



Saint Thomas More Academy, Inc.
Board of Directors

Kirk Doran, President
Margaret Freddoso, Vice President

Tuesday, May 31, 2022
Feast of the Visitation

Dear Saint Thomas More Academy Community,

On behalf of the founders and Board of Directors: congratulations on the fulfillment of our inaugural school year! This is a good time for us to take stock of where we've been, and to set our sights on where we are headed together.

When we founded Saint Thomas More Academy on October 11, 2020, we set out to build, with the help of our spouses and friends, what we knew would become the finest Catholic school in the country. What does that mean, and why did we think it would be possible? It means that our children and families should truly flourish, growing in the knowledge and love of God, and growing in the knowledge and love of the reality he has created for us. It means excellence in all things, as our Lord excelled in all things. And it should be possible right here in South Bend because true human flourishing only happens in the context of a community, and this is one of the most flourishing Catholic communities in the world.

Why not here? We knew then, as we know now, that all this community needed was a spark, and it would go ablaze. And now, after one year of building and one year of operating, the results are in: the STMA community is exceptional. Tests are not the measure we aspire to, but our iLearn results are astounding. In 2022, during our very first year, STMA students earned a 72% joint pass rate across iLearn language and mathematics exams; compared to the most recent results made public in 2021 from other schools, this **places STMA in the top 1% of all elementary and middle schools in the state.**

But, much much more importantly, we can see our dreams fulfilled in the lives of our students. We can see it in the child who rushes home to tell her mother that she wants to dedicate herself to God by entering religious life. We can see it when the fourth and fifth graders spontaneously break out in hymns and folk songs, leading each other, correcting each other, and singing with a combination of gusto and intonation that only happens among friends who love music and love each other too. And we can see it in the joy in the face of a child who, after years of struggle, attains mastery of the work that had always seemed out of reach. All of these marks of growth and grace in our children's lives reveal the real source of whatever academic success they may attain: a person who is united to God and who loves the truth will always shine, in whatever they do. On behalf of all of us who founded this school: thank you! You students, parents, faculty and staff have built a community of love with the help of God's grace.

Of course, the beautiful order of our community has not happened catalytically, or by accident. It happened in the context of a common plan of action which we set in motion in advance of our first year, designed to avoid typical startup pitfalls, strategically build momentum, and get the most out of our limited resources. In other words, STMA needed leadership to succeed; it will also need leadership to meet the challenges ahead. We promise to offer the same leadership that got us where we are to address each of our next challenges head on, so that you can all be assured that your investment in the life of this community is not in vain.

What challenges are ahead? If we were content to rest on our laurels and enter a period of maintenance, then our success this year would imply relatively few. But our mission is much bigger than what we accomplished this year.

First, we are deeply committed to making the high school grades at Saint Thomas More Academy profoundly Catholic, academically exceptional, thoroughly rooted in the classical tradition, and the perfect preparation for anything God calls our children to afterwards – including any university in the country. You can take a sneak peek at what we're planning with the attached chart, which shows some of the course content we're preparing for those years. Some of the rigor of our mathematics, science, history, and language curriculum will be apparent at first glance. But what you can only begin to see in the course titles, but can't really see without experiencing it, is how deeply our Catholic faith will be integrated everywhere into this curriculum. Both theology, the queen of the sciences, and the unifying thread of salvation history will inform all that we do. And, far from reducing our students' love of science, mathematics, and technical subjects, we know that this proper ordering will deepen it, as we have already seen with our students' academic performance this year.

Second, STMA needs to be a place where the whole person is educated. In the best of the classical tradition, this includes athletics, and we can do no less than the best at STMA. In the immediate future, that means that we are working hard to introduce as many of the following sports as soon as possible, starting next year and continuing over the next few years: girls and boys basketball, girls volleyball, girls and boys soccer, cross-country, and track. The order in which we introduce these sports will depend in part on coaching: if you are interested in helping coach, please contact Joe Everett at jeveret4@alumni.nd.edu. But we're also consciously pursuing excellence: for example, we have already begun the process of hiring a staff member who will focus the majority of their time on developing and running our athletics, and we even have particular candidates in mind who have national reputations for athletic success and inspirational leadership on and off the field.

Third, we will continue to build the music – and sacred music – program at STMA. Jerome Cole has already done a marvelous job using the Ward Method to teach the fundamentals of music and voice to our children, and we have seen the results at Mass and at our concerts. In the immediate future, we will begin expanding our music program to include more advanced music, including the opportunity to learn composition, for the upper grades. We will also build boys, girls, and mixed choirs at the lower and upper school levels.

