experiences a warm welcome and a vibrant community full of activity. The school has happy and engaged students. Hallways and classrooms are filled with beautiful artworks and signs of faith.
2. The mission statement includes a commitment to the Catholic identity of the school and all constituents know and understand the mission. It is evident that the mission is alive and more than just words on paper. The school embraces diversity and makes continuous efforts to bring their mission to children in the surrounding areas through any means possible, such as speakers and retreats.

Governance and Leadership

3. There is evidence of a strong relationship between the parish and the school at all levels: Pastor/Principal, Board/Councils, and Parish and School staff, Parents/Parishioners/Students.
4. School leaders, teachers, and board members generously share best practices with other local schools and within the alliance of Catholic Schools. Of particular note is the focus on being an inclusive educational community, with a robust program for meeting the needs of all students.
5. Fr. Jim referred to school leadership establishing a positive atmosphere within the school. In many schools, this is referred to as "school culture." Regardless of its descriptor, Saint Thomas certainly has a strong Catholic school culture that begins with Catholic identity and reaches well into academics and extracurriculars.

Academic Excellence

6. Parents see the value of the school and parent groups recognize the efforts of the teaching staff and the administration and show their appreciation through gifts and social events.
7. Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind.
8. School wide and aggregated student data are normed to appropriate populations and are shared with all stakeholders.

Operational Vitality

9. The school has made intentional efforts to develop a marketing plan. Materials are visually appealing and communicated across a variety of mediums.
10. The school has a well-developed school facility improvement report. This careful and intentional planning is essential to the future of the school.
11. There is a commitment to operational vitality. The school leadership is looking at new ways to market itself and continues to investigate ways to diversify the school's funding sources.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 1

An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence, and service.

Benchmark 1.1

The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School mission/vision guides all that we do.

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School's Principal, Assistant Principal, School Superintendent and Board of Education ensure that the mission statement includes a commitment to our Catholic identity, simply by declaring that we are "Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School" in all our communications. The mission statement "Dynamic Education Centered in Christ" exemplifies our vision of being a "leading innovative Catholic school that invites students to love and serve Christ and engage culture with a saintly passion." Partnering our mission and vision, we affirm our commitment to Catholic identity.

As a result of strategic planning, we stand by our mission and vision. You will find documentation in the Summary of Strategic Planning Sessions in April 2017. You will also see that our mission statement is displayed in all classrooms, the gym, all school communication, PR materials, website, and social media.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 1

An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence, and service.

Benchmark 1.2

The governing body and the leader/ leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.



Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Board of Education meetings begin and end in prayers that ask to help us live our mission statement, providing a dynamic education centered in Christ. Our concluding prayer explicitly asks that the plans discussed be brought to life promoting our mission to and for our school community. Our leadership team is committed to bring this to our faculty/staff meetings as well. Our mission is displayed at the top of every faculty/staff meeting agenda.

To strengthen the foundation of our planning, we have created a mission effectiveness committee within the board to examine factors that contribute to our school's mission and vision: the direction of the GR Diocese, the focus of our parish, the competitive landscape we are in, societal trends, the impact of virtual learning while living out our mission, and the critical realities that impact our ministry.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 1

An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence, and service.

Benchmark 1.3

The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni) to clarify, review, and renew the school's mission statement.



Self score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Annually, the Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School administrative staff creates a State of the School report, detailing mission effectiveness by highlighting: data, financial information, MAP and PSAT comparisons, policy and planning, development and outreach and unique challenges we face in our school community. Our Principal meets with parents, faculty and staff to clarify, review and renew our commitment to our mission and vision. This transparency brings the community together and extends a multitude of opportunities for parent engagement and input.

Our school improvement process includes faculty bi-weekly meetings. Ideas and improvements from these meetings are presented to the Board of Education, which includes representatives from school parents and the greater community. The Board formally evaluates and approves goals that are aligned with our mission, vision and long-range plan.

In 2015-16, we formally evaluated and improved our mission statement. At that time, we determined that this statement reflected our living and vibrant faith that permeates all we are and all we do. We will review the mission again at the next strategic plan, scheduled for the fall of 2021.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 1

An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence, and service.

Benchmark 1.4

The mission statement is visible and contained in official documents.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School mission/vision is visible everywhere! It's prominently displayed in the office and in every classroom. In addition, it's on the first page of our website and further described within the Mission/Vision section. Our social media pages include our mission/vision statement. It's included on our weekly newsletter, our school family directory, our school letterhead, strategic planning documents, marketing materials, on the gym wall, in the faculty/staff handbook, and in the parent/student handbook. All of our students can easily recite and access the school mission. Lastly, our leadership team (Principal, Asst. Principal and Director of Outreach) clearly articulate and expand on our mission and vision when giving tours, at parent information sessions and throughout the year at various parent and student gatherings.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 1

An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence, and service.

Benchmark 1.5

All constituents know and understand the mission.

Self-score

Level 4



Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School students, faculty, staff, parents and visitors see the Mission/Vision prominently displayed throughout our school. Constituents can recite the mission statement and articulate examples of how it is implemented in our school, whether at Chapel, in the classrooms, or at meetings involving the broader community and stakeholders.

Over the last five years, our program effectiveness surveys have consistently revealed that parents understand our school mission with the following:

- Mission/Vision clearly express a Catholic identity.
- Everything we do is guided by our Mission/Vision.
- Everyone in school knows and understands the school Mission/Vision.

We will review the mission again at the next strategic plan, scheduled for the fall of 2021.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 2

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.

Benchmark 2.1

Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious requirements and standards of the (arch) diocese.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, we utilize the Diocese of Grand Rapids religious education curriculum in conjunction with our Mission/Vision to guide our faith instruction. We create our religious curriculum using the Diocesan Anchor Standards, the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, current Catholic school practices, and best practices research from the Diocesan Curriculum Institute.

Some of our Saint Thomas school teachers assisted in reviewing and updating the Diocese religious education curriculum to ensure that our faith instruction is rooted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Through our religion courses, Saint Thomas students are invited to love and serve Christ, respect all people, value creation and serve others with a saintly passion.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 2

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.

