Saint Thomas the Apostle Board of Education

Meeting Minutes – September 08, 2026 [6:00 PM – 8:00 PM]

Prayer and Opening Remarks – Father Stephen

Father Stephen opened the meeting with prayer and provided the following updates and remarks:

- **Parish Personnel:** Father Stephen noted recent changes in parish staffing and leadership, including the retirement or departure of Margo, Austin, and David. Sarah and Katie have joined the parish. He acknowledged the continued transition and movement of personnel within the parish.
- **St. Stephen Parish Transition:** Father Stephen discussed the potential transition involving St. Stephen Parish and noted that many aspects of the transition will be determined by the Diocese. He referenced the potential impact on facilities, architectural elements, and other aspects of the church that may be applicable to St. Thomas. He noted that St. Stephen's weekend Mass attendance has grown from approximately 700 to 1,100 attendees.
- **Church Improvements:** Father Stephen discussed potential facility improvements, including contemporary plans to add a bathroom on the upper level of the church, potentially during summer 2027. He also discussed the possibility of relocating the confessional to another area within the church.
- **Alpha Program:** Father Stephen provided an update on the Alpha program, noting that several sessions are currently available. The program is beginning to expand its focus to include second-grade students preparing to receive the sacraments, with the potential for the program to develop further in the future.

Mission Moment

Presented by Sarah Pfennig, St. Thomas Parent.

Focus: Current school uniform program and associated costs.

- **Uniform Costs and Ordering:** Concerns were raised regarding the overall cost of uniforms, shipping expenses, and return costs. The current uniform website and ordering process were also discussed, including the difficulty of determining proper sizing when uniforms cannot be tried on prior to purchase.
- **Cost Analysis:** A comparison of uniform pricing with other retailers, including Old Navy as an example, indicated that comparable items may be available at a lower cost. The discussion focused on identifying options that could provide more affordable uniforms for St. Thomas families.
- **Historical Pricing:** The Board discussed whether uniform pricing was different when the uniform provider operated from its previous location on 28th Street and whether costs have increased since the school began outsourcing the program.

- **Embroidery and Uniform Requirements:** The Board discussed embroidery requirements and whether differences in shirt colors or embroidery could create concerns. Current requirements, including embroidered green shirts and non-embroidered white shirts, were reviewed.
- **Uniform Policy and Broader Considerations:** The Board discussed which uniform requirements are essential and whether there are opportunities to simplify the program while maintaining the school's overall uniform standards.
- **Potential Alternatives:** The possibility of researching additional uniform providers was discussed to determine whether more affordable options are available. The Board also discussed whether another parent survey may be beneficial to gather current feedback regarding uniforms and associated costs.
- **Ordering Guidance:** The Board discussed the importance of clearly communicating uniform requirements and applicable shirt policies to families at the time of ordering to help avoid purchasing issues.

Auction Reminder

The Board was reminded of the upcoming auction. Board members were encouraged to donate a box and/or gift box for the auction. A limited number of tickets remain available, and Board members were encouraged to purchase tickets while available.

Partner Organization Reports

Finance Council – David Shankin/ Mark Fjelsted

- Updates will be provided at a later time.

School Budget – Betsy Edgerton

Educational Foundation Goals and Mission	
1.	Ensure the Educational Foundation is recognized as an integral part of the Parish/School community with a consistent presence.
2.	Grow the donor, volunteer, and ambassador base.
3.	Our Mission: We stand in support of the educational and spiritual objectives of Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School by raising, protecting, and administering funds.

Happy Start to the New School Year!
The Foundation has had an excellent summer and are looking towards this year with

energy and excitement. Below is a summer recap and a Community Calendar for the upcoming year.

Summer Recap:

- **At the end of June** we received our first grant of $8,000 given to *The Excellence in Learning Society.* The mission of this new initiative is to support the academic and spiritual formation of every student by funding high-quality curriculum resources that enable exceptional teaching, targeted instruction, and meaningful learning experiences. As curriculum costs continue to rise, funding these materials places increasing pressure on our school's operating budget. Too often, this creates difficult choices, forcing teachers to weigh what is needed against what is affordable. No teacher should have to compromise the quality of instruction due to limited resources.
- **In July** we were awarded a $25,000 grant from the Steve and Amy VanAndel Foundation as a lead gift for our new Society.
- **In the month of August** we received an additional grant of $15,000 for this new society from a donor who also saw the need to ensure that our teachers and students have what they need to thrive

Community Calendar Highlights

- Join us September 11 at the CAT for the Booster/Educational Foundation annual Tailgate! Pizza, Popcorn, Snacks, Merch, and not one, but two slides will be center stage for our current school families, parishioners, and alumni.
- October the foundation partners with our Home & School as we look forward to Grand Friends Day and the connection and joy this day brings.
- Also in October, we ask you to support and attend our school's biennial auction on Saturday, October 3! This not-to-miss event with dinner, cocktails and dancing is open to all community members and is sure to be a grand time! Please note the **Foundation is not a beneficiary of the auction** – all funds directly benefit the school!
- In November the Foundation will offer a new evening program – **A Toast to Legacy**. We invite school parents, parishioners, and community members to an evening of wine, fellowship, and practical guidance on estate planning, Catholic funeral traditions, and legacy giving.
- December the foundation, in coordination with our annual year end appeal will host coffee and Donuts after all Masses on December 6.
- Mark your calendars for February 28 when our faculty, staff, and board members take on a local Special Olympics team in a rowdy, fun, and crazy game of basketball. Where everyone plays and everyone wins! Even the spectators.

