



For more than 85 years, St. Thomas Aquinas has been a school and parish that is built on belonging. We are a diverse and welcoming community that has attracted and served a remarkable range of ethnic backgrounds, income levels, and types of families. In its own 83-year history, St. Thomas Aquinas School has instructed thousands of young people with the highest academic standards, and the highest quotient of caring.

Steeped in a history of fighting racial injustice, alleviating poverty, and the daily practice of faith-rooted kindness and acceptance, our community strives to live the gospel of Jesus Christ through prayer, vibrant liturgy, and educational excellence. We are

“God’s People in Extraordinary Variety . . . A Caring Community.”



1939

original wood frame church erected



1964

gymnasium added to the school



2001

Bethany Room, science lab and kindergarten added at a cost of \$1.4M



2019

campus master plan created



2023

New Foundations Committee launched

1941

original school building completed



1969

current Evans Woollen-designed sanctuary built



2017

pre-K program launched



2022

conceptual designs for campus expansion created



A Growing Opportunity

The school welcomed 157 pupils when it opened in September 1941. Today, enrollment is 231, including 14 Pre-K students, up to 25 for kindergarten, all the way through eighth grade. Demand is surging for the quality Catholic education the STA faculty and staff provides, with waitlists for nearly every grade.



“Your family is part of a faith community that is growing and strong. We now have an opportunity to improve physical spaces so we can come together as a community, to get to know each other, to love and support each other, to learn and grow together. That’s probably why you chose St. Thomas in the first place. Now, we need the space to keep our strong community going.”

—Beth Borland
St. Thomas Aquinas School Principal



Why the waitlists? It's the spirit. What makes St. Thomas Aquinas School unique to anyone who sets foot on campus is the smaller size, our close-knit community, and personal attention that comes with smaller classes. "When I take prospective families on tour and they see the supportive interaction between younger and older students, that's what melts their hearts. It's something unique to St. Thomas — and once they see it, they want it!" says Principal Beth Borland.

A LITANY OF CHALLENGES

We are overjoyed that so many families wish to entrust STA to nurture their children with equal parts compassion and academic rigor. And we are delighted that many of these families choose to join the parish community as well.

But an obvious, persistent challenge has emerged in the 23 years since the last expansion of the STA campus and in the seven years since the Pre-K program began: the struggle for more useful space.

In our 85 years of parish community, we have had to be resourceful, often using the chapel and church meeting space to meet the needs of our students at the sacrifice of the needs of our faith-filled parishioners.

- When school is in session and because of school security practices, the chapel is not fully accessible for prayer life.
- There is a robust demand for full day Pre-K on the near north side of Indianapolis. And the Archdiocese mandates that our program meet state standards and caregiver-child ratios and square footage.
- Music classes for all grades are currently held in the Bethany Room, depriving parishioners of daytime space for Bible studies and other meetings.
- The fine arts room for all grades is in the basement of the parish building in a windowless room that is not ADA compliant and not connected to the fire sprinkler system.
- There are no adequate spaces for small group learning, forcing students and teachers to sit in the hallways or stairwells, often filled with distractions.
- Every Friday afternoon, Pre-K teachers spend time moving furniture and rolling up rugs to transform the Pre-K classroom into a nursery for use during weekend masses. They reset the room again each Monday morning, using time that would otherwise be used helping children.



These issues are symptoms of a beautiful truth:
The St. Thomas Aquinas campus is a well-used and well-loved place!

In the can-do spirit of St. Thomas, the parish and school work hard to accommodate each other and make the best of space challenges. Yet, these conditions erode both learning quality and parish life.

In the recent Year of Eucharist, an initiative to renew the Church by rekindling a living relationship with Christ, St. Thomas could offer only limited Eucharistic adoration due to the daytime inaccessibility of the chapel. As Principal Borland put it: "It is painful to know that the foundation of our faith is not something accessible all the time to the parishioners."



A recently graduated eighth grade student was unable to access the art class in the parish basement due to a physical disability. Teachers and fellow students gladly accommodated him by holding class in a different space ... where unfortunately, the use of paint was not permitted.



Thankfully, a comprehensive solution that honors the school and the parish is well within reach.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS **NEW FOUNDATIONS:** BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

“ This campaign and this expansion is about our parish community’s ability to serve more and more diverse people. Support for this campaign not only opens up additional opportunities for our students, but it also allows our church to keep growing and bringing God’s love to more people.

—Fred Glass



For more than five years, we have been analyzing possible solutions to the space challenge. After concluding that a temporary solution would be cost prohibitive, the commission committed to a bigger picture change: a new addition to the school on the southwest corner of the campus, at Kenwood Avenue and 46th Street — the first major improvement to the STA campus in a generation.

This \$4.5 million project will transform the entire parish campus, while giving our students, faculty, and staff much needed upgrades and more educational spaces to learn, to play, and to grow.