Benchmark 2.2

Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time and the selection of texts and other curricular materials.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, Religion classes are an integral part of our academic day, which includes a designated religion class in all grades. Our littlest learners (grades P3-3rd) visit the atrium for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program. Kindergarten through 8th graders participate in Theology of the Body. Our 7th and 8th grade students focus on Dynamic Catholic's Decision Point, featuring Matthew Kelly. Our teachers are certified Catechists and trained in Theology of the Body. Other textbooks/resources that we use include:

- 1st grade – Finding God and God's Gift, Exploring Faith through Art, Blessings
- 2nd grade – Finding God and God's Gift, My Own Mass booklet, Blessings
- 3rd grade – We Believe
- 4th grade – Christ our Life
- 5th grade – We Worship
- 6th grade – God Calls a People and Spirit of Truth
- 7th grade – Jesus, the Way, the Truth
- 8th grade – Church: Then and Now, Confirmed in the Spirit

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 2

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.

Benchmark 2.3

Faculty who teach religion meet (arch) diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.

Self-score

Level 2

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty have catechist certificates, ranging from basic to Master catechists – with the exception of our two new 2020 hires (Grades 1 & Preschool 3) and our 5th grade teacher, who applied for certification in November 2020.

Our kindergarten teacher is a certified Master Catechist in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and our preschool 4s teacher is an Advanced Catechist and teaches Level 1 and Level 2 to preschool 3s – 3rd grade Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. In addition, our Assistant Principal, who oversees the teaching staff and curriculum implementation, is a certified Master Catechist. We have an Atrium in the lower level of our Ministry Center and our students in grades P3 through third grade visit this space weekly to experience this hands-on religious education program.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 2

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.

Benchmark 2.4

The school's Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects, including religious education.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

As a Catholic school, we integrate our Catholic identity into all we do. We have clearly articulated standards for all subjects and strive to incorporate faith into each of them.

In keeping with our Catholic identity, Saint Thomas sets clearly articulated standards for and expectations of academic and intellectual excellence in all subjects including religious education. We are dedicated to providing excellent spiritual and academic information in the development of well-rounded individuals centered in Christ. Curriculum in all subjects, including religious education, gives evidence of the integration of our Catholic faith, culture, and life.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 2

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.

Benchmark 2.5

Faculty uses the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, faith is first. It permeates and propels academics, extra-curricular and conduct. We strive to teach our students the Scripture and the Sacraments in a way that leads them to a personal relationship with Jesus. Saint Thomas students participate in:

- Inclusive classes (preschool-Grade 8)
- Theology of the Body (K-Grade 8)
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (preschool-Grade 3)
- Service initiatives (preschool-Grade 8)
- Weekly Mass (Grades 1-8)
- Morning Chapel (K-Grade 8)
- Weekly adoration

Students are encouraged to raise questions about the Catholic faith and to actively seek answers. Teachers ask direct questions that lead students to explore their faith.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 2

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Benchmark 2.6

Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas, we believe in the power of art and music to express our Catholic faith. Introducing our students to different visual, oral, and performing arts, opens their minds and hearts to the beauty of God's world.

Our school is bursting with visual art. Students, parents and any visitors to our school immediately see signs and symbols of our Catholic faith as they walk through the halls of our school – from our cross wall, depicting crosses from around the world, to the various visual and intentional art that hangs in the hallways, displaying Catholic social teachings, prayers, bible verses, architectural Christian symbols, positive affirmations, respect, dignity, friendship and love.

Our students have opportunities to cantor, play an instrument, and read at weekly school Masses. Over the last three years, students from grades 3-8 have auditioned for and performed an annual musical (Peter Pan Jr., Godspell Jr., Lion King Jr.). (Lion King postponed due to COVID.) In addition, many of our classrooms have dedicated prayer corners, while other teachers utilize inside/outside places with religious statues for student prayer and reflection.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 2

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.

Benchmark 2.7

The theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas, the theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are essential to our curriculum. Our students receive planned instruction in these teachings.

Our 7th and 8th graders participate in the annual Creating on the Margins contest, which includes writing about and designing an art piece that examines a specific social justice issue (such as racism, homelessness, etc.). Over the last three years, Saint Thomas students have been awarded in the top three places or honorable mentions. Our 7th graders also participate in an annual Leadership and Unity Retreat, where they create their class cross that hangs in the main hallway of school. Younger grades have similar retreats where they have made class quilts, performed the last supper, Thanksgiving plays, All Saints, and Mother's Day parades and songs. In addition, our students write about "A Saint I Know," where they describe a person they know who displays virtuous characteristics.

Our students participate in various service projects throughout the year, incorporating Catholic social teaching lessons:

- Our kindergartners rake leaves for Saint Thomas neighbors in need.
- Our 0-5 programs include Intergenerational Lap Time, teaching our littlest learners to respect life at all stages.
- Our older students serve as reading buddies and Mass buddies for our younger students.
- As a school community, we participate in Christmas service projects (Knight's Table/Children's Healing Center).
- Our multi-agers shared a bi-weekly lunch with our Holland Home senior neighbors in a lesson for the ages
- Staff deliver food and blankets to homeless people in Grand Rapids.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 3

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 3.1

Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, Eucharist and liturgy.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, our students learn and can lead a variety of forms of prayer. Students are involved in designing prayer services and regularly serve in a variety of roles in liturgy. Liturgy is celebrated weekly as a school or class community.

Our students have opportunities to cantor, play an instrument, and/or read at weekly Mass. Classes attend weekly adoration. Several of our students serve as altar servers (before COVID). Classrooms are built to have prayer corners or places for students to reflect. All classes learn and recite Catholic prayers – as a class and as a school. At Saint Thomas, our students learn that prayer is not just something we do – it is who we are.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 3

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 3.2

Every student is offered timely, regular and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, students are offered timely, regular and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats, Chapel reflection, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and other spiritual experiences. As a school community, we begin each day with Chapel, during which we specifically ask our students to “take a moment of silence to dedicate your day to God and treasure our dynamic education centered in Christ.” In addition, we end each day praying as a school community – often with the Examination of Conscience, asking students to reflect on their day. Several teachers schedule weekly Adoration in the church for their students.

Our students also attend regular retreats. Our 2nd graders attend a First Communion retreat, our 4th graders a First Reconciliation retreat, our 7th graders a Leadership retreat and our 8th graders a Confirmation retreat. During all of these retreats and others, students have opportunities to participate in guided reflection on their faith and life experiences.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 3

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 3.3

Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.

Self score

Level 4



Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, we value service. Servant leadership is one of the promises we make to our school families. Our website states, "From the very first days of preschool through the last days of 8th grade, Saint Thomas students learn to care for others, to seek leadership opportunities, and to provide service to others." We incorporate service learning into our school days, using Gospel values and Catholic faith as rationale for engaging in service.

