

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr Gerald Raymond

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name St. Thomas More Catholic School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 630 W Ponce De Leon Avenue

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Decatur State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30030-2951

County Dekalb

Telephone (404) 373-8456 Fax (404) 377-8554

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Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/stmdecatur Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/stmdecaturga/ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDq5UZVCXRU2hE0eqiBsbTw Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Diane Starkovich E-mail dstarkovich@archatl.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Atlanta Tel. (404) 920-7700

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs Beth Morrison
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - Middle/Junior high schools
 - High schools
 - K-12 schools
- TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	16	22	38
1	25	23	48
2	26	29	55
3	23	31	54
4	23	29	52
5	22	27	49
6	25	37	62
7	27	25	52
8	31	20	51
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	218	243	461

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 16 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 73 % White
 - 8 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 3%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	486
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.035
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0%
0 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7%
 Total number students who qualify: 32

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
34 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>29</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1987

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

St. Thomas More Catholic School is a joyful learning community reaching out to the world as the hands of Christ.

PART III – SUMMARY

On September 1, 1950, St. Thomas More Catholic School led by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur opened its doors as a convent, school, church, and rectory. The school began with approximately 140 students in grades first through fifth. The middle school, 6th - 8th grades, were added in successive years. Today, classes range from kindergarten through eighth grade with two sections per grade level. The enrollment has grown significantly to 461 students, but the school has always been blessed to sustain a close-knit family environment which focuses on Gospel values and academic excellence.

Mulhern Hall was named in honor of Father Pat Mulhern, the seventh pastor of St. Thomas More. During his tenure the school's enrollment increased dramatically. The building was dedicated on June 26, 1994. In June 2000 the school saw the departure of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and closing of the St. Thomas More convent. The convent was renovated to house parish offices, meeting space, and additional classrooms. In recognition of the Sisters for their 50 years of faithful service to the students of St. Thomas More, the Notre Dame de Namur Multipurpose Center was dedicated on October 26, 2002. This multipurpose building houses the gymnasium, art, music, band, locker rooms, equipment rooms, performance arts stage and additional offices.

St. Thomas More draws students from nine surrounding counties, with some families traveling over 90 miles roundtrip to attend the school. Currently, 21 parishes from the Archdiocese of Atlanta are represented in the student body. The school continually grows in diversity to now include 26 countries of origin with 27% of the population being ethnicities non-Caucasian. It is composed of primarily Catholic students, though non-Catholics represent 14% of the schoolwide population.

Rich traditions have been carried on for decades through many generations of families. Every day, St. Thomas More begins and closes the school day through prayer. The school mission statement is not only recited daily, but lived through student, faculty, staff and parental actions with many community service projects. All grade levels are responsible for longstanding traditions which are carried out annually. For example, the eighth grade students embrace new kindergartners through an 8th grade buddy program. This program typifies the school culture and supports the future of St. Thomas More. Recently, these graduating students held the forty-third annual bake sale to raise funds for their annual retreat.

Teachers, faculty, and staff connect with students on multiple levels so that the learning that takes place is irreplaceable. The mission to nurture students into confident, life-long learners who can serve God and make moral decisions based on Gospel values is represented across the school. The faculty and staff participate in on-going professional development with an instructional goal focused on differentiated instruction. The school leaders and faculty members identify and share best practices, utilize instructional models that incorporate research-based, effective teaching and learning strategies, and allow veteran teachers to mentor less experienced teachers. Teachers attend conferences, webinars, book studies, and many professional development courses in order to deepen their knowledge and implementation of differentiated instructional techniques in the classroom. In addition, Danielson's four domains are utilized for professional growth and employee annual goal setting.

St. Thomas More uses an integrated educational approach, along with the principles of Catholic teaching, to bring together faith and technology, body and mind, creativity and reason, and science and religion. As teachers impart their lessons with kindness and high expectations, they nurture students into confident, life-long learners who can serve God and make moral decisions based on Gospel values.

Technology is integrated into many lessons in the general classroom setting across the curriculum. Students participate in a 1:1 iPad program in grades sixth-eighth for use at school and home. Chromebooks, laptops, and iPads are available at all grade levels for whole group or small group instruction. Teachers also have Promethean boards, iPads, Elmos, and desktop computers available in all classrooms including the computer lab and media center.

