SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

IMPACT REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2024-25

DEAR FRIENDS OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS,

As we reflect on the 2024–2025 school year, we do so with hearts full of gratitude and purpose. The understanding that we are ALL called to be Saints is at the heart of our faith formation. This profound truth has guided every aspect of our school year and has been brought to life through a renewed emphasis on the Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. These virtues are not just concepts we teach, they are habits we seek to cultivate in each student as they grow into men and women of faith and character.

We invite our students to take advantage of the many opportunities offered to develop a relationship with Jesus. We are blessed that several current students and two Aquinas alumni accepted the invitation to join the Catholic church this spring.

We are excited to announce that our new Track & Field and Multipurpose Room are complete, and the new Fine & Performing Arts classrooms were in full use this Spring.

All of this has been possible because of you - our generous supporters, faithful families, and dedicated alumni. I want to express my gratitude. Your belief in the mission of Catholic education has a daily impact on the lives of our students.

Thank you for walking with us in this shared mission. Together, we are building a community where we are ALL called to be Saints and where each student is inspired to rise to that call.

May God bless you,

Brian Schenck

Brian Schenck
President Saint Thomas Aquinas High School

GIVING OVERVIEW 2024-25

For over 35 years, the Saint Thomas Aquinas community has been blessed by generous supporters who have shared their time, talent, and treasure. We are deeply grateful for those who continue to stand by our mission year after year. Their ongoing support allows us to grow and adapt, creating meaningful opportunities for our students to deepen their faith and discover their God-given gifts.

~Tim Zande,'02
Director of Advancement

ONE GIFT. ONE GOAL.

Saints Community Fund ⇄ We Are Called — Saint Thomas Aquinas

Gifts made to One Gift, One Goal combined our annual giving fund with our campaign to streamline our fundraising with just one ask. Additionally, proceeds from our annual giving and our community fundraising event, Extravaganza, ensure we continue to provide opportunities for students to participate in diverse extracurricular activities, enhanced academic programs and leadership opportunities.

$1.8 MILLION
FY24-25 Total Gifts
(includes Extravaganza)

WE ARE CALLED CAMPAIGN

We are excited to share that Phase 1 of our campaign is making great progress, helping us provide upgraded facilities for our nearly 900 students and 75+ faculty and staff. Improvements include a new Fine & Performing Arts Wing, new Track & Field, and Multipurpose Room. The campaign also enables us to make significant investments that will rapidly advance programs for students.

Building the Foundation for College & Career Success

A successful career path starts with access to excellent education for every Saint. Our rigorous curriculum challenges and supports a diverse range of learners, helping each student reach their full potential. Through personalized guidance and partnerships with local colleges and universities, we prepare students to thrive in higher education and beyond.

~Craig Moss,
Academic Principal

Our Impact

- Saint Thomas Aquinas HS was named a 2025 All Star High School by the Kansas Board of Regents (the only school in the Archdiocese of KCK to earn this distinction).
- AP Pre-Calculus and AP Psychology were added expanding our AP course options to 14.
- The newly required Personal Finance course equips students with essential financial literacy skills and prepares them to confidently create and manage budgets.
- 24 students earned a score of 30 or higher on the ACT, and 74 students were honored as Kansas Scholars.
- 3 students were recognized as 2025 Kansas Governor's Scholars.
- Senior Jordan Prue, ‘25 was named Aquinas’ first Rudd Scholar, (one of just 50 students in Kansas).
- 2 students placed 1st in the Mechanical Engineering Design Contest at the University of Kansas School of Engineering.

The Cardinal Virtue of **Prudence** *empowers learning by guiding individuals to make wise decisions about what, how, and when to learn. Often called the "charioteer of the virtues," prudence helps direct our intellect and will toward good actions and in the context of learning, it enables thoughtful choices that lead to genuine growth.*

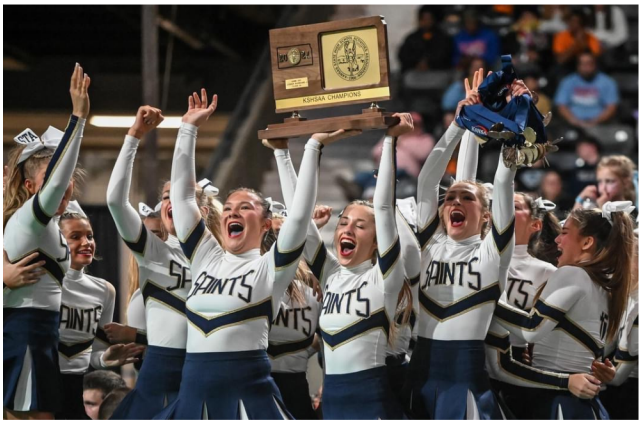
Finding Pathways to Passions Beyond the Classroom