Our preschoolers collect canned goods for God's Kitchen during Thanksgiving. Our kindergartners rake leaves for Saint Thomas neighbors in need. Our 1st-2nd graders adopt a family to collect food and gifts for at Christmas. Our 3rd graders learn about a Lenten Service Water Project. Our 4th and 5th graders give of their time to help clean up our Habitat. Our middle school students give up their recess to make blankets for the homeless. Our entire school participated in events to collect food for Kids' Food Basket (local), to collect diapers for HELP Pregnancy (local), to collect art supplies for ACT – Artists Creating Together (local) and to collect funds for Catholic Relief Services to help Haiti (global). In 2019 during our Do Good December Advent Project, the entire school made cards for Holland Home Raybrook residents and we adopted families from King's Table for gift giving and necessary essentials. Our students learn to make service a part of their lives.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 3

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 3.4

Every student experiences role models of faith and service for social justice among the administrators, faculty, and staff.

Self-score

Level 3



Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School students experience fully from everyone who serves as role models of faith and service for social justice. Our Saint Thomas administrators, teachers, and staff hold various liturgical, board, and committee positions in their home parishes.

This commitment to our Catholic faith begins in the interview process. We ask prospective employees questions about how their faith life is nurtured and sustained. Several of our teaching staff call Saint Thomas parish their home, while others are active in their home parishes throughout the diocese.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 4

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 4.1

The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty regularly. The preparation for the school year begins with a day-long faculty retreat, which includes prayer, planning team-building experiences, and Mass. The leadership team and faculty celebrate Mass together on the last Thursday of each month during the school year. As a school community, we lift each other up in prayer with our "Faculty/Staff Prayer Partners" program

Bi-weekly faculty and school improvement meetings begin and end in prayer. Fr. Jim Chelich attends these faculty and staff meetings prior to the Advent and Lent seasons to share his most recent writings and converse with our faculty on the teachings of the church.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 4

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 4.2

The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, we know that parents are the primary educators of their children. Our leadership team and faculty strive to assist parents in nurturing their children's faith as well as their own. This past spring (2020), we gave a Theology of the Body book to all parents so that they may better understand and gain insight into the substance of our religion curriculum here at Saint Thomas.

We communicate to our parents the various workshops or seminars that could support them in raising healthy, joyful, and faithful children of the light. This year, one of the blessings of COVID came in an idea to match each school family with their own prayer partner family – we could all use a little extra prayer this year in particular! We feature speakers, movies, and presentations on things we believe empower our partnership with our parents. For example,

- Love and Logic Parenting
- Boys and Girls Learn Differently
- Angst Movie Presentation and Discussion Panel
- MAP of Life – weekly virtual teachings by Fr. Jim
- Protect Young Eyes
- Vocations Awareness
- Celebrate Life

Parents are our valued partners in the education of their children. They create the atmosphere for which Saint Thomas is known. Their faith and actions support what we stand for as a school community.

Dynamic Education Centered in Christ

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 4

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 4.3

The leader/leadership team collaborates with other institutions for example, Catholic Charities, Catholic higher education, religious congregation-sponsored programs to provide opportunities for parents to grow in the knowledge and practice of the faith.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle School leadership team, teachers, and staff collaborate with several other institutions to provide opportunities for parents to grow in knowledge of the greater Grand Rapids community needs. These experiences allow our families to participate in service to bring about change for the better and make a difference in our world. They also provide real life opportunities that help both families and their students learn that these small acts of kindness can help them grow in their faith and knowledge of needs beyond their own.

During this past Advent season, Saint Thomas shared their light with each other by participating in an all school family prayer partner event. We spread our light by adopting three families through King's Table, a nonprofit dedicated to serving individuals and families impacted by developmental and intellectual disabilities. We shined the light by creating and delivering more than 250 cards to our Holland Home Raybrook senior neighbors. We lived the light by supporting local Saint Thomas family businesses over the holiday season.

We strive to partner with our community to bring other opportunities to our students. We welcome Aquinas students as student teachers, aftercare helpers, and volunteer tutors. Holland Home Raybrook is where we have provided intergenerational activities for children ages 0-100. We partner with Children's Healing Center, a first-of-its-kind recreational center for kids with weak immune systems. Our neighborhood and the Eastown community are willing and watchful supporters of what we do at Saint Thomas as we develop conscientious and honorable future community leaders.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 4

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 4.4

All adults in the school community are invited to participate in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Parents in the Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School community are invited to participate in Christian service programs and participation is the norm. Our 0-5 programs include Intergenerational Lap Time with our Holland Home senior friends. This program has drawn many of our families with young children. Lots of parents participate annually in our "Giving Tuesday," which has supported Children's Healing Center and Artists Creating Together and Kids' Food Basket. Our annual "Rumble with the Rams" event, which benefits Special Olympics. In addition, we make parents aware of Saint Thomas Parish's Christian service events by including information in our weekly newsletter "The Buzz," and our social media.

During the 2020 Advent season, we had our "Do Good December" event. Saint Thomas families participated in an all school family prayer partner event. We adopted and purchased gifts for three families through King's Table, a nonprofit dedicated to serving individuals and families impacted by developmental and intellectual disabilities. We delivered more than 250 cards to our Holland Home Raybrook senior neighbors. We supported local Saint Thomas family businesses over the holiday season. All parents and families were invited to participate in these social justice activities.

Parents are our valued partners in educating their children. They create the atmosphere for which we are known. Their faith supports the rich Christ-centered learning. Their actions reinforce what we stand for as a school community. They are the primary educators of their children.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 4

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

Benchmark 4.5

Every administrator, faculty, and staff member visibly supports the faith life of the school community.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School administrators, faculty and staff members support the faith life of our community. All members of the school community participate in school-wide prayer and liturgies. Parents, grandparents, grandfriends and caregivers are welcomed and encouraged to attend our chapels and Masses (prior to COVID).

Our teachers lead classroom prayers and participate in all-school Mass and devotions. We begin everything we do (meetings, Mass, parent/teacher conferences, athletic competitions, etc.) in prayer. Our teachers model timely and regular opportunities for their students to reflect on the importance of prayer, the Eucharist and liturgy.

Our school Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/saintthomasgr>) and YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd7Xcar1SMIWUx8tYRaSleQ/featured>) became an avenue during COVID to reach our families on a daily and/or weekly basis beginning in March 2020 and continuing today with Friday messages to our school and religious education students from Father Jim.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 5

An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.

Benchmark 5.1

The governing body, representing the diversity of stakeholders, functions according to its approved constitution and by-laws.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School governing body, the Board of Education, represented by a diversity of stakeholders, functions according to the approved constitution and by-laws. The Board of Education by-laws are posted on our website and shared with our school community.