At St. Thomas More, committees and task forces focus on specific areas for continuous improvement and

provide input to the administrative team and school leadership on methodology that will support student growth academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally. In order for teachers to effectively implement the instructional process, collaborative planning occurs. Teachers carefully review the needs of students, analyze the archdiocesan standards and create engaging lessons that provide students with meaningful learning opportunities. Teachers create curriculum maps every quarter which are shared to reinforce cross-curriculum instruction. The administrators visit classrooms frequently and provide feedback through post-observation discussions with teachers. Five times a year administrators conduct instructional chats with every teacher to ensure the students' instructional needs across the school are being met.

St. Thomas More has grown spiritually and academically since 1987-88 when it was a previous recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School award.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

St. Thomas More Catholic School follows the Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The curriculum at the school fully meets the requirements of National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The following is an overview of the core subjects taught in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Reading/English Language Arts: Students in grades K-5 utilize guided reading strategies as well as Fountas and Pinnell to monitor growth of growing readers. Students are immersed in high-quality literature through whole group lessons, small group leveled reading groups, journals, literacy centers, reader's theatre, close reading and Orton- Gillingham instruction for phonics and spelling. Handwriting Without Tears is utilized in primary grades for the beginning stages of writing. As the students make progress, the Six Traits of Writing by Ruth Culham are utilized across all grade levels. The guided-book room houses over two thousand pieces of literature to support students guided reading levels. Texts include various topics to ensure religion, science, social studies, and health are incorporated through cross-curriculum opportunities. Throughout the school year, students invest in novel studies to prepare for the Battle of the Books and Accelerated Reading Program to check comprehension. Students utilize textual evidence to support communication about a text through the use of the CER- Claim, Evidence, and Reason model. This model is also utilized across many other curriculum areas.

Mathematics: A solid foundation in mathematics is key in all grade levels. Mathematics instruction occurs in whole group and small guided math groups to ensure the diverse needs are met. Students in grades K-8 utilize iLearn Mathematical program at least 2 hours per week. In this program, students work at their own individualized level to ensure all gaps are filled and enrichment can occur for each individual. Students have increased their SSAT scores as well as IOWA scores in both computation and content with the utilization of iLearn. Student in grades six and seven are administered the IAAT- Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test to determine placement for Pre-Algebra & Algebra. The school recently adopted a new mathematical series focusing on opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and understanding to real world situations. The incorporation of technology beyond the series includes tutorial videos created by teachers to support mastery. Currently, the math task force is working on vertically aligning instruction as well as vocabulary to maintain the rigor and depth of mathematical instruction throughout the entire school.

Science: Through the Archdiocese curriculum, Next Generation Science Standards are implemented across all grade levels. Teachers are also focusing on STREAM- Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. Students are instructed on various levels of earth and space science, life science, and physical science at every grade level from Kindergarten to grade 5. In the middle school setting, students focus on earth and space science in 6th grade, life science during 7th grade and physical science in eighth grade. In every classroom, three dimensions- Disciplinary Core Ideas, Crosscutting Concepts, and Science & Engineering Practices are implemented during performance tasks. Middle school students participate annually in the science fair. Science instruction involves the 5 E's- engage, explore, explain, extend/elaborate and evaluate. This hands-on approach allows students to create hypothesis and work through many trials to develop a deeper understanding of the content. Students complete lab reports and discuss their findings with other individuals and groups through interactive science journals. Discover Education, TigTag and other wonderful technological resources are utilized to enhance science instruction. Every grade level is equipped with science bins full of equipment to allow exploration and multiple experiments specifically directed to grade level curriculum. Middle school students have an opportunity to join Robotics during academic enrichment course studies.

Social Studies: The social studies curriculum at St. Thomas More is dedicated to helping young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. In grades K-8 students engage in rigorous, intellectual work that encourages critical thinking skills, inquiry, depth, and relevance. The core content of social studies is often taught with connections and referenced during English Language Arts for cross

curriculum instruction. Students learn to incorporate their Catholic faith to become a model of Christ in the everyday world.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts: Students attend music and art through specials rotations one to two times per week. Middle school students have numerous opportunities to become well-rounded scholars with the availability of hand bells, chorus, band, visual arts, and broadcasting. Music and art teachers collaborate with content area teachers to incorporate cross-curricular instruction. The arts programs support many service projects such as Empty Bowls, Rivers of the World, Pennies for Patients, Haiti Projects, and Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry. Throughout the school year, the arts provide opportunities for students at St. Thomas More to showcase their talents through performances. Some of these performances include Book Fair Night, Art Show & Evening of the Arts, and Christmas Performance.