Being actively involved in activities during my time at Aquinas has had a significant impact on my overall experience, They have not only enriched my social life but also displayed a big role in shaping my character and skills. Through activities like show choir, theater, various clubs, and sports I've developed leadership abilities, cultivated teamwork, acquired communication skills, and gained valuable insights into various cultures and issues. These activities have provided me with the opportunity to explore my interests, discover my strengths, and overcome challenges.

~Hailey Selock, '25

Our Impact

- 9 state championships were won across 8 sports – 3 individual titles in wrestling and track & field and 6 team titles in volleyball, cheer, football, girls basketball, baseball, and softball, bringing our total to **134 total** team championships.
- Our two show choirs earned 3 finals appearances and 1 grand championship.
- Senior, Anisten Cabantac ‘25, was named Gatorade Player of the Year for Kansas Girls Soccer.
- 28 student-athletes across 10 sports signed a national letter of intent to continue to compete at the collegiate level.
- Key Club earned 2 first place awards, 1 second place at the District Convention and senior, Kobe Bui ‘25 was named Outstanding Key Club member for the state of Kansas.
- Two students won Judge’s Choice Awards at the annual Archbishop’s High School Art Invitational Exhibit.
- The musical **Footloose** was nominated for 3 Blue Star Awards.
- Senior, Brie Quinlan ‘25, won 1st place in classical voice in the Shooting Stars Scholarship sponsored by the Arts Council of Johnson County.



The Cardinal Virtue of **Fortitude**, *often called courage, empowers students to pursue and develop their God-given gifts by giving them the strength to overcome fear, resistance, and hardship. Fortitude fuels the journey of becoming who God created us to be, strong in purpose, steady in growth, and courageous in love.*

Shaping Hearts and Minds to Serve the World

The campus ministry department strives to form disciples of Christ by living out the cardinal virtues. In particular, we help our students practice the virtue of Justice by compassionately serving those in our community who are in need. We seek to help each student find their own unique calling to sainthood.

~Fr. Colm Larkin,
Saint Thomas Aquinas Chaplain

Our Impact

- 174 seniors participated in a transformative Kairos retreat focused on spiritual growth, reflection and community.
- 228 juniors and 15 teachers took part in our annual Junior Serve days, helping at one of the 11 local service agencies in our Kansas City area.
- 45 students actively led and served in our Campus Ministry as Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Gift Bearers, Lectors.
- 26,628 Community service hours performed by our student body.
- 67,265 cans donated to Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas (16th Annual Canned Food Drive) and $6800 raised to be used to buy fresh food for those in need.
- 45 students earned the Presidential Service Award (*23-24 school year).

The Cardinal Virtue of **Justice** *deeply influences how students serve the greater community by instilling a sense of responsibility, respect, and commitment to the common good. Justice transforms service from a task into a vocation; calling students to build a more just and loving world through thoughtful, consistent, and respectful action.*

Living Heroic Virtue

At Saint Thomas Aquinas High School, we proudly call ourselves the Saints—but our mission goes beyond a mascot. We are dedicated to forming saints by guiding our students to live lives of heroic virtue. Through prayer, academic study, and community building, we encourage our students to embody the four Cardinal virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice, in all they do. Our focus on virtue formation is supported by daily reflective prayer and monthly awards that honor students and faculty who shine as examples of virtuous living.

~Campus Ministry, Directors

photo credit: Kathryn White, The Leaven

Our Impact

- All-school silent meditation implemented at the beginning of the last period of each day focused on a specific virtue. By weaving these virtues into prayer, classroom discussions and everyday interactions, students are encouraged to rise above the ordinary and strive for the extraordinary.
- 7 students and 7 teachers were chosen by their peers and awarded the Virtue of the month at an All-School Mass.
- 11 current students and 2 alumni entered the Catholic Church this past Easter.
- 50+ students, faculty, and staff participated in in the National March for Life in Washington, D.C.
- 150+ students, faculty, staff and people walked in the annual Rosemary Maher Saints Walk for Life.
- 15 seniors, 2 teachers and our Chaplain toured Italy over Spring Break deepening their understanding of our Catholic faith and history.
- 50+ Seniors were trained as Eucharistic Ministers.