We intentionally reach out to a diverse group of stakeholders in an effort to seek new members. Board members represent the connecting element between parents as the primary educators of their children and the education experience within our school.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 5

An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.



Benchmark 5.2

The governing body systematizes the policies of the school's operations to ensure fidelity to mission and continuity and sustainability through leadership successions.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Board of Education systematizes the policies of the school's operations to ensure fidelity to our mission and continuity and sustainability through leadership succession. We have systems in place to ensure that our school can operationalize the policies and there is leadership succession on all levels.

The Board of Education is a policy-recommending body to the pastor as superintendent of the school. It is responsible for governance oversight of all aspects of the School. Its responsibilities include:

- Long range planning for the school and overseeing the plan's implementation.
- Recommending and drafting policy to the pastor under which the administrator operates the school and seeing that approved policies are implemented.
- Serving as a body of consultation for the pastor and principal in major decisions of administration and annually evaluating the administrators as well as recommending an annual budget to the Parish Finance Council and seeing that it is adhered to.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 5

An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.



Benchmark 5.3

The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the Bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Bishop's legitimate authority.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Board of Education, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the Bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue and respect for the Bishop's legitimate authority.

Each year, our Saint Thomas principal sends a letter to the Bishop, thanking him for the Bishop's Scholarships and his support of Catholic schools. In addition, our Board of Education attends and participates in the Annual Board Summit.

The evidence of our ongoing relationship with the Bishop includes:

- The Diocesan Expectations
- Invitations to the Bishop for Saint Thomas school events
- A letter congratulating the Bishop for an award that our Saint Thomas principal nominated him for
- Our photo of the Bishop, displayed in our school office
- NCEA membership certification
- The Bishop's election day social media message, featuring our Saint Thomas photo

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 5

An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.



Benchmark 5.4

The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a constructive and beneficial relationship with the (arch) diocesan Education Office consistent with (arch) diocesan policy pertaining to the recognition of Catholic schools by the Bishop.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Board of Education, in collaboration with and through the actions of our Principal and Assistant Principal, maintain a constructive and beneficial relationship with the Diocesan Education Office, consistent with the policy pertaining to the recognition of our diocesan schools by the Bishop. The Board of Education supports our administrators as members of diocesan working groups. All work is monitored for consistency with diocesan policies pertaining to Catholic schools.

Our principal has attended all weekly principal check-ins during COVID and all grade level virtual meetings in support of our relationship with the Diocesan Education Office. Other evidence of our ongoing relationship with the Diocesan Education Office includes:

- Grade level cooperation professional development, hosted by the Office of Catholic Schools (Fall 2020)
- Principal professional development, hosted by the Office of Catholic Schools (Fall 2020)
- New curriculum standards, outlining the expectations through the alliance of Catholic schools, which includes Fine Arts, English Language Arts, Physical Education, Religion/Theology
- Email from the Office of Catholic Schools, encouraging us to pray for local seminarians.
- Email asking our principal and assistant principal to lead grade level PLC meetings in the absence of the Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 5

An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.



Benchmark 5.5

In the case of a parish school, the governing body, in collaboration with the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the canonical administrator (pastor or designee of Bishop) marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, and continuing dialogue.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

As a parish school, the Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education and our Principal and Assistant Principal foster and develop a continuous working relationship with the pastor of Saint Thomas, which includes regular, positive interactions, shared goals, mutual trust, close cooperation, and continued dialogue that is productive, sustained, and focused on the mission of our school.

Our Pastor attends monthly Board of Education meetings, Executive meetings (which include one representative from Finance, Education, Foundation, and Parish), and Parish meetings (which include our school principal and assistant principal). Our pastor is a vibrant part of our school community, meeting bi-weekly with our middle school students, weekly with our students in grades 1-8 for Mass, and bi-annually for both Advent and Lenten lessons. Currently during this COVID year, our pastor celebrates three weekly Masses, tailored to specific age levels. In addition, he has become a Facebook live star with weekly virtual messages to our parish and school community.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 5

An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.



Benchmark 5.6

The governing body engages in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Board of Education engages in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation and evaluation of the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities. These responsibilities occur on a regular schedule and utilize at least one measure of accountability for each.

Outcomes are assessed utilizing both formative and summative measures to ensure the faithful execution of responsibilities, with strategic follow up, discernment, and plans for moving forward with improvements. Assessments include all stakeholder groups. Intentional planning is executed to secure representation from the diversity of stakeholders.

Evidence that our Board of Education recruitment, ongoing training, and evaluation occur regularly include:

- Board of Education surveys
- Strategic plan strategy tactics progress reports
- Program effectiveness surveys.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Benchmark 6.1

The leader/leadership team meets national, state and/or (arch) diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the school faith and instructional leader(s).

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas leader/leadership team meets national, state and diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leaders of the school. The leader/leadership team renews these credentials in a timely manner, as required. Our Principal and Assistant Principal both hold Catholic School Leadership graduate certifications. In addition, both are certified with the State of Michigan. We have a budget line for professional development and a Saint Thomas Professional Development Plan. Our Title II Part A Plan includes the leadership team so that they may better serve our students and our mission.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Benchmark 6.2

The leader/leadership team articulates a clear mission and vision for the school and a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leadership team clearly articulates our school's mission and vision and engages the school community to ensure that our school culture embodies our mission and vision. Our mission and vision are clearly displayed around our school – in the office, in classrooms, in the gym, on our website – and mentioned in all parent communication (newsletters, new family welcome documents, website). We involve our school community – from students to parents to the entire Saint Thomas faith community – to ensure that our school culture enlivens and honors our dynamic education centered in Christ.

Evidence of our leadership team articulating our school's mission include:

- State of the School presentations
- New school family presentations
- Marketing materials
- Weekly newsletters
- Church bulletin articles by the Principal and Director of Development and Outreach
- Hallway and classroom Catholic identity art pieces
- WOOD-TV8 coverage

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Benchmark 6.3

The leader/leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including recruitment, professional growth, faith formation, and formal assessment of faculty and staff in compliance with (arch) diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including recruitment, professional growth, faith formation and formal assessment of faculty and staff, in compliance with diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies. We follow our Saint Thomas Faculty/Staff Handbook, which has been reviewed and endorsed by our Board of Education. Our principal meets with teachers three times a year to plan, review and assess their teaching and professional development goals and accomplishments. Our planning process and budget intentionally and visibly support professional development.