Physical Education/Health: Through weekly direct and whole group instruction, students are encouraged to strengthen their athletic skills and ability to become team players. Teachers encourage positive sportsmanship as well as proper techniques to maintain proper health and safety. Students in grades K-8 participate in health instruction including nutrition and healthy living. Fifth grade students also learn about family life. All students participate in The President's Program for Physical Fitness.

Foreign Language: All students in grades K-8 receive instruction in Spanish. The focus of instruction is listening and speaking skills along with cultural awareness. Classrooms incorporate Spanish at appropriate levels by identifying colors and items in Spanish around the classroom. As students advance into grades 4-8, more emphasis is placed on reinforcing their verbal, written, and auditory skills. Students enrich their fluency and understanding through Dual Lingo and other interactive resources. Catholic prayers in Spanish are taught to students and the day ends with prayers in Spanish recited over the public address system. St. Thomas More is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements.

Technology: Technology forms the basis for 21st Century learning. At St. Thomas More, all students receive direct instruction in technology as a specials course taught weekly; some students take additional courses through academic enrichment classes. Keyboarding, word processing, research skills, creative productions, and responsible digital citizens are highlights of the technology concepts and skills taught. Many software programs are utilized to provide students with a rich well rounded technological foundation. The technology teacher is available three days a week after school to assist students with individual needs insuring that all task requirements are complete.

St. Thomas More employs a full-time Technology Coordinator available to support all staff and students. Teachers receive direct support for various technological needs. Consequently, teachers have embraced the importance of technology and continually increase the opportunities for students to utilize technology to capture content. The technology coordinator supports student with iPads while monitoring and supporting all instructional technological needs. For faculty and staff, the coordinator provides professional development, maintains an interactive blog for teachers to showcase and support one another, and highlights educational apps and resources available to enhance instruction. The school will retrofit the computer lab to incorporate new technology equipment providing students with equipment that will prepare them for the future.

Religion: The core content area of religion shapes the heart and soul of our school. Annually, the fifth and eighth grade students are assessed on the Assessment of Catechesis /Religious Education (ACRE) which reflects a solid foundation and understanding of the Catholic faith and doctrine. The Director of Faith Formation works with students to strengthen their faith and understanding of Catholicism. At every grade level students assume responsibilities for planning mass, reciting the rosary, and creating community prayer for the school. Students participate in liturgical celebrations and service opportunities throughout the school year. Obviously, the instruction of religion goes much deeper than any textbook can offer. The PAW, Praise and Worship, group is a new addition to the school for the 2015-16 school year. This group of students and faculty lead some of the Community Prayer services with songs, movement, and energy!

Middle school students experience enrichment courses that extend beyond the curriculum. Students participate in three unique courses that range from supporting/extending core content to enriching the arts as well as strengthening their skills in physical education, journalism, broadcasting or technology. Homerooms consist of mixed 6th-8th grade students who strive to support each other through goal setting, team building activities, assemblies, and academic support.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

The faculty and staff believe that all students can and must learn at relatively high levels of achievement. Teachers, students, and parents work collaboratively to achieve this shared educational purpose. A Professional Learning Community which meets regularly and shares expertise while collaborating to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students definitely exists at St. Thomas More.

Numerous instructional methods and interventions insure that high levels of student learning and achievement occur in all classrooms. Students in grades K-5 receive individualized direct instruction through guided reading daily. This tiered instruction also occurs in the content area of mathematics. Students feel comfortable and successful when given the opportunities to work at their individualized instructional levels. Then opportunities arise for all students to participate in activities and discussions regardless of their diverse ability levels.

All students experience support through the use of technological programs (iLearn, Moby Max, Benchmark Universe, ThinkCentral) that are differentiated to support students through all core content areas while meeting their individual needs. Students have access to these programs at school and home to enrich, remediate, or continue on grade level.