To live heroic virtue means to consistently choose what is good, true, and loving even when it is difficult, unpopular, or costly. It is the pursuit of virtue not just in ordinary moments, but in extraordinary ways, showing steadfast commitment to moral excellence and self-giving love.

The Transformative Power of a Faith-Filled Community

by Samantha Paradise, '03, Director of Community Relations

For 36 years, Saint Thomas Aquinas has remained steadfast in its commitment to faith formation. Within our long standing traditions one thing has remained constant - our love for Christ and our eagerness to share it with others. Our staff and faculty are the pillars of this mission, sacrificing time and energy to be present for our students not only in the classroom and during school hours, but far beyond. Their dedication is an embodiment of Christ's love and selflessness.

This past Easter, 11 students from Saint Thomas Aquinas High School made the profound decision to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. Among them, three were baptized, three were confirmed, and five received both their First Communion and Confirmation. Additionally, two Aquinas alumni chose to join the Church and received their First Communion and Confirmation.

These moments are a powerful testament to the vibrant faith within our school community and the lasting influence of our teachers, staff, chaplain, coaches, and students, who inspire others to grow closer to Christ through their daily witness.

Keegan,'25 one of the 11 students initiated into the Catholic Church, describes his eagerness to join the Catholic faith because of a fellow student named Nate who supported, guided and walked alongside him in his search for answers.

"The community here is what I like to say is humility in their faith. They do not preach so everyone can see them do it but they live it out in everything they do. I had no idea what the Catholic faith was or how I would be accepted. I have never felt uncomfortable by a student, teacher or staff member for seeking answers to my questions. My friend Nate has walked me through this journey and has helped me along the way."

We are much more than an institution of learning, we are disciples on the road to sainthood, participating in the greater work of God. Let us rejoice in every teacher, staff member, coach, chaplain, student, and volunteer who leads others to Christ, knowing that we are all walking this journey of faith together. This is His mission, and we are blessed to be a part of it.

We are ALL called to be Saints!

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann offers a blessing to 10 of the 11 Saint Thomas Aquinas High School students who entered the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. The archbishop was the main celebrant and homilist for a special Easter Mass at the school on April 29. Father Colm Larkin, chaplain at Aquinas, concelebrated.

Expanding Space for Innovation and Purposeful Collaboration

We Are Called Campaign

Phase 1 of the **We Are Called Campaign** included constructing a much-needed Track & Field on the north-side of our campus and constructing a Fine & Performing Arts wing with a multipurpose center as well as expanding our curriculum with real-world learning opportunities.

Presentation Room: state-of-the-art theater seating classroom designed to hold 75 people, it's furnished with audio-visual equipment and comfortable seating.

New Track & Athletic Facilities: opened this spring, providing students a safe space for training on campus with an additional turf field for practice. These facilities reflect our belief in developing the whole person - mind, body, and spirit.

New Fine & Performing Arts Wing: the expansion of our Fine & Performing Arts Wing created two new art classrooms, a new Theatre Classroom and Band Room, and allowed us to renovate our current Theatre Green Room and Choir Room to accommodate the growing success of our Arts Programs!

The Cardinal Virtue of **Temperance** *grounds innovation in wisdom, integrity, and sustainability, making sure that what is created isn't just new, but also good, responsible, and enduring. Temperance plays a crucial role in helping us create wisely, sustain focus, and lead with purpose.*

Giving From The Heart, Creating Possibilities

2024 Extravaganza General Chairs, (l-r) Scott Hardgree, '96, Michelle (Gossman) Hardgree, '96, Julie Tuttle , Dave Tuttle

As an alumna and Director of Special Events, I see firsthand how support for Extravaganza directly empowers our students to thrive; not just academically, but in the wide array of extracurricular opportunities that unfold after the bell rings. At Saint Thomas Aquinas, we're committed to a holistic approach to education, helping students discover and develop their God-given talents while instilling the values they need to make a meaningful impact in the world.