Evidence of our leadership team assisting with recruitment, growth and development of faculty/staff include:

- Initial face-to-face interviews
- Job descriptions with expectations
- Teacher observations
- Teacher performance assessments
- Faculty and Staff Handbook
- Goal summeries
- Professional development line item in the Budget

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Benchmark 6.4

The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.

Self-score

Level

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leaders have established and support networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence. Our principal and assistant principal are part of and/or participate in these networks:

- Executive committee
- Parish Staff meeting
- School Improvement meetings
- Board of Education
- Development and outreach subcommittee
- Marketing subcommittee
- Mission effectiveness subcommittee
- Technology subcommittee
- Finance subcommittee
- Policy and Planning subcommittee
- Building and Grounds subcommittee
- Budgeting subcommittee
- Principal weekly check in meetings
- Home and School Association
- Boosters

These networks have regular and designated meeting times and places. The leaders ensure that the school's scheduling, budget and work demands support a culture of community and collaboration.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Benchmark 6.5

The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction and uses school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.

Our plan for continuous assessment over time is aligned to the curriculum and executed to ensure continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction. School wide data measures growth and achievement in accordance with academic excellence and objectives.

Evidence includes:

- MAP grade, summary and school reports
- State of the School presentations
- AIMS diagnostic
- Achievement status and growth summary
- Curriculum summary from the Office of Catholic Schools

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Benchmark 6.6

The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leadership team, consisting of the Principal and Assistant Principal and the Development and Outreach Director, work in collaboration with the governing body, our Board of Education, to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensure the operational vitality of our school. To ensure this, budget and personnel are provided to create and implement policies, programs, and procedures.

Plans for facilities, budgeting, advancement, and development are transparent and shared with and supported by the community to ensure the operational vitality of the school.

Evidence includes:

- 5-year capital technology plan
- Draft budgets for subcommittee reviews
- Educational Support Services information, including itemized Sensory Room
- School budget
- Tuition breakdown
- Timeline for technology purchases.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Benchmark 6.7

The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leadership team, consisting of the Principal, Assistant Principal, and Director of Development and Outreach, assume the responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all school constituents.

All new initiatives and/or changes to school programs are shared at the beginning of the initiative or change and updated over time as needed. Outcomes are routinely measured and reported to all constituents. Information about the new programs are communicated electronically and celebrated at community events.

Our leadership team communicates to parents and constituents at New School family meetings, State of the School meetings, email communications, social media postings, YouTube videos, newsletters, Board of Education meetings, parent and students surveys and letters from the leadership team.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.1

The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Catholic values.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Catholic values.

Our differentiated curriculum encompasses several learning styles to foster critical thinking skills. We use cross-curricular teaching methods to facilitate learning and academic success. Our objective is to provide tools so that students reach their learning goals and experience success.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.2

Standards are adopted across the curriculum and include integration of the religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, Diocesan standards are adopted across the curriculum and include integration of the religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects. We weave faith throughout lessons in science, social studies, reading and math, reminding our students of God's presence in our daily life.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.3

Curriculum and instruction for the 21st century learning provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical, and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers, and socially responsible global citizens.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School curriculum and instruction provide students with knowledge, understanding, and skills for 21st century learning. Our students learn to become creative, critical, moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers, and socially responsible global citizens. We teach our students to solve problems, interpret information, and research and evaluate evidence to make decisions – all part of our dynamic education centered in Christ. We offer 21st century STEM opportunities such as Lego Robotics, You Be the Chemist, Science Olympiad and more.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.4

Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning prepares students to become expert users of technology, able to create, publish, and critique digital products that reflect their understanding of the content and their technology skills.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School empowers our students with critical digital life skills. We remain at the leading edge of technology by engaging our students, increasing productivity, and improving communication with our families.

Student products and performance require they learn to be expert users of technology. They develop capability in creating, publishing, and critiquing digital tools.

At Saint Thomas, you'll see purposefully selected devices throughout our school – Clever Touch Interactive display boards and SMART boards in classrooms, iPads in teachers' hands, Chromebooks in students' hands, desktop computers in our computer lab and virtual learning available to all students via Canvas.

Our goals are to:

- Link all technology and tools to a specific curriculum.
- Invest wisely and prudently in technology (see tech expenditures).
- Engage students in conversation about the responsibilities of using technology in a faith-filled life.
- Ensure that 7th and 8th graders are ready for the technological realities of high school and the world around them.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.5

Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning. Lesson plans demonstrate deliberate attention to Gospel values, collaboration, risk taking, hands-on experiences, perseverance, and initiative. At the same time, teachers integrate virtues into their lessons, modeling virtuous behavior that leads to a culture of positivity and success. We begin our day in Chapel, where we study a new virtue every two weeks. Students learn how to incorporate these virtues in their academic and daily lives.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.6

Classroom instruction is designed to engage and motivate all students, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student and accommodating students with special needs as fully as possible.



Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School is an inclusive school. We believe children are unique so their education should be too. Our classroom instruction is designed to engage and motivate learners of all abilities. We address diverse needs and capabilities while accommodating students with different learning options. Both our Educational Support Services and our Enrichment program provide the necessary differentiation that students need for success.

Each student actively participates and contributes to the life of the school community. As an all-in school where we welcome all student of all abilities, it is imperative that students participating in and outside of the ESS and/or Enrichment programs feel they can bring their uniqueness to the table in a supportive and positive environment.

ESS students (grades P3 through 8) benefit from 1:1, small group, and targeted support within their classroom. Enrichment students in grades 3-8 are challenged to utilize higher order critical thinking skills in math and reading. They participate in hands on, collaborative research where they analyze and synthesize information regarding a chosen topic.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.7

Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to develop, implement and continuously improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction to result in high levels of student achievement.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to develop, implement, and continuously improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and their instruction, resulting in high levels of student achievement.

School Improvement meetings occur bi-weekly afterschool and Strategy Group meetings occur every Thursday, prior to the start of the school day. These meetings provide our teachers with an opportunity to:

- Pray together
- Review MAP testing results
- Discuss strategies and curriculum
- Decide procedures
- Conference with Educational Support
- Determine processes

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.8

The faculty and professional support staff meet (arch) diocesan, state, and/or national requirements for academic preparation and licensing to ensure their capacity to provide effective curriculum and instruction.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty and professional support staff meet the diocesan, state, and national requirements for academic preparation and licensing to ensure their capacity to provide effective instruction and curriculum. Compliance with these requirements is a part of the employment decisions.