Thank you,
Betsy Edgerton

Home and School – Holly Kammel/ Clare

Home and School Goals -	
1.	Support teachers in their work with students.
2.	Build community among families, including new families.
3.	Enhance communication between the school and families.

Boosters – Ashley Emmerson / Jeremiah Sluggett

Boosters Goals -	
1.	Giving every student the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports and activities.
2.	Holding social events and fundraisers to fund sports and school needs.
3	Provide knowledge of sports and activities to the school community and an understanding of what Boosters represents.

- The primary goal is to increase visibility and transparency regarding the allocation of funds generated through Booster events.
- Upcoming event: Social, 5:00–7:00 p.m. – CC Tailgate.

Committee & Organization Reports

Mission Effectiveness – James Wilson

Mission Effectiveness Committee Goals -	
1.	Deepen the Catholic spiritual life of the students of St. Thomas in the classroom and beyond.
2.	Strengthen the sense of Catholic mission of school parents.
3.	Broaden programming for parents, families, and parishioners so that Catholic education becomes a life-long activity.

- Discussion included efforts to reestablish and increase participation in the school rosary.

Policy & Planning – Rita Maddox

Policy and Planning Committee Goals -	
1.	Written Policy Review and Establishment
2.	Policy System Review
3.	Support for the STA School Strategic Plan

- Reviewed the student handbook.
- Continued work on the school strategic plan.

Buildings & Grounds – Josh Szymanski

Building and Grounds Committee Goals	
1.	Implement Safety priorities from SEC assessment
2.	Make St Thomas more accessible to people with a variety of abilities
3.	Maintain and improve the building and grounds with consideration of long term economic and environmental sustainability

- Discussion focused on implementing secure entry systems for the school and church, with a target implementation date of summer 2027.
- The committee is evaluating and reprioritizing facility assets, including items such as boilers.
- Long-term planning will consider the St. Thomas campus as a whole, including the school, grounds, parking lots, church, and other facilities.

Finance – Mark Fjelsted

Finance Committee Goals 2025-2026	
1.	Build a framework for a financial sustainability plan that aligns with the long-term financial forecast that has been compiled (reviewing Education Foundation, grant writing, school admin costs, multi-child discount, add'l revenue streams, etc).
2.	Evaluate and propose a model for sustainable compensation of staff.
3.	Consult on the financial portion of the accreditation process.

Committee on Directors – Matt Jennings

Committee on Directors Goals - 2025-2026	
1.	Maintain candidate database containing information about past and present Saint Thomas parents and parishioners that includes professional experience/expertise and previous service to the church and school
2.	Backfill seats with ending terms (Chairperson, Planning & Policy, Committee on Directors, Marketing/Communications)
3.	Train incoming Committee on Directors

- Additional discussion and direction are still to be determined.
- The committee will continue working with Meredith on this area.

Development – Cammi Lawrence

Development and Outreach Committee Goals - 2025-2026	
1.	Collaborate with Boosters, Home & School, and Parish to provide coordinated events and activities for all students and their families.
2.	Ensure the enrollment process is well communicated, documented, and accessible.
3.	Establish a succession plan

- We're starting the year off with 341 students and counting, including 58 new students and about 31 new families! We've got a couple more families in the wings who are considering St. Thomas for this school year.
- We kicked off the school year with our annual STA Open House, which was well attended by both new and returning families. Tonight at 7 p.m., we'll welcome our new families and their "host" families at our New Family Welcome Social at the Delgado home. And the STA Tailgate at the CC football game is this Friday, September 11, at 5 p.m. Lots of opportunities for our St. Thomas community members to connect, meet new friends, and strengthen the bonds that make our community so special.
- Finally, our Emerald Auction is right around the corner on October 3. Do y'all have your tickets yet? We hope to see you there!

- The school has conducted 15 tours during the current year, with 14 prospective students identified as potential enrollment for the following year.
- Efforts continue to expand the prospective-family pipeline.
- Open Houses were discussed as an opportunity to increase awareness and engagement.

Marketing – David Shankin

Marketing and Communications Committee Goals - 2025-2026	
1.	Create a style guide and library of brand assets to aid in the creation of Saint Thomas marketing materials.
2.	Work with the marketing committee to refine communication channels.
3.	Work with the marketing committee to implement the Saint Thomas identity refresh into the website.

- The school's visual identity and logo were completed in 2026.

- Marketing training sessions will be implemented.
- Efforts will continue to better integrate marketing resources and information into the St. Thomas website.

Principal / Administration Report – Ryan Corcoran

- Enrollment has increased from 332 students at the beginning of the 2026 school year to 341 students for the 2027 school year.
- The 2026 school budget finished approximately $5,000 under budget.
- Planning and initial discussions have begun for the 2027 school budget.
- Tuition and enrollment considerations were discussed.
- The recent Open House was well received, including participation from St. Thomas alumni who returned to speak with prospective families.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The May 5, 2026 Board meeting minutes were presented for approval.

Motion: Molly Kennedy
Second: Jake Smith
Result: Approved unanimously.

Board Discussions / Deliberations

No additional discussion was recorded in the notes provided.

Attendance

Present: Jeremiah Sluggett, Jake Smith, Shannon Dickerson, David Dakoske, Molly Kennedy, Jamie McCabe, Cammi Lawrence, David Shankin, Rita Maddox, Nick Freylber, Josh Symanski.

Absent: Betsy Edgerton, Mark Fjelsted, Matthew Jennings, Mary Vonck, Genevieve Boyle, Ashley Emmerson, James Wilson.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at **8:15 p.m.**