~Christine Darden, '06,
Director of Special Events

Extravaganza

Annual Giving Fundraising Event

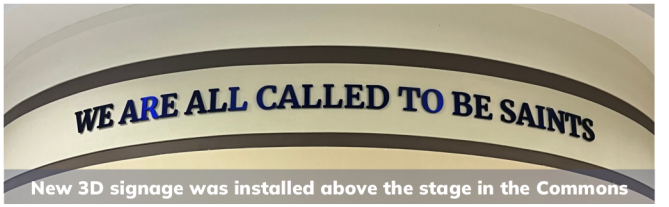
Michael Kimani, '27 with parents, Anne and John Kimani

Held on Saturday, November 16th, "Saints in Disguise: Unmasking Elegance" was an amazing success! Guests were treated to a performance by student, Michael Kimani, '27 in which he implored:

> *"So let's open our hearts, let's rise to the call. To uplift our community and strengthen us all. For the future of every bright, successful generation. For the men and women who will change our great nation."*

Our community did indeed 'rise to the call' raising nearly $680,000 in contributions for the nearly 900 students ensuring they receive opportunities for achieving excellence not only within the classroom and academic pathways but also through a diverse range of extracurricular activities available "after the bell".

Saint Thomas Aquinas Choirs



New 3D signage was installed above the stage in the Commons

Picnic tables for our courtyard installed courtesy of the Extravaganza Student Gift project

Strengthening Alumni Connections for Student Success

This 2024-25 school year, we proudly welcomed our largest ever Alumni Legacy Class and celebrated our second largest Alumni Legacy graduating class. Alumni consistently choose Saint Thomas Aquinas for its rich traditions, authentic faith experience, excellence in athletics and academics, and its dedication to fostering personal growth in all areas of life.

~Samantha Paradise, '03
Director of Community Relations

Alumna, Carolyn (McCullough) Spexarth, '04 (pictured with her family & Brian Schenck, President of Aquinas) honored at our annual Alumni Basketball event for her outstanding athletic career as a Saint.

Our Impact

- Over 700 alumni participated in events at Saint Thomas Aquinas.
- Over $800,000 in donations were made in support of our programs and initiatives.
- Over 150 alumni have students currently attending Saint Thomas Aquinas.
- 35 Alumni parents in the graduating class of 2025.

A special thank you to the following alumni for their time and continued commitment to Catholic education.

Ashley Burns, 2005
Annette Evans Mirocke, 1972
Anthony Mirocke, 1975
Patrick Mirocke, 1976
Joseph Mirocke, 1979
Mike Mirocke, 1985
Lauren Gates, 2004
John Kuhlman, 2003
Kevin Coomes, 2003
Celia Needleman Thompson, 1998
Valerie Martin, 1997
Kristen Saberi, 2000
Brittany Boddicker Elkins, 2007
Mary Grace Copeland Salinas, 2014
Maggie Nachbar Bell, 2005
Beth Benedict Borders, 2005
Soccer Alumni 1970-2023
Basketball Alumni 1985-2024
Robert Cowdrey, 2013
Josh Elliot, 2023
Ryan McCarthy, 2000
Chris, 2001 & Bridget (Gangel) Lee, 2002
Foote Family
Zarda BBQ
Scott Collin, 1989
Patrick, 2001 & Carrie (Furman) O'Donnell, 2001
Colby Landers, 2019

Creating a Roadmap for Achieving Long-term Goals

This spring, our school community – including students, staff and faculty, alumni parents, and current families – came together with a shared purpose: to shape a bold and lasting vision for the future of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. The months of collaboration was inspiring and energizing. There was thoughtful dialogue and collective determination. The result is a Strategic Plan that reflects our values and sets a clear path forward for our current families and students, and for those we will serve for decades to come.

~Christa Dubill,
member, Board of Directors,
Co-chair Strategic Plan Steering Committee

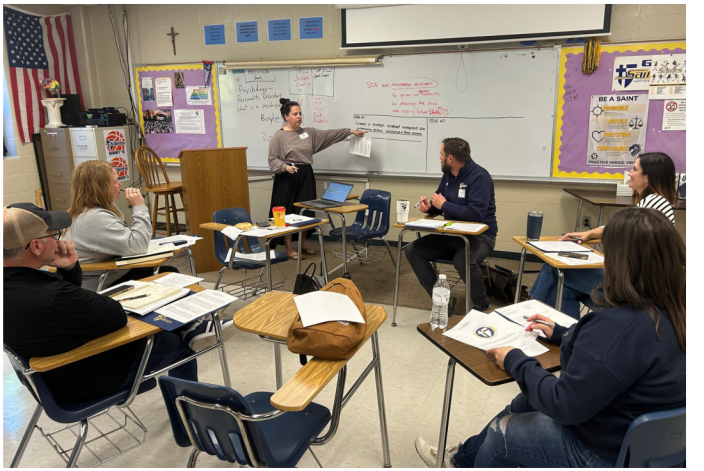
Strategic Plan 2025-2030

In the Summer of 2024, prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, Administration took a bold step forward to partner with the national Catholic organization, Partners in Mission to lead us through the strategic planning process.