Two resource teachers and the curriculum coordinator work with students through inclusion and pullout models dependent on the needs of individual students in core content areas. Support and classroom teachers collaborate while providing appropriate accommodations to ensure that all students reach their full potential. Ongoing open communication with parents occurs as a team approach between home and school. Students receiving resource support receive interim and quarterly progress reports including students' strengths and areas of improvements. While these reports focus on core content they also include study skills, organizational skills, and work ethic strategies.

The Student Success Team (SST) is comprised of classroom and resource teachers, the school counselor, and assistant principal. This group of educators meets frequently throughout the school year to discuss students' academic, social, and behavioral needs. Identifying a successful plan and recommendation of strategies to meet student needs remains the main focus for SST. The team meets regularly to follow-up on the success of accommodations. If students continue to struggle, the team begins progress monitoring. Some students require more intense support which may lead to a formal psycho-educational evaluation. When this occurs, the SST team as well as parents and the archdiocesan psychologist will meet to review evaluation results thus developing a plan of action for both the school and home to support students.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Across all content areas, formative and summative assessments are consistently utilized to monitor students' progress and mastery of the curriculum. The IOWA Assessment (IA), CoGAT, & ACRE results are analyzed annually by grade level and by subject area. Based on this data evaluation, grade levels create goals and strategic plans for future success. St. Thomas More utilizes a bell curve to plot and analyze individual student's IA scores, CoGAT scores, as well as overall academic grades in each core content area to clearly see students' strengths and weaknesses. Pre and post assessments direct instruction to meet students' needs.

In 2013, the iLearn Mathematical program was introduced at the school with the focus on supporting students through enhancing differentiated instruction. Many students showed significant growth on both the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) and the IOWA Assessment. An average growth of 21 percentile points from the 2013 IOWA Assessment results to the 2014 IOWA Assessment results occurred for first

through fifth grade students who utilized iLearn three to four sessions per week in the academic year. Advanced mathematical thinkers are receiving above grade level individualized instruction while others are previewing or reinforcing daily mathematical instruction. Students' progress is continuously monitored to ensure all learners are growing and reaching full potential. Parents receive quarterly reports and progress is discussed at conferences and through Student Support Team. A Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting was also dedicated to sharing results with the community. St. Thomas More was the first Archdiocesan school to adopt this highly successful program; since then many other schools have followed this successful instructional strategy employed by St. Thomas More.

A full-time literacy coach works with students and teachers in grades K-5 with formative and summative assessments in English Language Arts. The literacy coach meets with every grade level to provide professional development as well as construct lesson plans to meet the diverse needs of students in reading, grammar, writing, spelling and phonics. In addition, the literacy coach also works directly with individual and small groups of students. By rotating throughout all classrooms & working with all ability levels, the literacy coach assists in meeting the needs of all students. Through determining individual student's instructional and independent reading levels (Fountas & Pinnell), the school's well stocked book room supports instruction at every level. Reading and language arts scores have grown with this direct support provided by the literacy coach.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

St. Thomas More Catholic School exemplifies a positive learning environment. The faculty and staff recognize the importance of creating a caring school culture. Our school nurtures a sense of mutual respect for all people by welcoming and respecting all members of our school community. Students are encouraged to take risks, work out problems and delve into the learning process. Teachers and staff are committed to establishing a positive attitude toward the learning process and building a firm foundation of work habits and study skills. Fifty-five percent of the teachers hold advanced degrees and lead through team building, group planning, frequent communication, and encouragement that serves as the basis of a united approach to education and community building. The schools' mission statement is recited daily following opening prayers. Teachers often reference the two-fold components of the mission statement which promotes a joyful learning environment and the importance of reaching out to others as the hands of Christ.

Every two years the students choose a theme that is viewed as a rallying point for the school's academic, spiritual, moral and social focus. For the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years students picked the theme: Jump In: A Ripple Today Can Become a Wave of Change Tomorrow. Teachers use the theme to encourage students to work hard in class, be considerate of others and to immerse themselves in the various outreach projects conducted throughout the school year.

Guidance programs provide social and emotional support to students. In grades K-5 the counselor promotes respectful and positive interactions among students. In the middle school the focus is on conflict resolution and positive peer interactions. The counselor meets with individual students and small groups to address topics such as separation/divorce, grief, study skills, and social and emotional issues.