All faculty and professional support staff are provided professional development opportunities. Our principal and other members of the administrative staff and Educational Support Services staff have participated as presenters at professional conferences, workshops, and other nonprofit organizations.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.9

Faculty and professional support staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty and staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values. Our annual goal setting (reflected in our TPAs) includes plans for continuous improvement in all areas related to our inclusive, all in culture.

Individual faculty members align their own professional goals with school goals (reflected in our Title II Part A Plan). They intentionally review their own work for progress and improvement and meet with the principal annual for review. This helps faculty identify strengths and challenges, enabling them to determine best practices in the next steps.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 7

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.

Benchmark 7.10

Faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning. They set goals for professional development, which is measured by student learning growth.

Faculty create planning documents to implement their professional development, and the assessment of that implementation is on-going and frequent.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 8

An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

Benchmark 8.1

School-wide and student data generated by a variety of tools are used to monitor, review, and evaluate the curriculum and co-curricular programs; to plan for continued and sustained student growth; and to monitor and assess faculty performance.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School and our Educational Support Services staff (ESS) utilize school wide and student data generated by a variety of tools that monitor, review and evaluate the curriculum and co-curricular programs to plan for continued and sustained student growth as well as to monitor and assess faculty performance.

Faculty and Educational Support Services staff who demonstrate appropriate academic growth are recognized for their facilitation of student learning. Our faculty as a whole are engaged in robust evaluation of student growth data and standardized test data.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 8

An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

Benchmark 8.2

School-wide and aggregated student data are normed to appropriate populations and are shared with all stakeholders.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School school-wide and aggregated student data is normed to the appropriate populations and consistently shared with all stakeholders in a clear and effective manner to ensure transparency.

Annually our Principal hosts a State of the School presentation (normally in person and online during COVID), which showcases to our school families important student data. A school Impact Report is also distributed annually and posted on our school website Welcome page that contains student data, which can be viewed over the course of the last four years for consistency with teacher performance and student success.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 8

An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

Benchmark 8.3

Faculty use a variety of curriculum-based assessments aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to assess student learning, including formative, summative, authentic performance, and student self-assessment.

Self-score

Level 2

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty and Educational Support Services staff (ESS) use a variety of curriculum based assessments aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to assess student learning.

They utilize formative, summative, authentic performance, and student self-assessment. Our faculty and ESS staff adjust instructional practices based on the data gathered from the assessments.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 8

An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

Benchmark 8.4

Criteria used to evaluate student work and the reporting mechanisms are valid, consistent, transparent, and justly administered.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The criteria used by the Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty and Educational Support Services staff (ESS) to evaluate and report student work are valid, consistent, transparent, and justly administered.

Our parents and students understand the criteria and these reports are easily accessible. Criteria is based on national best practices and shared with our families and students.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 8

An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

Benchmark 8.5

Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to monitor individual and class-wide student learning through methods such as common assessments and rubrics.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School faculty and Educational Support Services (ESS) staff collaborate in professional learning communities to monitor individual and class-wide student learning through common assessments and rubrics.

These communities meet weekly to discuss criteria for goals and objectives for their work. Faculty teams meet regularly on Thursday mornings prior to the start of the school day. During that time, they look for improvement based on shared student data as well as adjustments needed for curriculum and instructional methods for student improvement.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 9

An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.

Benchmark 9.1

School-wide programs for parents/guardians provide opportunities for parents/guardians to partner with school leaders, faculty, and other parents/guardians to enhance the educational experiences for the school community.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School principal, assistant principal, faculty and staff partner with our parents in programming that enhances their student and family educational experiences. This results a caring and tight-knit community, allowing us to stay better engaged enriching the learning environment.

Our parents are the primary educators of their children and we welcome their partnership in the school experience. Parents are involved in our mission-driven, service-oriented experiences, enhancing and enriching the broader community.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 9

An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.

Benchmark 9.2

Guidance services, wellness programs, behavior management programs, and ancillary services provide the necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program.



Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School students and parents know about and can access services available at Saint Thomas. Guidance, wellness, behavior management services provide the necessary support for students to not only successfully complete the school program but also feel successful themselves.

Our Educational Support Services (ESS) Director analyzes student data and shares this information appropriately across services.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 9

An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.

Benchmark 9.3

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities outside the classroom for students to further identify and develop their gifts and talents and to enhance their creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical, and spiritual capabilities.



Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School offers co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that provide opportunities outside of the classroom for our students to further develop their gifts and talents. These programs are designed to enhance a student's creative, social/emotional, aesthetic, physical, and spiritual capabilities.

Communication of these programs are continuous and consistent for all activities. Our Director of Outreach and Communications Specialist take responsibility for community-wide communication via all social media platforms, Infinite Campus, weekly newsletters, bulletin inserts and ads, emails and flyers.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.1

The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in nonprofit management and funding.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Board of Education, principal and assistant principal engage in a well-defined financial planning process in collaboration with Nienhuis Financial Group LLC, certified CPAs with more than 20 years of experience working with non-profit management and funding. We also collaborate with Finance Council members who are licensed CPAs. We begin this process with projection data and a preliminary budget that is revised through input from the administration, Board of Education, Technology Director, Athletic Director, and Auction Chair.

The leadership team works closely with the Pastor to assure that the school budget reflects a commitment to a healthy parish, taking no more than 35 percent of the parish offertory.

In December, we present the draft budget to our Board of Education for review and input and to establish tuition rates. In January, the Finance Council approves the proposed tuition rates. We revise the budget with input from each of the budget's expense areas: School Administrative expenses, Elementary School expenses, After School and Enrichment revenue/expense, School Lunch revenue/expense, Athletics revenue/expense, Plant expense, Home and School budget, and Technology budget. As enrollment is secured in the Spring, we revise the budget to reflect the known income. In April, we present the most current draft to the Board of Education and Finance Council for final approval and then submit it to the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

The Educational Foundation commits to an amount for the school operating budget and tuition assistance prior to April, after consulting with the principal, the Board of Education and the Finance Council to determine need. The Board of Education and leadership team work closely with the Education Foundation, an entity separate from the school and parish tasked with providing operating expenses and tuition assistance to Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School through grants from the Foundation's investments.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.2

Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved who may include but are not limited to parishes, dioceses, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.

Self score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School is part of the larger Saint Thomas community, which includes Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish and the Saint Thomas Education Foundation. We are grateful for the support of our entire community to inspire the faith lives of our children. Our school financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by our Parish pastor, the Saint Thomas Education Foundation, our leadership team, the Executive Committee and the Finance Council.