This Strategic Plan will be our compass over the next several years, guiding our decisions and aligning our resources with our most important goals. It challenges us to act boldly and remain rooted in the mission of Catholic education. We invite you to read the plan, accessible on our website: www.stasaints.net/strategicplan.

8 Domain Areas

- Academics
- Advancement
- Catholic Identity
- Enrollment
- Facilities
- Finance
- Governance
- Student Life

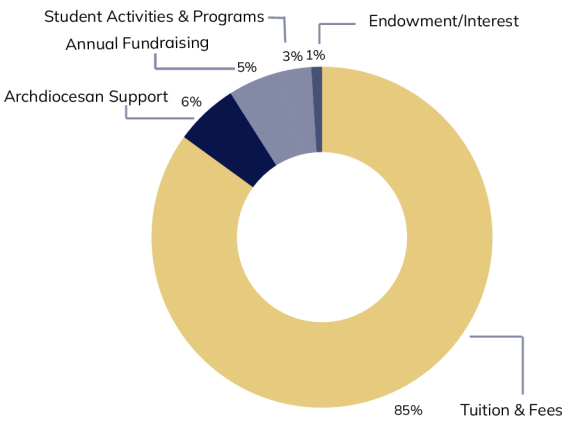


FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

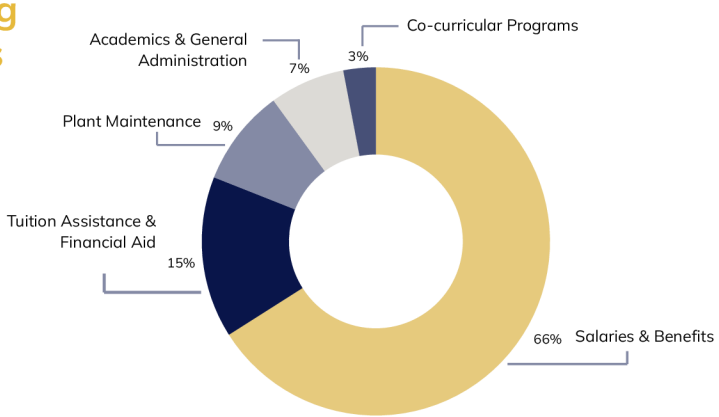
Saint Thomas Aquinas High School supports our students in becoming Saints through an operating budget of $12.5M, with an additional $1.7M dedicated for tuition assistance.

We maintain a high level of fiscal responsibility, managed by the school administration and governed through policies approved by the Board of Directors. Our annual budget is approved by the Board of Directors and the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas. The school is audited annually by an independent accounting firm.

Sources of Operating Funds



Operating Expenses



85%

OF OUR OPERATING BUDGET IS SUPPORTED BY TUITION AND FEES, WITH THE REMAINING PORTION PROVIDED THROUGH INVESTMENT INCOME, PHILANTHROPY, AND DISTRIBUTIONS FROM ENDOWMENTS.

A NEW YEAR AHEAD

As we look to the future, our journey continues with bold aspirations and a deep commitment to our Saint Thomas Aquinas mission. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Saints Community Fund

Our annual fund is the most important annual giving opportunity at Saint Thomas Aquinas High School because it allows us to maintain our tradition of excellence in education. Supporting the Saints Community Fund helps ensure our students are provided opportunities in the classroom, through campus ministry, on the stage, and on the court/field to discover their God-given gifts.

It also allow us to maintain our yearly expenses which includes retaining top teachers and staff.

Support Our Mission

Together, we are building a community where we are ALL called to be Saints and where each student is inspired to rise to that call. Explore how you can continue to contribute to a transformational Saint Thomas Aquinas education.

stasaints.net/givenow

Mission Saint Thomas Aquinas High School is a Catholic educational community that fosters excellence and empowers students to pursue life as a Saint.

Vision Saint Thomas Aquinas High School will educate students to live the Catholic Faith by discovering, developing, and applying their God-given gifts.

Saint Thomas Aquinas High School
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WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE SAINTS

Thank you for being part of the Saints story. We're excited for the incredible impact we'll continue to make together.

Follow us @stasaints