

# 2024-2025 Annual School Development Report

St. Thomas Aquinas



**Our Mission:** The school community of St. Thomas Aquinas is committed to academic excellence nurtured in a safe and inclusive learning environment. Here our students can reach their fullest potential supported by home, school, and community partnership.

## **Introduction**

As in previous years, we are very pleased with our School Development Survey results as a whole - but we are always looking for ways to enhance academic opportunities for our students. Our Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) data and survey results indicate that we are experiencing success academically when compared to other schools which are similar in size, as well as when compared to the provincial results. We take a tremendous amount of pride in these results, but like any institution devoted to student learning and engagement, there are always ways to improve student opportunities.

During the Strategic planning day scheduled in November 2024, we decided as a school based planning team to focus on the Wellness and Positive Relationships and Instructional Practice determinants. Concerns were raised on the way in which we are meeting the needs of the students in our building, which was a big factor in choosing the determinants listed above. We did not continue our SBL - Standards Based Learning (Jr. High) for the 2024-2025 school year. Instead, a return to grades based assessment (with elements of our SBL included) to coincide with the provincial assessment policy implemented at the beginning of the school year.

This is the seventh year using the new school development model and we are extremely proud of the progress we have made thus far.

**Our strategic planning day gave use the opportunity to examine our school data and establish next steps to address areas of needed growth as well as areas of success and positivity. Here are some overall results which helped us shape our school development direction, based on our data:**

- The vast majority of feedback from teachers, students and their families was very positive.
- When analyzing our PMF data, we have scored High or Very High in most areas except for Positive School Climate (Staff), School Engagement (Student) as well as School Fit (Family). It is concerning that School Fit (Family) has dropped from very high to intermediate, and that STA has dropped 7.6 percentage points from 2022, and Positive School Climate (Staff) went down 22.8 percentage points from 2022. We at STA pride ourselves on creating a positive school culture, so this is why it is concerning that these three areas have decreased from the previous year. It is also surprising that school engagement has decreased, as according to our reading record tracker, 39/60 students from grades K-6 increased their reading level enough to be at grade level.

## Strategic Issue/Goal: Wellness and Positive Relationships

**Objective: Improve Wellness and Positive Relationships:** Wellness is a state of dynamic physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being that enables a person to achieve full potential and an enjoyable life. A focus on social and emotional learning involves moving beyond problem-focused approach to proactive whole school strategies supporting the social development of all students

### How did you know this was a Strategic Issue/Objective? What evidence did you have?

- According to our School Development Survey (student) results from 2023-2024, only 54% of students in grades 3-8 responded positively to the school belonging section, in which they were asked questions such as 'How much respect do students in your school show you?' and 'How much do you feel you belong at your school?' This has also been a downward trend in the data since 2020.
- According to the School Development survey (teacher) results from 2023-2024, even though there is a 83.3% rate of positive results in the school climate section, there is a 16.7% rate of negative results. Questions that were asked were, 'How positive were the attitudes of your colleagues?' and 'How optimistic are you that your school will improve in the future?' This is concerning as we have such a small sample size for staff, there are a number of staff who feel negatively about our school climate.
- According to the School Development Survey (Family) results from 2023-2024, only 25% of families who responded did so with positive results to the School Engagement section, in which families were asked questions such as 'How often do you communicate with teachers from this school?' and 'How often have you helped out at this school?'

### Year end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?

Collaborative decision for Staff Wellness day. Held concurrent sessions throughout the day, including Zumba, darts, colouring and reading room, as well as a massage therapist who offered individual sessions to staff members. This was held in Feb 2025.

Student Wellness day went as planned in Feb 2025. A choice of swimming at the Regional Aquatic Centre, skating at the Stephenville Dome, and snowshoeing at the Whaleback Ski Lodge was given. Students really enjoyed the trip, as well as staff. Everyone came back refreshed ready to work the next school day. Andrew

applied for the Western Wellness Coalition grant, and we received a total of \$550. It was intended to be used for the Student Wellness day, but the Port au Port Indian Band offered to fund the trip. This grant was used for the purchase of Disc Golf nets and equipment to be used in after school sports.