In creating our financial plans, we consider a diverse set of funding sources such as tuition revenue, Education Foundation scholarships, Tuition Angel Grant scholarships, Diocesan scholarships, registration fees, school donations, subsidies from other parishes, grants, and fundraising. Our school families sign a tuition commitment form as written agreement of their tuition and registration fees. The Diocese sends updates to confirm scholarships given to Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School students as well as the Bishops scholarships awarded to our students. The Education Foundation commits in writing the amount of scholarship money pledged to the school. Our Parish Finance Coordinator maintains contact with all funding sources to assure that commitments are made in a timely and predicted manner.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.3

Financial plans define revenue sources that include but are not limited to tuition, tuition assistance/scholarships, endowment funds, local and regional partnerships, public funding, regional cost sharing, (arch) diocesan and/or religious communities' assistance, foundation gifts, entrepreneurial options and other sources not listed.

Self score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School financial plan defines revenue sources that include tuition assistance, Diocesan and Education Foundation scholarships, endowment funds, financial gifts designated for school use, assistance from Tuition Angel fund gifts, a bi-annual major fundraiser, grant funding, support from other parishes without schools, and income from programming such as preschool or kindergarten enrichment program. We also partner with the Red Glasses Movement to support our Education Support Services. The Finance Coordinator regularly tracks the history of these sources.

Our financial plans are routinely reviewed by the pastor, leadership team, Board of Education Finance committee chair, Board of Education as a whole, and the Finance Council. Every year, State of the School meetings are held as accountability and transparency measures to our families. At these meetings, the leadership team highlights the budget and means of arriving at tuition rates for the upcoming year.

In addition, we have visited Blue Ribbon schools and highly successful Catholic schools in other states to benchmark our financial and operational practices.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.4

Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.



Self score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Our Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School financial plans include all the costs associated with the school, including costs that we share with the parish. The finance coordinator and the principal agree on the allocation of costs such as plant expenses and shared personnel. We give every expenditure on our budget a line item with an account number from our chart of accounts.

We generate reports on a monthly basis, both detailed and aggregate for monitoring budget vs. actual. We also project out a five-year capital expenditure budget to assure that we are anticipating large expenses and incorporating those into the appropriate budgets. We do cost analysis for cost per student, hot lunch and plant costs. To make sure that more than one person documents and checks accounting and handling of money, we follow a documented internal control procedure. The Finance Council reviews budgets, projections and financial statements, as well as monitors the health of the fund balance. Our Executive team (which consists of the Pastoral Council President, Finance Council President, Parish Life Coordinator, Board of Education President, Education Foundation President, and Principal and Pastor) regularly meets with the Board of Education and the Finance Council regularly review this information.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.5

Current and projected budgets include a statement of the actual and projected revenue sources, indicating an appropriate balance among revenue sources, and a statement of actual and projected expenditures including the actual cost per child, benchmarked compensation/salary scales, and other health benefits and retirement costs.



Self score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, we start current and projected budgets with a projection based on the current year's budget and comparison data regarding cost per student, tuition rates, salaries and fringe benefits, tuition discounts or incentives and programming provided. We capture this data from other East Deanery schools and diocesan school reports. All extra programming, such as preschool and kindergarten enrichment and after-school enrichment opportunities, are self-funded and do not require parish contribution money. We use our annual State of the School meetings to help parents understand the relationship between tuition rates and actual costs to educate students.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.6

Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.

Self score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Parents are the primary educators of their children and our valued partners in the process of a Catholic education at Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. We take these relationships seriously, and they weigh heavily in our school stewardship measures.

The cost to educate each child at Saint Thomas is an important factor in setting the budget, as well as for adding programming or expenses each year. We calculate these figures based on all costs, including those shared by the parish and any capital expenses and maintenance. We consider cost per student in the overall financial health of our school and parish. Every year, we proactively share the breakdown of cost per child in the total proposed budget through our State of School meetings and throughout the channels of Board of Education and Finance Council. We consider all feedback and, if necessary, address concerns in budget revisions.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.7

The governing body and leader/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.

Self score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Money should never prevent a child from attending a Catholic school. We strive to make sure that any family who wants to send their child to Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School can do so.

We use several communication avenues to make sure that families know of available financial assistance. Early in the school year, we encourage all families fill out and submit the SMART Aid tuition form, whether or not they need financial assistance. We link to the online form on our website and in our weekly newsletters and post reminders to our social media sites. In addition, we send out an email to all families, explaining the process and linking to the SMART Aid online form.

In the spring, we evaluate all sources of tuition assistance including our Education Foundation, Angel Tuition Fund, the Bishops Scholarship and other possible sources unique to the year. In addition, the principal addresses the parish after every Mass during Catholic Schools Week about an extra gift to the Angel Tuition Fund, and students speak as well to thank the parish for their support. Our bi-annual school and parish auction includes an Angel Tuition appeal that nets a significant amount of support dollars dedicated to assisting families with a Catholic education. A parent or student who receives tuition assistance speaks at the auction, creating a personal connection and awareness of the importance of this fund to families.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three- to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Benchmark 10.8

The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.

Self score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leadership team and governing body are stewards of the school's financial resources. We take this responsibility to heart. We make sure that there is accountability built in to our financial practices. The governing body and school leadership team, along with the finance coordinator, have a mature process for financial planning and long-term planning for capital expenditures. We document the planning process, which has a regular rhythm throughout the year. Every month, the leadership team and governing body receive a Statement of Activities that accounts for all spending, compared to the last year, and as a percentage of the annual budget. We present this to the Board of Education and Finance Council on a monthly basis as an accountability measure for the principal and as a means of monitoring the stewardship of resources. The Board of Education and Finance Council also receive the General Ledger for those expenditures with all journal entries for the month. This, too, demonstrates transparency in reporting, as well as a means of monitoring stewardship.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 11

An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies, developed in compliance with (arch) diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.

Benchmark 11.1

Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e., central office, school office) and ensure full compliance with human resource policies.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

We are a community – parish, school, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and students. The parish and school are in a symbiotic relationship. The health and welfare of one affects the other.

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic Parish finance coordinator assists the school principal with personnel policies and paperwork required for full compliance with IRS designations. We meet at least once a week at parish staff meetings and more often when needed for matters of personnel and staffing. The parish Personnel Policy Handbook guides and supports the School Faculty and Staff Personnel Handbook. In addition, the Diocese of Grand Rapids Human Resource Department has a trained professional to assist the leadership team.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 11

An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies, developed in compliance with (arch) diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.