A culture of continuous improvement exists at St. Thomas More. Starting with the administration and working through all faculty members, the focus is on doing what is best for students. Teachers are continuously exposed to the very best instructional practices through staff development, teacher sharing opportunities, peer observations, book studies and collaboration. The works of Marzano, Danielson, Wong and others influenced our positive climate. Teachers in grades K-5 have daily planning time and middle school teachers are afforded two periods per day to plan and collaborate. Frequent classroom observations by the two administrators and time to discuss the observations contribute to this culture of excellence and continuous improvement.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

To help promote positive student success, St. Thomas More recognizes the importance of building constructive links between the home and the schoolhouse. The school works very hard to involve parents at all levels in the education of their children. Clear lines of communication are maintained between the school and home so that parents are fully informed of what is taking place at school. Each week an electronic update is sent to all families informing them of upcoming events in the week ahead. The More News is the school's bi-weekly online newsletter. The newsletter includes a note from the principal, current school news and a brief summary of happenings and deadlines at the school and is an important communication vehicle for parents. The school's main source for communication to families is Sycamore. This communication system is used by teachers for posting homework, class assignments and class news. In addition, teachers in grades K-5 send home weekly folders with specific information about their child's progress. In addition to these activities, the principal hosts parent coffee talks four to five times a year to meet with small groups of parents to discuss areas of interest concerning school activities and offerings.

The school's web site is used to promote St. Thomas More Catholic School to a broader audience. It provides general data about the school, alumni news, curriculum information, extracurricular activities, donation opportunities and serves as a marketing tool. In addition, St. Thomas More's Facebook page contains current school news and pictures.

Students participate in various school events throughout the year. Some examples of these include: National Geographic Society's Geography Bee, Scripps Spelling Bee, Modern Woodmen Oratorical Competition, Math Counts Competition, Girls on the Run, and Science Fair. All of these activities involve parent volunteers who serve as mentors, judges, coaches, helpers and supporters.

Community outreach projects such as the 9-11 Remembrance Day, Veterans Day Program, Thanksgiving Food Drive, Pennies for Patients Program, Eighth Grade Bake Sale, Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry, Rivers of the World and Empty Bowls Project bring together the entire school community for service learning opportunities. Parents work together with the students and staff to help fulfill our school's theme of Jump In: A Ripple Today Can Become a Wave of Change Tomorrow.

By working together on all of these activities the parents, students and staff of St. Thomas More build a strong school community.

3. Professional Development:

The faculty of St. Thomas More is committed to professional growth and development as the best possible way to insure that students are challenged to achieve and achieve at the very highest levels. Teachers are encouraged to constantly reflect on their teaching practices to discern the impact it is having on students. Data results are analyzed to determine whole class and individual student progress toward the achievement of improvement goals. Feedback from classroom observations serve as a way to further determine the impact of classroom instruction. During collaborative meetings teachers have the opportunity to discuss ways to best challenge students. Five times a year all teachers meet one-on-one with an administrator for "instructional chats" to talk about teaching practices and further the professional discussion of what works best in the classroom setting. Teachers are encouraged to try new methods of instruction and take risks to meet student needs; an environment of continuous improvement sets the standard for teaching and learning at St. Thomas More. New teachers are assigned a mentor and regularly meet during the school year to help with the transition to the new school environment.

In the spring of each school year teachers very carefully analyze the results of the IOWA Assessments, iLEARN Math Assessments, Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessments and various informal measures to determine areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. This thorough analysis of all data helps to drive instructional decision making at St. Thomas More School. Faculty and level meetings are devoted to professional development. All teachers are members of either a task force or a committee. Task forces and committees are focused on improvement in the areas of math, reading, writing, science and character development. Staff development topics discussed over the past three years include differentiation, the use of best practices, critical thinking skills, technology as an instructional tool, guided reading practices and the use of various forms of assessment. During the school year teachers participate in Catholic in-service learning opportunities earning credit toward certification in religion.

The teachers at St. Thomas More have access to Chromebooks, iPADS, Promethean Boards and various other forms of technology. Frequent training sessions are held so that all teachers have the opportunity to learn how to utilize technology as a teaching tool to engage students in meaningful learning opportunities. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to grow professionally by participating in learning opportunities off campus.

4. School Leadership:

St. Thomas More Catholic School is organized into three levels. The Primary Level includes kindergarten through grade two. The Intermediate Level includes grades three through five. The Middle School Level holds grades six through eight. A lead teacher represents each level who is also a teacher on that level. All levels meet independently to discuss academic or behavioral issues, scheduling problems, and plan activities that are pertinent to that level.

