



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1925



2024 - 25

# IMPACT

REPORT

2024



*Celebrating a Century Centered in Christ*

# Rejoice *in the Lord* Always

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Dear Saint Thomas Families,

In 1925, 75 faithful families came together with a shared dream – to build a school where their children could grow in knowledge, character, and faith. With hearts full of hope, they broke ground on what would become Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School. They entrusted their children's futures to educators who believed deeply in the transformative power of a Christ-centered education.



This school year has been unforgettable, marking the official start to our celebration of a century centered in Christ. We kicked off the year with our Parish and School community gathered in front of the school for a commemorative photo, replicating the first photo taken the day Saint Thomas school opened in 1925. This new photo is featured on the cover of this report.

Our school theme, "Rejoice in the Lord Always," celebrates our first 100 years. We have much cause for rejoicing! The spirit of joy and gratitude that began last fall has carried us through this school year in many moments of faith, growth, and community where we have:

- welcomed 56 new students from 46 families into the 2024-25 school year.
- gathered in community and loads of fun at the Parish and School Picnic – even the rain couldn't dampen this great time.
- exceeded fundraising goals at our Roaring '20s Auction in support of our Parish, School, and Angel Tuition Fund.
- celebrated All In Week and Catholic Schools Week with purpose and energy, ending with our second annual Family Dance. A new family favorite.
- completed construction of the new Preschool Center for P3s, P4s, and Y5s in an expanded program which welcomes students this fall.
- honored Father Jim's 32 years of service and preparing to welcome Father Stephen as our new pastor.
- enrolled 40 new students for the 2025-26 school year—with summer just beginning!

One hundred years later, as the reflections above show, our founders' dream is not only alive, it is thriving. This year, 342 students from more than 200 families walked the halls of Saint Thomas, living proof that the prayers of our founding families were heard and answered. Though we've grown through the decades, the heart of who we are remains the same. Our mission endures. Our faith is strong. And ... our commitment to Catholic education is unwavering.

This has been a joyful, grace-filled, dynamic school year – a true celebration of all that God has done in, through, and with this community. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Here's to the next 100 years!

In Christ,

Ryan Corcoran, Principal



# OUR MISSION & OUR VISION

A dynamic education centered  
in Christ

A leading innovative Catholic  
School that invites students to love  
and serve Christ and engage  
culture with a saintly passion

## OUR PILLARS & PROMISES

Rigorous Academics

Peaceful Climate

Virtuous Faith

Empowered Community

Servant Leadership

Intentional Technology



# Rejoice *in our Faith* ALWAYS

We begin each school day by reflecting on a virtue and praying together as a community. Prayer, worship, study, and participation in the Sacraments are woven into our school day. Students in grades 1–8 attend weekly Mass and Eucharistic Adoration, keeping Christ at the heart of everything we do. Faith formation is not just part of our curriculum—it is central to our identity. In partnership with our parish, we share in retreat experiences, parish events, and aspects of Sacramental preparation. Through this collaboration, our students grow in faith as active members of the broader Catholic community.



PERSEVERANCE   *Foresight*   Fortitude  
HONESTY   Loyalty   ORDERLINESS  
Temperance   Respect   Affability  
DOCILITY   PRAYERFULNESS  
SELF-CONTROL   PATIENCE   Generosity  
Leadership   PRUDENCE   HUMILITY  
Gratitude   PATRIOTISM   Circumspection

20 VIRTUES  
180 examinations of conscience  
312 VISITS TO EUCHARISTIC ADORATION





# Rejoice *in Excellent Academics* ALways

Our teachers incorporate STEAM, Human-Centered Design, and project-based learning to engage and inspire students. These approaches prepare students to become independent, critical thinkers who can learn, solve problems, and make informed decisions—fostering a lifelong love of learning.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, measures the academic performance of students across the country in grades 4 through 8 in reading and mathematics. Results consistently show that Catholic school students outperform their public school peers in both subjects. At Saint Thomas, all students demonstrated measurable growth and academic achievement on this year's standardized MAP assessments.

**342** students excelling in math, reading  
and science MAP scores

**220+** years of teaching experience  
amongst Saint Thomas teachers

**7:1** ratio of students to teachers



# Rejoice *in Servant Leadership* ALways

One of the hallmarks of a Saint Thomas education is the formation of servant leaders. Our dynamic education is enriched by opportunities for students to learn the value of serving others as Jesus did and model virtuous behavior in their daily lives.

Students engage in service through a variety of experiences, including:

- Visiting senior friends at Holland Home Raybrook
- Volunteering at Lincoln School
- Adopting local families through King's Table for Christmas
- Participating in Saint Thomas sports teams with a focus on teamwork and character
- Making blankets, collecting food, and serving meals for those in need
- Raising funds for Special Olympics Area 11 through our "Rumble with the Rams" basketball game

We hope that the spirit of servant leadership instilled at Saint Thomas remains with our students long after they leave, guiding their actions and choices well into adulthood.