Fourth, in order to accomplish the above goals, we will need to continue to be market leaders in the salaries and benefits we offer our faculty, staff and administration. Too many amazing Catholic educators must leave K-12 education exactly when they reach the peak of their experience and have the most intricate ties to a community that has grown to depend on them. This is because of the generally low salaries and benefits offered in this market, usually too low for someone to use to support a large Catholic family. Schools that aspire to greatness need to counter this trend. We are already leaders in Michiana in terms of salaries, but we need to become leaders in terms of benefits as well, and we need to continue to recruit at a national level in order to achieve our ambitious goals. All of this means continued investment on salaries and benefits in the years ahead.

Fifth, as our school quickly grows to its long-term size of 390 students, composed of two classes of fifteen students in each grade, K through 12, we will need a physical location that can support a school of this size. Furthermore, this location will need science labs, rehearsal space, a gymnasium, access to other athletic facilities, and a beautiful chapel for the heart of our school day: daily Mass. Finally, this location must be, like our current one, in the center of the Michiana area, in order to be easily accessible to all of our families. Having signed our lease with St. Patrick's parish for the 2022-2023 school year, we are now working assiduously to find a new location that can accommodate our ambitions and our growth.

Because we embrace all of these ambitious goals, we are working this summer to lay the foundations for our first capital campaign, which we will officially open at the start of our 2022-2023 school year. We are completely confident that, if we cast out into the deep, God will provide. As we develop our relationships with individuals, communities, and foundations that can support our mission, we will attract the resources to build a school that our children deserve.

We close with our gratitude for so many gifts God has given us this year. We are grateful for Tony Biese, who graciously agreed to become STMA's first full-time Headmaster. Tony brings with him exactly the adventurous spirit and level-headed leadership that we knew we needed in a partner to build our school, and he has been a true delight to work with since he arrived in January. Hiring, as soon as possible, a full-time Headmaster who shares our vision and complements our gifts has been an essential part of our plan from the very beginning. Tony has been a godsend. For example, between November 2020 and January 2022, the two of us put considerable care into forging the unique spirit of STMA by personally recruiting and admitting the first 100 students. In just three months, Tony encouraged us to expand our horizons to high school right away, and then recruited and admitted 34 more students by himself to help the expansion, with at least equal care for the composition of our community. The responsibility now lies with Tony for all of the day-to-day operations of the school. Furthermore, he brings decades of unique experience, shares our vision, and is a man of vision himself. Tony is a builder. He is exactly the partner we need to build the school we envisioned.

We are grateful for Diana Philpott, whose exceptional guidance to our teachers has made her curriculum more than just something on paper, but a dynamic reality which has blessed our students and faculty alike. The heart of the work that happens at STMA lies in the teacher-student relationships. It is these relationships that Diana has constantly nourished with continual feedback to our teachers all year long. Best of all, Diana has agreed to come back next year to continue her work, and to train her replacement. We would be nowhere without her: thank you!

We are grateful for all our founding faculty and staff: Jerome Cole, Tess Cramer, Noah Furneri, Christen-Marie Havard, Amie Kulick, Peter McAuliff, Emily Nye, Katie Otteson, and Leah Stroik. This year, and this school, never could have happened without you. Whether you are near or far, you will not be forgotten.

We are grateful to all who have given advice and financial support. STMA was nourished at its foundation by the advice and encouragement of Margaret's father Peter Blume, President, and Leslie Mitros, Head of Aquinas Academy. It was their help in 2020 and 2021 which allowed us to incorporate and obtain tax deductible status quickly enough to open this fall, and without their

experience we could not have weathered the early decision making of the 2021-2022 school year so well. And we are deeply grateful for the generosity of our many financial benefactors. Every fruit of STMA has depended on your donations, and we have been careful stewards of these gifts. Please continue to be generous. We will remember you at Mass every day; please remember that STMA is your home as well, and you are always welcome to visit home.

Most of all, we are grateful to God for bringing all of us together on this great adventure. As we shared in our opening letter to STMA's first annual yearbook, the history of STMA's founding shows God's hand reaching out to bring the leaders, teachers, and families of STMA together. We entrust this school to God's providence, and offer it to him in gratitude for his everlasting mercy and love.

Yours,

Kirk Bennett Doran, President (kdoran@stmasb.org)

Margaret Blume Freddoso, Vice President (mfreddoso@stamsb.org)

STMA High School Course Offerings

Note: Where the STMA course title differs from the standard IDOE course title, the IDOE course codes and titles are indicated in italics.