The principal and the administrative team work together in all matters of school operations and decision-making. The administrative team is comprised of the principal, the assistant principal, the curriculum

coordinator, guidance counselor, director of school operations, technology coordinator, the director of faith formation and lead teachers from each of the school levels. This team approach ensures that there is open communication at all levels and throughout all programs in the school.

The principal believes that his key role is to help build a positive and caring professional learning environment focused on student success. He encourages parents to get involved through the Parent Teacher Organization and the School's Advisory Council. The administration maintains an open door policy where teachers, parents, and students are welcome to express ideas and concerns. Respect between faculty members and the administration is important to the establishment of a positive culture in the school. The principal shares goals and expectations with faculty, students, and parents through regular faculty meetings, school board meetings, student advisory meetings, lunch and learn events, coffee talks, Parent Teacher Organization Meetings, Curriculum Nights and through school publications. The principal provides spiritual leadership as well as educational leadership to the school community.

Cultivating a welcoming and caring environment is an important focus of the principal and the administrative team. Both the principal and assistant principal are visible throughout the school frequently visiting classrooms, the lunchroom, playground and common areas of the school. The administrative team at St. Thomas More is highly effective and prides itself on leading the way to academic excellence, faith formation and a positive school climate.

St. Thomas More School is accredited through AdvancED , the largest accreditation agency in the world. Accreditation by AdvancED ensures that our improvement efforts are aligned with a rigorous set of research-based quality standards.

The principal reports directly to both the pastor of the church and the superintendent of schools. The Archbishop of Atlanta serves as the ultimate authority of the school.

PART VI * INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCESS

St. Thomas More takes pride in nurturing the whole child, not just the scholar within them. The school encourages each child to become their best self. Through rigorous curriculum and a holistic approach, students are guided to reach their goals. The school meets each child's academic, social, and spiritual needs each day in every school environment. The main focus is ensuring the well-being of each whole individual from the moment they enter the school through graduation. When students feel loved and fostered, the opportunities to succeed in a risk-free environment soar.

The diverse accomplishments of students within the school, church, and community environments are evidence of well-rounded individuals which are always embraced and acknowledged at St. Thomas More. The live broadcast on Tiger News Network of daily announcements leads to the prime opportunity to "knock the socks off" of students to honor their growth especially in the spirit by giving or doing for others. Character building opportunities occur through service projects, team building opportunities, student assemblies, retreats for students and staff, projects and experiments, and the teachable moments that occur in classrooms. The school nurtures the students' growth in scholarship, athleticism, art, music, and language which are all included in the robust curriculum. But St. Thomas More does not stop there. Through the support of the school and church, students are purposefully nurtured in courage, morality, health, faith, friendship, community and generosity.

A love of life-long learning is what any good school strives to instill in their students. Where St. Thomas More is different is in coupling that on-going love of learning with Gospel values so that students learn that helping others can be a life-long source of joy. The learning environment is one where students feel accepted, safe, and secure while they learn to their fullest potential. Throughout the school year, students are able to showcase their God-given gifts and talents. A daily focus at St. Thomas More Catholic School is to nurture the whole child while he or she finds their own level of brilliance. This approach has ensured that all students will become accomplished successful citizens whom contribute to society.

The majority of St. Thomas More students are accepted to their high school of choice. The feedback received from the high schools is on how well-prepared academically coupled with the strength of their Catholic faith knowledge allows all students to contribute to every phase of life!

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Non-public school association(s): Catholic

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$8870
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$3309

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 10%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 27%

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	82
Number of students tested	52
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	75
Number of students tested	51
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	73
Number of students tested	54
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>6</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	73
Number of students tested	57
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>7</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	72
Number of students tested	53
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	87
Number of students tested	52
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	78
Number of students tested	51
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	78
Number of students tested	54
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>6</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	81
Number of students tested	57
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Iowa Assessment Form E</u>
Grade: <u>7</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2011</u>
Publisher: <u>Riverside Publishing Company</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Percentiles</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	83
Number of students tested	53
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: In St. Thomas More's current population, 16% of students are African American. For the 2015 IOWA Assessment, all students were assessed and no subgroup scores are needed. Testing for 8th grade is not required in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.