**75** HOURS as CHAPEL LEADERS  
**351** HOURS as ALTAR SERVERS





# Rejoice *in a Peaceful Climate* ALways

At Saint Thomas, we are committed to ensuring the success of every student, regardless of their background or abilities. As our school community becomes increasingly diverse, we recognize the need for tailored support to meet the uniqueness of each learner. Our Educational Support Services (ESS) program is designed to provide this critical assistance.

Today our school embraces students of all abilities. This spirit of inclusion reflects our Catholic belief that every person is made in the image and likeness of God.

**10** ess staff members

**342** students benefit from our inclusion efforts

**780** hours offered with our school counselor





We are the largest elementary school in the Diocese of Grand Rapids with 342 children!



Since 1999, we have more than doubled our teaching staff to include 26 teachers, 4 classroom aides and 10 ESS teachers.

Our MAP scores consistently exceed diocesan averages year after year.



Our students attend weekly Mass, Adoration and daily Chapel where virtues are taught and woven into their day.



More than 90% of our graduates attend Catholic high school.



Parental involvement and volunteering remains strong with more than 175 parents volunteering each year.



Saint Thomas is one of a few schools in the diocese with our own foundation whose sole purpose is to support our students and school. annually providing \$211,000 in tuition assistance and school operational needs.





# Rejoice in our New *Preschool Center!*

This momentous occasion would not have been possible without the support of our community - thank you! The parish planned for a preschool center someday, with funds set aside to get us started. Last fall we set out with the goal of raising \$800,000 by early 2025 so that construction could begin. As you always do, our community rose to the challenge and not only were the funds raised by our deadline, so many of you contributed your time, talent and treasure to make this dream a reality. The construction on the Preschool Center is complete and the building is now being filled for its grand opening on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Over the last few years, we had heard from our parishioners, current, and prospective school families of a growing need for a full-day preschool option. Between 5 - 7 prospective families per year were unable to join us because of the absence of this full-day experience for their 3s, 4s or young 5s. To meet these increasing needs, three larger classrooms with enough square footage to accommodate classes of 18 students each was required. The new Preschool Center will not only boost our enrollment, but also provide parents with a faith-based education right from the start of their child's educational journey. This is a true investment in their future and ours. We thank you for your support and look forward to showing you the new Center!

**We still have a wishlist of needed items for the Preschool Center.**  
[Click here or scan the QR code to see what we need!](#)



Preschool 4's Classroom

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium

Hornets' Nest Aftercare

Preschool 3's Classroom

Young 5's Classroom



# EMBRACING TIMES OF TRANSITION

*with gratitude and hope*

We will forever remain grateful to Father Jim, who has led us with prayer, devotion, love, and wisdom for more than three decades. Few can tell the story of our Parish and School as beautifully as Father Jim, who began his journey at Saint Thomas 32 years ago and has been our spiritual shepherd ever since.

His faithful service and pastoral heart have been a source of strength and inspiration, leaving an indelible mark on our community and in the hearts of all who have walked this journey with him.

With hearts full of gratitude, we thank you, Father Jim, for your unwavering dedication and leadership in God's name. Your wisdom, compassion, and tireless commitment have guided us through countless seasons of growth and grace. As you begin this new chapter, we pray that God continues to bless and sustain you, just as you have so generously done for us.



## THANK YOU, FATHER JIM!



It is with great joy and anticipation that I begin my assignment as your new pastor at Saint Thomas the Apostle. I am truly excited to begin this time with all of you at Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish. I can't wait to get to know you, to hear your stories, and to walk together as a community of faith. Please keep me in your prayers as I begin this new assignment and know of my prayers for you!

In Christ's love and friendship,  
Father Stephen J. Durkee

As we move forward in this transition, let us all be thoughtful about our own roles. Whether a student, school parent, parishioner, faculty, staff, or other community member, we hold great appreciation for Father Jim's leadership and look forward to ensuring a smooth and successful transition for Father Stephen in July.

## WELCOME, FATHER STEPHEN!



# On to the next **100** years, *Rooted in Faith*

During each school day, everything we do is organically designed to provide leadership opportunities for our students. From the classroom to the playing field, from recess to school assemblies, faith permeates every aspect of our community life. We nurture virtuous behavior through everyday acts of dignity, respect, and care for one another – instilling the values that shape students into confident, compassionate leaders.



Whether participating in service projects, leading prayer, or encouraging teammates on the court, our students are constantly guided to grow in faith and character. These photos capture a glimpse of the vibrant and joyful moments that defined this past school year. As always, our strong community continues to embody our guiding belief that...

*...You Belong Here!*