2022-23 Academic Year

Discipline	Course Title	Credits	Grade level(s)
English	Ancient and Medieval Literature <i>1026: Classical Literature</i>	2	9th-11th
Math	Algebra II	2	9th-11th
	Algebra I	2	9th
Science	Physics I	2	9th-11th
Social Studies	Ancient and Medieval History <i>1548: World History and Civilization</i>	2	9th-11th
Foreign Language	Latin I	2	9th-11th
	Greek I	1	9th-11th
PE/ Health	Physical Education I	1	9th-11th
Theology	The Word of God <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	9th-11th
Trivium/ Philosophy	Formal Logic <i>1074: Critical Thinking and Argumentation</i>	1	9th-11th
Fine Arts	Beginning Chorus	1	9th-11th
	Intro to Two Dimensional Art	1	9th-11th

2023-24 Academic Year

Discipline	Course Title	Credits	Grade level(s)
English	American Literature	2	9th-12th
Math	Geometry	2	9th-11th
	Pre Calculus: Trigonometry		11th-12th
Science	Biology I	2	9th-11th

Social Studies	United States History	2	9th-12th
	Economics	1	12th
	American Constitutional Tradition <i>1540: United States Government</i>	1	12th
Foreign Language	Latin I / II	2	9th
	Greek I / II	1	10th-12th
PE/ Health	Heath and Wellness Education	1	9th-11th
Theology	Professing and Living the Faith <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	9th-12th
Trivium/ Philosophy	Classical Rhetoric <i>1078: Advanced Speech and Communication</i>	1	9th-12th
Fine Arts	Beginning Chorus	1	9th-12th
	Theatre Production	1	9th-12th

2024-25 Academic Year

Discipline	Course Title	Credits	Grade level(s)
English	Ancient and Medieval Literature <i>1026: Classical Literature</i>	2	9th-10th
	Modern Literature <i>1052: World Literature</i>	2	11th-12th
Math	Geometry	2	9th
	Algebra II	2	10th
	Pre Calculus: Trigonometry	2	11th-12th
	AP Calculus AB	2	12th
Science	Physics I	2	9th-10th
	Chemistry I	2	11th-12th
Social Studies	Ancient and Medieval History <i>1548: World History and Civilization</i>	2	9th
	AP European History	2	10th-12th
Foreign	Latin I / II / III	2	9th-12th

Language			
	Greek I / II / III	1	9th-12th
PE / Health	Physical Education I	2	9th-12th
Theology	The Word of God <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	9th-10th
	Texts in the History of Christianity <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	11th-12th
Trivium / Philosophy	Formal Logic <i>1074: Critical Thinking and Argumentation</i>	1	9th-10th
	Philosophy of the Human Person <i>0514: Humanities</i>	2	11th-12th
Fine Arts	Beginning Chorus	1	9th-10th
	Intermediate Chorus	1	11th-12th
	Intro to Two Dimensional Art	1	9th-11th

2025-26 Academic Year

Discipline	2025-26	Credits	Grade level(s)
English	Ancient and Medieval Literature <i>1026: Classical Literature</i>	2	9th
	American Literature	2	10th
	Modern Literature <i>1052: World Literature</i>	2	11th
	AP English Literature and Composition	2	12th
Math	Geometry	2	9th
	Algebra II	2	10th
	Pre Calculus: Trigonometry	2	11th-12th
	AP Calculus AB	2	12th
Science	Physics I	2	9th
	Biology I	2	10th
	Chemistry I	2	11th
	AP Physics AB	2	12th

Social Studies	Ancient and Medieval History <i>1548: World History and Civilization</i>	2	9th
	United States History	2	10th
	AP European History	2	11th
	Economics	1	12th
	American Constitutional Tradition <i>1540: United States Government</i>	1	12th
Foreign Language	Latin I / II / III / IV	2	9th-12th
	Greek I / II / III / IV	1	9th-12th
PE / Health	Physical Education II	2	9th-12th
	Health and Wellness Education	1	transfer s
Theology	Professing and Living the Faith <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	9th
	The Word of God <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	10th
	Texts in the History of Christianity <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	11th
	The Church in the Modern World <i>0550: Religion</i>	2	12th
Trivium / Philosophy	Formal Logic <i>1074: Critical Thinking and Argumentation</i>	1	9th
	Classical Rhetoric <i>1078: Advanced Speech and Communication</i>	1	10th
	Philosophy of the Human Person <i>0514: Humanities</i>	2	11th
	Ethical and Political Life <i>IDOE nonstandard course</i>	2	12th
Fine Arts	Beginning Chorus	1	9th-10th
	Intermediate Chorus	1	11th- 12th
	Theatre Production	1	9th-12th