MORE FLEXIBILITY & SAFETY & MORE COMMUNITY

A newly designed configuration will solve multiple challenges, with a wonderful domino effect:

- An “early learning center” will take shape: with Pre-K and kindergarten classrooms now closer to each other.
- The current science lab will become a kindergarten classroom, much larger than the current kindergarten space.
- The former kindergarten room will become the new Pre-K area for three- and four-year olds, giving them more space to grow and learn.
- The current Pre-K space will be turned back over to the church for use as the cry room/nursery.
- A brand new STEM Lab will double as an afterschool space for parent association meetings, breakout classroom space, student council meetings, yearbook workspace, and much more.
- The chapel will become available for use by parishioners anytime.
- The church will regain exclusive use of the Bethany Room for meetings.
- Security issues arising from the lack of separation between school and church will be eliminated.

These configurations will profoundly shift the STA learning experience while reopening a world of convenience to parish life.



The first floor of the new addition brings more than 3,000 sq. ft. of space specifically for creative arts programming. STA has long been known as a safe place where students are encouraged to participate in music and drama and that inclusion is celebrated in student holiday performances and the annual school musical. Not only do we want to continue fostering that spirit; we must keep growing it.

A new music classroom:

- Provides dedicated rehearsal space.
- Stores instruments and equipment.
- Helps grow the school and parish children's choral and music programs.
- Allows for the addition of instrument lessons and ensembles, including band and handbells.



Performing Arts Classroom



Art Classroom

A new art classroom:

- Makes art accessible to all students.
- Incorporates additional art media such as sculpture and pottery.
- Provides a dedicated space that can be messy — and plumbing that can handle paint!
- Helps students find their own creative spirit.

The dedicated STEM Lab comprises the second floor, where science learning and discovery delivers more hands-on experiences and stimulates curiosity. This new lab will provide opportunities to foster intellectual, entrepreneurial, and technical skills and design thinking. We will be able to:

- Expand the Robotics program to meet growing interest from students.
- More easily move furniture to accommodate experiments.
- Host larger groups of students.
- Break off into small learning groups more easily.
- Foster soft skills such as creativity, innovation, collaboration, and problem solving.
- Serve as flexible space for community meetings, such as Parent Association and Aquinas Club.



STEM Lab



Rooftop Garden

Experiential learning continues to be a hallmark of a strong education. In an effort to not only use as much of the new building as possible, but to also provide expanded educational opportunities for our students and practice the value of creation care, we are planning for a Green Roof and Rooftop Garden where we can further STEM education through:

- Rain barrels
- Solar cells
- Windmills
- Gardens and plants
- Programming that supports exploration of renewable resources and sustainability.

We can't forget the need for more restrooms — our current restroom stall-to-student ratio is 4:100. New bathrooms for girls are planned on the first floor, while a new set for boys will be directly above on the second floor.

There are important existing spaces that will be transformed as a part of this campaign.

- We are creating an early learning center that brings our youngest students closer to the heart of the school where they will be safer and more fully embraced by the love of this community.
- The current science lab is being reconfigured as a larger and better equipped kindergarten classroom.
- The current kindergarten classroom will become the new home for our Pre-K students, providing a safer and more secure environment, and additional room for their continued growth and development.



Kindergarten Classroom

As we turn our attention to the outside, we will also refresh our outdoor spaces with additional picnic tables, bike racks, and sustainable landscaping.

Ultimately, ***New Foundations*** is an opportunity for our parish to come together and create room for our entire faith community to expand. Not only are we providing room for today's students and programs ... ***we are also planning for tomorrow's students.***



“ In our world, country, and city, we need more people who are rooted in their Catholic faith devoted to social justice. This ethic has been the core of STA since the civil rights movement. We need this financial support to keep this parish growing and to keep doing the good work of taking God’s loving message out to everybody.

—Beth Borland
St. Thomas Aquinas School Principal



Your Invitation to Join Us

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and School is at an exciting point in our eight decades of serving the community. The school is thriving, as demand increases for our powerful, nurturing educational model. The parish family continues to grow and our outreach continues to enact our commitment to social justice, diversity, and inclusion.

New Foundations is a \$4 million capital campaign that allows us to create a dynamic environment that does justice to the quality of the work we are doing both inside and outside our campus. You can help us lay the foundation for future generations of students and families to benefit from the one-of-a-kind STA experience.

With God's grace and your important support, our future is secure for today's students and thousands more for years to come.

“ I have never seen anything like it. I have been in public and Catholic education for 28 years. The level of true acceptance and encouragement that exists in this community ... it doesn't exist anywhere else. I'm very proud to be part of a school and parish so full of belonging.

—Beth Borland

St. Thomas Aquinas School Principal



ST THOMAS AQUINAS
CHURCH AND SCHOOL