Benchmark 11.2

Human resource policies delineate standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, and benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning and retirement.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School follows the Diocese of Grand Rapids human resource policies and uses them for position descriptions, staff responsibilities, qualifications, hiring, compensation, and benefits. We developed a succession plan policy to assure that the school included succession from within in budgeting and professional development plans.

All full-time employees receive benefits and a retirement plan from our enrollment and participation in the Michigan Catholic Conference. The Parish finance coordinator, in compliance with the Diocese of Grand Rapids Personnel policies and the Michigan Catholic Conference, oversees plan enrollment and benefits, as well as provides guidance to all school employees.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 11

An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies, developed in compliance with (arch) diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.

Benchmark 11.3

Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

At Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, we love our teachers and staff members. Their well-being is of utmost importance to our community. For that reason, we offer some of the best fringe benefits in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Full-time parish and school employees receive 100 percent tuition waivers for their children to attend our school. We cover 100 percent of individual medical coverage and 62 percent of family coverage. In addition, we offer employees:

- Life insurance
- Short and long term disability
- 10 sick days and two personal days each year
- Annual funds for professional development.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 11

An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies, developed in compliance with (arch) diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.

Benchmark 11.4

Human resource policies ensure that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth, health care and retirement.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School budget reflects our appreciation and investment in our teachers and staff. We devote specific resources to faculty development and have a significant investment in employee fringe benefits. Each year, we hold an Open Enrollment for Michigan Catholic Conference. Our Parish finance coordinator provides our employees guidance with this process, if needed.

We support professional growth in our faculty by providing the funds to attend MANS and investing in training that aligns with our mission. Annually we review our benefit package, salaries, and increases committing ourselves to providing total compensation to our employees.



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 12

An excellent Catholic school develops and maintains a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the school.

Benchmark 12.1

The school's facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.

Self-score

Level 4

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School facilities, equipment, and technology management plans include objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the school and provide accessibility to all students. Our objectives align with our school mission.

Saint Thomas' technology plan includes current and future technology in productive and efficient ways to enhance the curriculum. With the integration of technology, students learn to use digital assets responsibly and morally to enrich their learning experience.

Our facilities director has been on staff for more than 30 years. He is in constant contact with our principal and finance coordinator to assure that all facilities in our school are maintained and secure with new cameras on campus, inside and outside and fob access to the school gymnasium.

Our capital expenditures are frequently reviewed by our Finance Council and Executive Committee. Within the last few years, we completed a capital campaign successfully and are securing special funding that have the finances to support the projected needs.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 12

An excellent Catholic school develops and maintains a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the school.

Benchmark 12.2

The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacement.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School's budget presents a detailed and interrelated approach to accounting for our facilities, technology spending, and equipment following the generally accepted principals of accounting. Our finance coordinator manages all facets of this accounting.

We maintain a multi-year projected capital budget, estimating building and land improvements, heating, cooling, ventilation, furniture, fixtures, and equipment for six years into the future to prevent any unexpected large expenses. We keep one monthly Statement of financial position, giving our stakeholders and school leaders a realistic understanding of our assets and financial standing.

We follow the Diocese of Grand Rapids Office of Catholic School Budget and Finance policies for all our finances.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020



Standard 12

An excellent Catholic school develops and maintains a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the school.

Benchmark 12.3

The school's purchasing and physical and technological improvements are, by design, done in alignment with the mission and the school's planning and curricular goals and consistent with environmental stewardship.

Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School's purchasing, physical, and technological improvements are, by design, completed in alignment with the school mission, its planning and curricular goals. It is always made with a conscious understanding of environmental impact and stewardship.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 13

An excellent Catholic school enacts a comprehensive plan for institutional advancement based on a compelling mission through communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development.

Benchmark 13.1

The communications/marketing plan requires school leader/ leadership team and staff person(s) to insure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach targeted audiences, and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School marketing team (comprised of a Director of Outreach, a Communications Specialist, and a Marketing committee, subset of the Board of Education) ensures the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach targeted audiences and establish reliable accountability to our stakeholders. This plan includes several methods to initiate and engage prospective and existing families seeking information and involvement. We communicate utilizing:

- Infinite Campus emails
- The Buzz (weekly newsletter, formerly called The Bits & Pieces)
- Twitter [@SaintThomasGR](https://twitter.com/SaintThomasGR)
- Facebook [@saintthomasgr](https://www.facebook.com/saintthomasgr)
- Instagram [@saintthomasgr](https://www.instagram.com/saintthomasgr)
- YouTube [@saintthomastheapostlegr](https://www.youtube.com/saintthomastheapostlegr)
- Emails
- Flyers
- Phone calls (616) 458-4228 ext. 1300
- Website <http://www.stthomasgr.org/parent-pages>
- EGR Living 2019/20 Monthly Ad
- Remind 101

At all outreach events, we capture names and contact information to add to our email lists for future communications. We review data analytics from all our sites, giving us information about our viewers and how they navigate these channels. We send out regular surveys, to gather feedback that we use to hold ourselves accountable for programming and events.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 13

An excellent Catholic school enacts a comprehensive plan for institutional advancement based on a compelling mission through communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development.

Benchmark 13.2

The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.



Self-score

Level 3

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School governing body (Board of Education), the school leadership team (Pastor, Principal, Assistant Principal) and the Director of Development and Outreach annually review enrollment and retention data collected through conferences, surveys, exit interviews and parish demographics to determine the following year's enrollment goal. The information gathered is used to direct decision-making related to tuition, enrollment, retention, marketing, communications, and all other aspects of school operations linked to overall enrollment.

In partnering with the Director of Development and Outreach, we have created a communication, marketing and enrollment plan to guide our enrollment and retention action and strategies.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION REPORT, 2020

Standard 13

An excellent Catholic school enacts a comprehensive plan for institutional advancement based on a compelling mission through communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development.

Benchmark 13.3

The development plan requires school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni (ae), over time and when appropriate.



Self-score

Level 2

Supporting narrative

The Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School leadership team partnered with the Parish, the Education Foundation, and the Bi-annual Auction Committee to create a new Director of Development and Outreach position. This position is divided into four categories and ensures the collaboration of key stakeholders and strategies to identify, grow, and maintain significant funding prospects including alumni over time and whenever appropriate.

1. School marketing – 20 hours per week
2. Parish marketing – 8 hours per week
3. Education Foundation – 4 hours per week
4. Bi-annual Auction – 8 hours per week