Staff PAWS were introduced digitally. Staff members suggest that informal methods may be needed.

Many staff members took part in a Push-Up Challenge in February as a team (STA Fit), raising over \$500 for the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Roundtable discussions were implemented in Staff meetings at the beginning of each month.

Monthly Staff vs. Students activities took place only a few times.

### **Next Steps...**

- Continue with including Wellness as an intentional focus for staff and students. STA Well periods will be scheduled into the 14 day cycle to ensure wellness as a focus for all. At least one school-wide Wellness Activity will occur during each Term.
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- Staff will be encouraged to take on wellness challenges as a 'team' throughout the school year.
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- Continue planning major school-wide outings and activities with an increased focus on variety.
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- More effort will be necessary to ensure that mitigating factors are accounted for when planning school activities, such as the Staff Vs. Students and STA Together monthly events.
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- Continue to cultivate partnerships with school community members and organizations to facilitate wellness and inclusive opportunities and strategies at STA.

## Strategic Issue/ Goal: Instructional Practice

**Objective: Increase Effectiveness of Instructional Practice:** Within a collaborative and inclusive learning environment, responsive teaching and learning incorporates quality instruction for all students. Responsive teaching and learning involves all teachers and all student learning. When planning for effective instruction teachers must be aware of and responsive to the learners in their classes. *Universal Design for Learning* (UDL) is an approach to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all by setting clear, rigorous goals; anticipating barriers; and proactively designing to minimize those barriers. As well, instructional practices should provide opportunities for students to develop global competencies of collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication, citizenship and character.

### How did you know this was a Strategic Issue/Objective? What evidence did you have?

According to the School Development survey (teacher) results from 2023-2024, there is a 58.3% rate of positive results in the professional learning (staff) section. Questions that were asked were 'How valuable are the available professional learning activities?' and 'How relevant have your professional development opportunities been to the content that you teach?'

According to the School Development survey (teacher) results from 2023-2024, there is a 28.6% rate of negative results in the teaching efficacy (staff) section. Questions that were asked were 'How thoroughly do you feel that you know all the content you need to teach?' and 'When one of your teaching strategies fails to work for a group of students, how easily can you think of another approach to try?'

### Year end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?

- Our junior high Math and Phys Ed teacher travelled to St. Michael's Elementary in January 2025 to shadow the Phys Ed teacher from that school. He learned tips and tricks along with classroom management skills that he could use in the gym for Phys Ed classes.
- Our junior high Math and Phys Ed teacher was visited by the Program Specialist for Numeracy in April 2025. This was intended to help him with his year end planning and to maximize the use of his time in class. Being a new teacher, the program specialist was able to guide him in the right direction.
- AI has been introduced in 2 separate PL sessions. Not all members were present for the first session in November, but the rest were present in the second one in May. There were opportunities for individual sessions for those who missed out.
- The district offered a variety of optional Tech PL throughout the year. Teachers did avail of Code 09 for some while others did PL on their own time.
- All teaching staff have availed of PL on the use of eNLighted curriculum platform. Primary staff availed of this in Nov 2024 while the rest availed in June 2025.
- IRT staff are using AI to create social stories for special needs students. This is proving effective in the delivery of SEL programming for these students. Multiple students have used these stories to help use strategies to calm when dysregulated.
- Multiple staff members have been using AI as a tool to support lesson content development and assessment tools.

### **Next Steps:**

- IRT staff should be offered eNLightened PL in the near future.
- Offer more training opportunities throughout the year, especially in tech and other resources.
- Make sure tools and opportunities, such as eNLightened) are clearly communicated to all stakeholders, not just specific staff members.
- TLT meetings are too individual focused and not teaching focused. It should include an aspect of approaches and strategies that are working for students and sharing them with colleagues.
- Currently, the use of AI is still somewhat limited. Continue the PL and training on the use of AI for teachers so that they can use it for more than just specific lessons and activities and to keep up with this evolving technology.